

ELECTRIONIC BOOK

By Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami

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Every Day, Just Write

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Living For

The Quota

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Also by Satsvarupa dasa Goswami

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May 15, 1998, 12:10 A.M.

To cure recurring doubts seems to require knowledge of Krishna's greatness, becoming convinced by directly perceiving God's presence, and feeling awe. Or, perhaps doses of misery may prompt us toward faith, since we are already inclined to take shelter in the reality of Krishna. But faith is required. When faith is established, we can move toward practicing *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is both the means and the end. It begins with *Sravanam kirtanam visnoh smaranam* in the company of devotees and also ends there. Lord Krishna personally teaches *bhakti* as the most confidential knowledge In the ninth chapter of *Bhagavad-gita*:

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: 'My dear Arjuna, because you are never envious of Me, I shall impart to you this most confidential knowledge and realization, knowing which you shall be relieved of the miseries of material existence.'" (Bg. 9.1)

How to study (or read) better? Should I seek help? Ask for a tutor or companion with whom I can read? Something else? There are so many reading techniques from which to choose "repeat a phrase, read analytically . . . I just want the reading to come alive in me.

"No one can be a greater authority than Krishna, and therefore by hearing from Him one receives the greatest opportunity to become a perfectly Krishna conscious person. One has therefore to learn from Krishna directly or from a pure devotee of Krishna "and not from a nondevotee upstart . . . " (Bg. 7.1, purport)

That's my answer: hearing from Lord Krishna, Srila Prabhupada, and the *acaryas* coming through them, should help me live what I read. *Srnavatam sva-kathah Krishnah* "proper hearing is righteous activity. Krishna, as the best friend in my heart, "purifies the devotee who constantly engages in hearing about Him." I say I am not able to hear all day long, but Krishna says constant hearing will naturally develop our dormant transcendental understanding.

May my heart be cleared of material contamination. Without that cleansing, I cannot understand the Krishna conscious science. May I go beyond distinguishing between matter and spirit and the understanding that the self is not material. May I learn and practice spiritual activities. May I hear the Lord's glories submissively and with great satisfaction. May I proclaim those glories with faith and devotion, in my own words.

It is foolish to try to live happily and peacefully in my "castle" here if it means losing my intense focus on Krishna consciousness. Quiet intensity in spiritual life can come when we protect our lives for Krishna consciousness. That is, when we spend as much time as possible hearing the glories of the Lord. Maharaja Pariksit was such a devout hearer. I want to be a devout writer too, which is fine. Srila Prabhupada says writing Krishna conscious literature is the first duty of a person in the renounced order. Dropping out of social intercourse is helpful to me because a *sannyasi* should be free of anxiety. Unless he is free, he can't help anyone. But that freedom is only to give him more time to hear. My writing should also support my hearing.

Krishna says to Arjuna, "Because you are not envious of Me I shall impart to you this most confidential knowledge *and realization*, knowing which you will be relieved from the miseries of material existence." [emphasis mine] Writing means repeating what comes through my eyes, brain, mind, and intelligence "all the organs of reception.

For those who hear steadily, it's just a matter of time before they break through into deep Krishna consciousness. If we don't hear regularly, then it is just a matter of time before we deviate. *Maya* is ready to lure those adverse to the honey of devotional service.

Idam tu te guhyatamam "let that rhythm be our drumbeat. And the rhythm of the Hare Krishna mantra.

* * *

4:38 A.M.

Hare Krishna, sister and brother. Hare Krishna, mother and father. Here comes Nanda. There goes my irreverence. Here comes the moonlight metaphors of divine spirituality filling the ear holes of . . . Watch

your mouth and pen.

Don't play around with what is
too holy to touch.

If you can't repeat words just as they were translated from the perfect Sanskrit, then don't touch them.

Okay.

Now, let me speak of Krishna's pastimes with the residents of Vrndavana as they are described in Rupa Gosvami's *Lalita-madhava*. The opening act doesn't hint that their play will take place mostly in Dvaraka.

O Krishna, I was reading this book back in the days when I was an aspiring *rasika*. reading it now is a way for me not to totally disown what happened and what I was at that time. It is not exactly a revival of something I have given up, but a claiming of my rights as a member of the Gaudiya-sampradaya. Srila Prabhupada wouldn't forbid me, as long as I hear as his *cela*.

I particularly like a section "which he also included in his *Caitanya-caritamrta* purports "where Purnamasi sees Krishna's approach home from the pasturing grounds. She says the cloud of dust raised by the cows' hooves covers Krishna just as night covers Him so He can have His pastimes with the *gopis*. She also says that this dark covering is like the Yogamaya curtain which prevents nondevotee scholars from understanding His pastimes. Krishna is the sun, and darkness cannot stand before Him.

But sometimes He makes an ally of darkness. I wish to be in the right place to know of Krishna's darkness and light. Let the *tamo-guna* darkness not cover me. Let me know His confidential pastimes. May I hear without displeasing my master. May I hear in a way that pleases him, and thus achieve attraction to Krishna.

I hesitated, then gave wool *cadars* to Radha-Govinda. It's not *that* cold, but I myself am wearing two sweaters, a turtleneck jersey, and a *kurta*. If I warm up later, I can also remove Their *cadars*. O Krishna sonnet, O Krishna parrot and deer. Look! The cows are

attentive to Krishna's flute music. They love Krishna more than they love their own calves. Look, Krishna is approaching His home, and His mother and father are rushing out to greet Him. The *gopis* watch from their towers. Krishna sports with them all to please them, but His heart is fixed on Radha "sometimes so fixed that He mistakenly says Her name when He is with Candravali. Whatever He does (sometimes He says "Candravali{ in front of radha) churns the nectar of His pastimes with Radha.

* * *

I left a Post-it for M.: "Don't leave the Deity dishes unwashed for many hours." I am not angry with him, but I want to point it out. I washed the dishes myself this morning. I should see the service as my treat if he doesn't do it.

Durvasa Maharaja was pleased when radha served him on a visit he made to Vrndavana. He blessed Her that Her cooking would be nectarean and whoever would eat it would have long life and good health. Hearing this benediction, Mother Yashoda asked radha to cook for Krishna every day. That is an excellent arrangement.

Oh, don't talk. You have no right to even say that. Just hear and be quiet. If you want to speak, then utter the Hare Krishna mantra.

It is 4:50 a.m. and I notice it's light enough to go out for a walk. But I don't think I have the strength. Or if I go, then I won't have time to write poems. I have so many nice things to do. Why not go out anyway? I could walk a little on the road. That would be good for me. I can chant another two rounds, and then it won't feel like lost time.

M. should be up soon. He had another late night in Dublin last night, where he went to hear an Irish traditional band. It would be nice if he was known throughout Ireland as the Hare Krishna monk who plays Irish traditional music. I can be known as the ISKCON sage who is not on the social grid but who is within the vision of the ISKCON social planners who allow for sages to dwell in their hermitages and chant Hare Krishna and provide examples and advice to rulers.

Well, maybe I don't want to give so much advice. I would rather live in my house of pain and writing my sonnets. When the rulers arrive, I inevitably have a headache.

May Krishna please be kind, and may the sidelong glance of the best devotees fall on me and inspire me in my actions. *Jnana* means I am the eternal servant of the Lord. *Vairagya* means becoming so attracted to Krishna that I give up material pleasure. The Krishna consciousness movement arranges for *sankirtana* so people can get together and chant the Lord's names.

O Krishna, I have been reading about Your form as Lord of the Yadus. I heard that when You left Hastinapura for Dvaraka, You traveled west and stopped each night to say Your prayers. When You arrived in Dvaraka, You blew Your conch and it turned red from the beauty of Your lips.

* * *

5:30 a.m., Morning Walk

I decided to take that walk out onto the public road. I see calves drinking their mother's milk. They seem more leisurely and less passionate than lambs in the way they nurse. As I glance around the fields, I see many herds of cows. Many of them are just

getting up "it's morning for them too. This is a beautiful, pastoral scene, but it's still a concentration camp for them. Every last one of them is doomed to destruction, but still their daily affairs go on. It's that fact that gives Ireland a semblance of peace and order. If these animals were people, they would understand better what was going on, and this would truly be a ghastly scene. Human concentration camps breed hatred and despair, more cruelty, and often, atheism. Do cows become atheists?

The lane winding up to our house (and Praghosa's) is almost impassable due to the water rushing down the mountain.

* * *

Preaching To A Friend
& *This* is the way I want to say
Krishna is the Man and God and
the music and rhythm and
"How could He be?" (asks
a voice of doubt)
"How could He be the
bad stuff? Hell is from
Him?"

* * *

I'll explain soon enough
but first just
listen to this song:
Krishna is the way and whey
He's the song and day
He's the night and play
and as for work and hell

* * *

they're from your misuse
of free will "from
you. Free well will free
you up if you do your
thing nice and clean and
for the Lord.

* * *

Learn from the guru
the saintly
one
and smile sober.

* * *

He makes you give up
what? I want my pup want
my record collection and you said I could
be happy but if I have to give up
sup of meat
piece of ass
booze and pipe
then where's the fun?

* * *

O disconsolate, O sop
you poor sap you'll
laugh years from now when
you're a Vaisnava
to think you enjoyed like
a pig in the trough

* * *

or if you miss out then
I'm sorry for you.
Please take
my advice at once
Hare Krishna *prasadam* for you
dear friend, hand shake
go with peace
and "Hare Krishna." "

* * *

The Monk's Prayer
& That Japanese monk said his peace
and quiet might cheat him of salvation,
so he shouldn't have praised his tiny
hut his renunciation and all . . .
But he said he would chant the
name of Buddha instead of talking
and poor as his chanting was
he knew he'd win something.

* * *

Now that hit home/ but I said

to myself "my "hut" is for vigorous
devotional service and therefore I am not
knocked out ineligible for Krishna consciousness
use it for the Lord is all
I can say. Don't rip-up destroy
anything.

* * *

The day is bright
the cows are God's
the pasture too
beyond this place of cruelty
there is a home for all in
Krishnaloka
that Japanese monk spoke true
in his way oh me but
I got to be better.

* * *

On my knees before Him it's
almost His breakfast time
and I know He never suffers from
indigestion
or depression, unhappiness even
when You put down Your flute
maybe lift off Your turban
ornamented
and receive Your devotee's *bhakti*
even from this earnest but pig-like fool
who comes before You twice or
thrice a day and never strays so
far away. "

* * *

8:57 a.m.

Returned to quiet hermitage after the walk and feel asleep in my chair over a manuscript about Ma Jahnavā, Lord Nityānanda's consort. Now another sunny day. Let me open the window to this cave to let in a little fresh air. Do I need to keep Their *cadars* on? I never can tell when the weather will change in Ireland. Hare Krishna. Now let me busy myself and try to go deep "or realize suddenly, "I'm going to die." But I have to *mean* such words from where I am at now. Even the blood flow through my veins has to be honest.

When *The Castle* comes I'll look it over. The new translation is supposed to reveal a Kafka we never knew. But I think I'll conclude after all is said and done that it's a work of fiction and I am not interested or able to write like that. Once upon a time the guy . . . who lost something. The man who lived in a house and the police came and said "that kind of stuff. One reason is I don't like to put my characters through the duress that makes for a good read. Why make them suffer, so removed from life? It's too much of a game. Henry Miller called that game "death warmed over."

Sound of a car or truck struggling up this rocky road. Each day the blood flows through my veins, and on many days, the pressure causes pain. One day it comes and I've used up my ration of painkillers. On those days, I just have to sit back and endure. One day maybe "today?" Krishna may reveal more to me and I will find a new direction. Then I will tell the story of what that is like.

Spring days of sunshine and rain;
collect poems "that's life. Weather the storm of headaches.
Count up a life in that way.

* * *

10:53 A.M.

One of Soren Kierkegaard's editors said something to the effect that no one has written as delicately and sensitively about suffering as Kierkegaard. The implication is that suffering is a subject difficult to handle; it's not one to be foisted unnecessarily on readers. We all suffer, but few of us want to read about the suffering of others. We turn to books to get relief from suffering "thus the phrase, "escapist literature." But serious writers talk about reality; others bludgeon us with self-pity. The editor says that Kierkegaard (and anyone who successfully presents suffering) discusses this vital subject in a way that enlightens us about its necessary function in our lives. I mention that because I too would like to write about suffering. I live in a constant state of fragility, by which I mean nearness to pain, vulnerability. For the second day in a row today, the twinge began in my right eye in the morning and I took a painkiller.

My nearness to pain or experience of actual pain is certainly not as powerful as what some others have experienced, but it is my experience. I want to write about it. If I am successful, readers will look delicately at their own suffering without being dragged down by mine.

* * *

11:30 a.m.

Similarly, I shouldn't automatically omit all my thoughts about writing from these pages. If those thoughts are important to me, and if I am successful in conveying them, then my readers will get energy for their own creative endeavors. It would be wrong to pretend that the outer events in my life (small as they are) are the real thing, and to avoid mentioning writing concerns. I think about my writing service quite a bit. It would be a lie not to admit that.

We are deciding how to print the first volume of EJW, how to design the series, etc. My editor's insistence that the separate volumes not be merged into a continuous diary

brings up some important points for me. I tend to fear that EJW is *only* a formless, ordinary diary. It's what any diarist would present. In one sense, that's true, but I aspire for more. My editor's acknowledgment of the integrity of each volume, and the movement through themes, gives me the confidence to believe that EJW is progressive.

A Swami who is visiting Dublin said he would like to come to see me, but right now he's too busy. My disciple replied, "Satsvarupa Maharaja often comes to Dublin. Why not see him there?" O brother, I too am busy, because an idle brain is a devil's workshop. How am I busy, you want to know? I'm either managing pain or writing books. I'm an author, and I spend a lot of time working at my writing.

* * *

12:40 p.m.

From the introduction to SK's *Gospel of Sufferings*: "The true preacher, it has been said, will preach out of his own experience, but he will not talk about himself."

O Soren Kierkegaard, I am a preacher, but I talk about myself. That's because I'm not just a preacher of doctrine but a preacher of the human experience of practicing spiritual life.

Another quote from the introduction: "He [Kierkegaard] would have been the last to wish his readers to find in what he wrote a mere self-disclosure . . . What others may, if they will, find that they have in common with him "this constitutes the theme of these discourses. The theme is our suffering."

Yes, that's what I am saying.

* * *

2:58 p.m.

I read with attention Lord Brahma's prayers to Lord Krishna. Each verse is a beautiful composition, even in the English translation. Brahma describes ignorance of Krishna, material bondage, and many aspects of Krishna's inconceivable nature. For example, he says there is no meaning either to bondage or liberation. As spirit souls we are never truly bound, and our only illusion is our thinking that we belong to matter. real liberation is Krishna consciousness. Brahma wishes to be a devotee of the Lord in eternal Vrndavana, even a small stone on the footpath where the Vrajavasis will walk. He doesn't presume that he will be offered a place in Krishna's eternal entourage.

"There are people who say, 'I know everything about Krishna.' Let them think that way. As far as I am concerned, I do not wish to speak very much about this matter. O my Lord, let me say this much: As far as Your opulences are concerned, they are all beyond the reach of my mind, body and words." (*Bhag.* 10.14.38)

At the end of his commentary on Brahma's prayers, Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura states, "May these prayers of Brahma, which take away all doubts and broadcast all the definitive conclusions of devotional service, become the expert craftsmanship of the foundation of my consciousness." (*Bhag.* 10.14.40, purport)

* * *

3:18 p.m.

Ani drilling, Madhu sawing, I might as well write.

To secret sources.

He has put a big door in the wall. Now it's official: I'm sealed off from the outer world. To get in people will have to ring the bell. A bell and we can answer or not.

For example, if I'm busy with the world of Lord Brahma's prayers.

Next, Maharaja Pariksit will ask Sukadeva how come, during the *brahma-vimohana-lila*, everyone loved Krishna more than their own relatives. I want to hear it attentively.

Krishna is in all things, but to see that fact, we have to renounce our enjoying spirit. Krishna, Krishna. We're stuck in this world of activity with desires pure choir boys don't have. I watched football games on TV and drank cans of beer in my priest's apartment. I played gin rummy with visiting professors. At least I stopped short of worse. Fat priest, let me confess. Krishna has seen everything I have done, and He judges me for what I am. No grin can hide it.

O Lord, everything is Your energy, and I operate within it. I rescue matter by using it for Your service. I chant Hare Krishna in a holy attempt to contact You. I need You to help me get through.

Sometimes devotees say the gin rummy and beer is the juice they need to get through the offerings.

Yes, Krishna hears all. Wise devotees do too. They see through the offerings to what's behind them.

Men tell me I had better work out my inner desires now, or I'll have to come back and live them out next time. Hare Krishna. What about letting those inner desires die? Look for purity.

That drill is so loud! I can barely concentrate. At least it's not a dentist's drill making holes in my teeth.

The *sastras* are the source of my Krishna consciousness. Everything else seems relative "unconnected to the inconceivable topics of *Krishna-katha*. Let me get that straight. Krishna, Krishna. Let me touch the nerve of Krishna consciousness.

* * *

Our released prayers showed we have some tinge of desire for the world, some selfishness. We will be detained for that, but we have been promised that we will eventually be freed. Just hear.

Krishna, Krishna, Krishna.

The orphan is returned to his father. Only if we receive a drop of His mercy will it be possible to hear and chant. We can't do it on material strength. But that mercy comes to those who thirst for it and who show signs of sincere dedication. I therefore pledge to go on improving myself "if I can stay awake, not overeat, and not forget that I am dying even while I live . . .

* * *

5:07 p.m.

I learn from reading my unpublished volumes of EJW. Just looked at the EJW that described my return to Ireland from the U.S. at the beginning of this year. I discussed facing the fact that I have chosen to live alone. It's not romantic "always easy. Solitude is hard work. But I shouldn't run away from it. If I did abandon the life of solitude to travel, my headaches would increase and so would the demands upon me to perform. I'd have to increase my Esgic quota, then suffer from rebound headaches, then have to crawl back to this cave. I have been through all that before and I still remember it well. So in that volume, I tried to face the fact that I am meant to live in solitude by temperament and health. I can't get away from it. And it's *nice*.

Facing myself means seriously facing Srila Prabhupada. My life has already been offered to him in sacrifice, and despite my physical limits, I want to please him by my activities. I am not trying to take up a life for my own sense gratification. That too is a fact of my being. So let me make the best of it and serve my spiritual master through it. He wants my affection offered from a real life. Dear reader, translate this into whatever it means in your life.

Now I am entrenched in this house. We have taken the idea of solitude further than we ever dreamed we would. This morning I walked down to the little bridge with the stream running under it and remembered previous years when I would stay at Praghosa's house on a writing retreat, walk to this bridge, and dictate a "Prabhupada Appreciation" piece. Who would have dreamt in those days that I would live next door to him?

The front gate went up today, and I asked my disciples here to support me in the no-visitors policy. If someone does come to Wicklow to see me, I would rather meet them in someone else's house.

He said, "We decided to paint the front door black so that it doesn't look like the person inside has something colorful going for him that needs investigation."

And they are going to build a wooden deck around the building so I can walk while I chant *japa*. I asked for that.

I realized that as the wall keeps visitors out, it also keeps me in. Yes, my life has become physically confined, a hermitage. Is this what I want? A shy yes.

As I walked into the house after *japa*, I looked at the front gate and daydreamed that a GBC man arrived to see what I was doing. In my reverie, he asked with mild amusement, "May I come in?" I was about to say, "No, Maharaja, this is my house of pain."

"Pain? Well, are you feeling pain *right now*?"

No. Because I took a pill to avoid it.

The leaves, the lovely green leaves, open and stretch down into our backyard.

But nobody can live here forever. I mean, in the material world. We have to give up all claims. Someone else will come and take over this place and I will move on, soul transferring to another body.

Can I walk around the house and develop a better attitude toward chanting? Can I understand that I must beg Krishna to please, please allow me to properly respect the holy name? I'm not asking for spiritual sense gratification; I'm asking for relief from my own offensive mentality, my inattentive chanting. I can't seem to free myself. I have no power at all. Please, I ask You, please come and control my mind. Please don't let me go

on chanting offensively. I want to honor You in Your name. I want to give Nama-rupa all respect. I'm chanting anyway, but my chanting is like taking a bath with a leaky bucket. All that sweet water running out and being wasted. Dear Lord, don't let this waste continue. Come and help me. I ask You in these sentences and always, please help me to remember to beg You to help me chant without offense. My brothers and sisters and daughters and sons may be doing better or worse, but I ask this boon especially for myself. And if I improve, I'll pass it on to any and all who wish the same blessing.

May 16, 12:10 a.m.

"This knowledge is the king of education, the most secret of all secrets. It is the purest knowledge, and because it gives direct perception of the self by realization, it is the perfection of religion. It is everlasting, and it is joyfully performed." (Bg. 9.2)

I woke at midnight with a suggestion of a twinge in my right eye. It's the last day of the week, and I have already used up my Esgic ration. If the pain comes, I'll just have to live with it.

I dreamt I was back in the Navy, and a "lifer" (career Navy man) was giving me friendly advice on the proper way to wear my sailor's hat. He also told me about a store in New York City where I could get a proper uniform. I didn't want to be there, so his advice was lost on me; he didn't tell me anything I wanted to learn.

And now I am awake and a bit weary. Should I start right in on my rounds? How to read *Bhagavad-gita* with devotion?

"And the king of all confidential knowledge culminates in devotional service." People are usually interested only in external knowledge. No universities teach the science of the soul. Yet the soul is the most important thing to study. *Bhagavad-gita* teaches knowledge of the soul. The first knowledge is that the soul is different from the body, that it is indestructible and eternal. Furthermore, confidential knowledge means describing the soul's activities.

If I'm going to give readers an impression of myself, it would be good to make it light, not melancholy. I want to be a likable companion and guide. But most of all, people want (and ought to receive) truthfulness. Then when they read my book they can think, "I can count on this author. He's my friend." Still, if he can contact the reservoir of all beauty and pleasure, Lord Krishna, then this friend can give them the best thing. By hanging out with Him, the reader should receive the king of knowledge. We could get it directly from Krishna, one might say, so what need is there of this author? Especially one who is sometimes so forgetful of Krishna?

O Krishna, If I really thought I was not in some way a touchstone of Your mercy, why would I seek to offer friendship to others? That would be another reason to stay alone "knowing that I can do no good for anyone.

But I can. Because I can preach what Prabhupada taught. *Anyone* can do *that*. Let me become that anyone. And Srila Prabhupada wanted Krishna conscious books.

9.2 has a long purport. Don't try to swallow it all at once. Take its different points one at a time, and not just to "go over it" once again. We want to learn something new, feel some new appreciation, when we read, and that's possible when we're attentive, because

Lord Krishna Himself is ever-fresh, and it is He who is teaching us *bhakti* in these verses.

This knowledge is the purest because it powerfully annihilates the chain of karmic reactions. Devotional service is also directly perceived. We can see ourselves making spiritual progress. We certainly see that about ourselves when we first begin the process. Now we may be so accustomed to living the transcendental life that we don't notice the changes in ourselves. We have already taken off and are flying in the sky.

But we should never take our position in devotional service for granted. rather, we should always appreciate what we have been given. I seem to be almost more aware of my shortcomings, my absence of spiritual perception, than any advancement I may be making, but the more important perception is the positive. Why not emphasize that? Directly perceive how we are practicing spiritual life and making progress. This personal awareness is important; it is also a remedy for doubt. If we feel Krishna conscious, then who can tell us it isn't real? Like eating, we have to experience it for ourselves to understand it.

"Devotional service is so potent that simply by engaging in the activities of devotional service ones becomes enlightened without a doubt." (Bg. 9.2, purport)

The boy Narada Muni is given as an example. We may continue to doubt or not experience what the *sastras* say, but it's better to accept and practice them anyway. This is our path. Our shortcomings are inevitable. I know so many devotees who have been practicing for fifteen or twenty years and who still have considerable shortcomings in taste, but we all identify ourselves as devotees. We have chosen Krishna, and we will not give Him up despite our lack of personal advancement. That's the groundwork of our faith.

As for me, I tell myself constantly to make a last push. I'm at that stage where a last push is becoming more and more required. As my body declines, I can focus more on the essence. I do want to taste the confidential knowledge of *bhakti*, and I will admit that it is so potent that even I feel something.

* * *

In a dream, I was in Vrndavana "not at the temple, but in some small dwelling. I was lying in bed. I heard an oxcart go by on the road outside my door. A young Indian man was addressing his students. I thought he was being so presumptuous the way he was lording it over them, although they were only children. Then he threw one child out. I took that child and hugged him. He was so small. I asked the young man if he couldn't still love this boy. The teacher had to think about it, and I realized I wouldn't want to be part of that school.

* * *

5:50 a.m.

Slept from 3:00 to 4:30 a.m., but the twinge persisted. While I was in the bathroom, I remembered an old Jean Shepherd episode. He once said that the more a person is "knocked around the head," the more likely he will be to have respect for humankind and to love everyone. People who have it easy, who go to the best East Coast schools, and

who get a good job immediately upon graduating, are more likely to become cynical later in life. I remember he also said that we shouldn't turn away from things we don't like, but stay and observe them.

My life consists of such a narrow slice of reality. I have lived in the ISKCON world for so many years, and in the last few years, I have even been withdrawing from that. Of course, a transcendentalist would say that the material world is illusion. The sufferings of the people in Gary, Indiana or the Bronx, New York, and the particular ways that people live and suffer in each city, state, country, and time in this world, although unique and fascinating from a material viewpoint, are all *maya*. It is not worth wasting our time observing them. We are meant to rise out of the sea of infinitely varied misery and board the boat of transcendental knowledge. But we shouldn't exactly avoid the concept of suffering by cloistering ourselves in ISKCON as if it doesn't touch us. We have to broaden our minds.

And in favor of the reclusive life: a recluse is not necessarily cheated of human experience if he or she lives deeply. A monk (or nun) who can stand constantly before God, uttering His holy names, hearing of His pastimes, or preaching in writing or in person, needn't be considered as blindfolding himself to escape from reality. Better we all awaken to our identities as devotees of God and practice our chanting and reading of scripture. Scripture alone will bring us a reality far better and richer than that experienced in the juke joints and taverns of Kentucky.

* * *

5:32 a.m.

Maybe that twinge will go down. Warm weather means no hat for Srila Prabhupada and no *cadars* for Radha-Govinda. I persisted through the pain and bathed and dressed Them, then took a little walk around the house.

When I returned, I looked out the window and saw a fox. The window glare prevented my getting a clear view, so I opened the window as softly as I could. But the fox heard me and climbed a stone wall to get a better look at me. His eyes looked like two dark little flashlights. Then he walked away. I looked further and saw the cows and bulls in the same pasture. One coughed, then a few stood up and began to graze. They didn't seem afraid of the fox. But it preys on sheep. Are these among the "people" one can love? They too are fellow sufferers. Another spring morning in the concentration camp. Although they'll soon be mercilessly exterminated, they cough in the morning air like any old woman, and begin to eat grass alongside their fellows while a fox exits.

Forget material variety? Just concentrate on Krishna? The preacher is one who mixes with humanity. Everyone is a potential buyer of a book or a person who can hear the holy name.

* * *

11:05 a.m.

Won't do Srila Prabhupada *puja* and probably won't take a noon bath. No one is here right now, and it's too late to change what they have cooked for lunch, but I'd prefer a

simple soup. I should fast. Indigestion. Just lying around in pain. Everything suspended. Pinpointed behind the eye, the "alarm" is ringing.

So folks, we live not for this world but for going to the next. Talk tomorrow if I'm cured by then, of otherworldliness. People want to hear how to live in the present moment. We tell them to live now if they want to make progress. Then at death they can gain eternal life. Get off the cycle of pain and illusory happiness. Shepherd spoke about the world of illusion, but he didn't have the transcendental weapon called detachment. He wasn't even religious. He probably saw religion as a hoax. He was just a commentator, a humorist, a raconteur, philosopher, entertainer . . .

Ah, oh, ooo Hare Krishna.

If I write in pain, should I write as if I don't feel it? Leave a record of ordinary talk? Just say, "It hurts!""? That's why on a day like today I won't write much at all. Forget the twenty-page quota. It hurts too much to try for it, and the effort only intensifies the pain.

May 17, 12:09 a.m.

The headache is lingering. I hope I'll have recovered to give the talk in Dublin this morning. If I do go, it will probably be better to improvise more than pressure myself to perform. But speak from *sastra*, nothing ordinary. Scripture is Krishna Himself, our best friend. As a very pure, dependent devotee of Jesus prays to his lord, so we live with Krishna. He's the original Personality of Godhead, residing always in Goloka.

We repeat dogma but try to infuse it with experience and realization. I chose today's topic some time ago. Has it already grown stale in my mind even while it waited to be addressed? How otherworldly am I? I am otherworldly, certainly, in the sense that I have withdrawn from this world, but not in the sense of yearning for Goloka. At least let me seek Krishna here. Dovetail *joie de vivre* with participation in the *sankirtana* movement.

* * *

My head still being cracked, I can't go for the regular 12:00 to 3:00 writing and *japa* schedule. But I've been in bed for almost twenty-four hours and I'm tired of that. In between. Doesn't bode well for an 8 a.m. departure for Dublin. In any case, I'll be grateful for a day of gradual recovery. That's just as important as giving a weekly lecture.

* * *

Limping *japa*, limping lines? I once thought I could be a little Gua ("little warrior") and write through pain.

Oh, stop whining. What kind of hero are you?

Analyze pain? I don't bother. I simply try to grasp how it is a religious exercise, my once a week dose of carrying the cross, my small installment of suffering and death. O Krishna, Hare Krishna. See that pale body? That's yours. Not you, but yours "the current form for a brief lifetime.

My aspirations are to hear from Krishna, hear about Krishna, about Goloka, and to be pure enough to hear about His pastimes with Radha without becoming contaminated or

over-familiar. Live out of the safety zone, active and daring to write. Be a writer, a maker of literature. Art for Krishna. Forge a process that leads to Krishna, although not always by the straight line. I aspire to do my best for Him. A devotee, who is also a professional actress, renounced acting but has now returned to it. She wants to breathe again, she says, although she knows it's risky. She hopes to find a way to offer it to Krishna. She says, "I hope to follow in your footsteps as a truly honest, riveting artist/preacher for Krishna."

Yes, we will be like the poets, artists, actresses, etc., we admire as dedicated and brilliant, touching and sacrificing, "but we'll do it as preachers, *somehow*. High (human) art of propaganda.

Big hopes, but Srila Prabhupada says there is no harm in being utopian because Krishna can do anything.

* * *

3:04 a.m.

More rest and clearer. Now I'm thinking I will go to the city for my scheduled lecture. It's my chance to be with people, and it certainly is a direct way to witness our belief in the Krishna science. So if I'm still clear, this preacher ought to get out there in the white tarnished bullet.

And don't forget to lock the gate.

Otherworldly! Aspire to go to Krishna, to where Srila Prabhupada is. Sudama's mom said, "Sudama, go to Prabhupada!" Me too, and turn in this achy head and body for a new and better one. Hope to be a stronger, more loving preacher.

* * *

Swami, please forgive me
wish I could serve you always
and better and stronger
may you grant that wish "
that I should ardently wish it
instead of poise, polite and putrid.

* * *

4:23 a.m.

The new translation of *The Castle* has arrived. Let's see what I'll make of that. Me, who writes only of what happens and what I dream of and what Krishna conscious teachings I have assimilated from the source. Shakily I return to my schedule. Worship Radha-Govinda with Their morning bath. Hear Rupa Gosvami's play wherein Sankhacudacomes and steals Radha momentarily, but Krishna goes after him saying, "It pains me that I cannot torture you forever but merely kill you!" With a playful punch, Krishna kills the demon. Mukhara, who had been harsh in her reprimand of Krishna, used both hands to wipe the perspiration from His face. She said, "By the will of providence, you have saved Radha."

I can see how these harsh old women, Mukhara and Jatila, add flavor to Krishna's *lila*, and this particular time, the juxtaposition between Mukhara's reprimand and gratitude was especially sweet. But this happy-ending scene will soon be followed by the saddest scene of all: Akrura's arrival in Vrndavana to take Krishna to Mathura. The *gopis* stay up all night, crying. Vrnda says, "Of what use is it to decorate Vrndavana if Krishna is not here?"

I chose the coppery brown outfit with gold trim for Radha-Govinda to wear today. He also has a gold turban, and radha a jeweled *candrika*. I am happy to serve Them. But my main service is to write.

Arrived in the mail: *The Book Of Radha*, Prabodhananda Sarasvati's *Radha-rasa-sudha-nidhi*. You know my proposal about such literature "it is glorious, topmost, but I recognize that I may not be qualified to read so much of it. Yet if I don't read it, I tend to read something else. Like *The Castle*. And now Shambala's spring catalogue has arrived, and I see they have a new Hammil translation of Chuang Tzu. Better Radha than Buddha.

Behind on my rounds. I like to have them all chanted by now. It's sheer work, like pickaxing rock. I know I must do it.

I heard sheep bleating during the night. Now that I've seen that fox, perhaps the sheep bleat to protect themselves from him. I am constantly reminded of a death camp by this seemingly bucolic scene of sheep on the hills, vales, and the rich green grasses. I write for humans and hope the day will come when people will see their karma and give up the cruel ax. Hare Krishna.

* * *

When you don't know what to write, write Hare Krishna. There was once a mad devotee who wanted to free all the cattle and sheep from the pastures. He broke down boundary walls and opened gates, but they caught and punished him. It was in the newspaper, "Krishna Man Breaks Cow Walls." Arrested . . . That man is not making good propaganda for our movement. Makes us seem like fanatics. We have to preach peacefully. The people themselves will have to realize their ignorance and decide to live differently. People would have to say they are no longer interested in eating meat, just as so many people are now saying they don't want to smoke cigarettes. Nondevotees would have to take up the cause. We can at least sing Hare Krishna, speak it, and live it, and protect a few cows on farms to set an example.

If you go into town, will you wear a crown? Will you arrive safely at the door and smile to the ladies, children, and men? Is love true? Must it be measured? Just do your duty and that's all there is to it? If there is love, take it freely, but act dutifully anyway.

Hare Krishna, Hare
Krishna.

Me and my audience, me and my cap and gown and *kaupinas* and
froth and vigor.

The words are beyond me.

I am just a bedfallen
crest jewel of a dust ball

found
under the bed.

I am also a worshiper and
no comical genius.

I have no novel structure or even anything autobiographical. I have told the truth only in measly parts. I have warmed water but not heated your heart. I have built an elaborate wall, but why should I live behind it? Have I offended stalwart brothers who range all over the world? Have I judged without knowing the details of the case? I have sighed and been hurt, eaten a bad diet, mixed meals and karmic sins and leftover omissions. I will one day reap it all, as every mortal will. Because this is *martya-loka*, and what can I expect "to live forever in a cottage, writing gentle consolations in the longest book ever published? Who will even live long enough to read it? Are you in the *sankirtana* army or a deserter? Whose side are you *on*? Do you carry nectar and not drop it even when demons come? Can Krishna count on you? Can Prabhupada? Let's hear you open wide and chant Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare.

* * *

8:15 a.m.

In van. On for one-hour lecture, and immediately after, a meeting with *sannyasi* Godbrother. Then Uddhava will drive me back to Wicklow. I'm supposed to be home by 1 p.m. This means that for the second day in a row I'll have to skip Srila Prabhupada massage and bath. Hectic. Behind on quotas.

Muir's translation of Kafka (1930) is outdated. One reason is it is religious. Modern times don't need an allegory of God (as the "castle"), and that's not what modernist, agnostic Kafka intended. Welcome to the new translation and "what is a monk like you doing with fiction like this anyway?"

* * *

9:10 a.m.

Madhu felt we were late, so he flew here and now we're early. I'm sitting at a desk I have used before, just before traveling to Europe last year. Now I don't want this to be only a diary; this is literature, see? It's a discussion of spiritual application, spiritual despair, and Auld Lang Syne. I also remember Prabhupada. And I remembered my father yesterday, and his working at the Great Kills fire station. I thought, "If I can remember all the way back to him, then why not more recently to Prabhupada and Krishna consciousness?" I allowed myself so many thoughts yesterday. It was too hard to concentrate more than that because of the pain. The *structure* and *repetition* of Hare Krishna mantra made it extremely difficult to say the mantras in my mind. I just let the mantras float in my consciousness. Now it's over. It sure is hard getting caught with a long, strong headache, but that's the nature of the game; three Esgics per week and not one more.

We were driving to Dublin so fast that I had no time to get into observing the scenery, but I did notice that all the leaves are out and green, that the sun was bright, and that the roadside milkweeds were in bloom. Otherwise, we were two Hare Krishnas zipping into

town, slowing only a few times to allow baby rabbits to hop out of the way. In one town, about twenty boys and fifteen girls were standing by the road. M. said they were a football team waiting for a bus. After a while, I lay down on the floor of the van; allowed more of that free-floating semi-consciousness which I allowed all day and night yesterday. Hare Krishna. I have my lines ready. Srila Prabhupada photo in here "master of all his followers. We each have our own way of approaching him.

* * *

9:32 a.m.

Doesn't sound like many people are here. I'm waiting for Madhu to call me. In this room there are two cushions, two cups, and a bottle of Ballygowan mineral water for me and my brother to drink after my lecture. What's yer topic? Otherworldliness. We shouldn't be attached. We should hanker for and be captivated by the spiritual world. Srila Prabhupada said very few people want to go back to Godhead. That is especially true these modern-post-modern days. They think there is no personal heaven. I don't want to spend time trying to prove the existence of the *sanatana-dharma*. Not to this audience. I'll simply assume they want to go there. But we need to awaken the desire.

* * *

2:30 p.m.

Uddhava brought me back by 12:30 p.m. Now back to literature-making.

My brother said he read a book of Tukarama's poetry and thought of me. Thanks. I saw a gray bird and thought of my hair. I saw a fake-toothed grin in the rearview mirror and wondered if that too was me. The green land zipped by as we drove back. Did I see my years pass by and think I was getting nowhere?

The talk on otherworldliness went okay. Someone asked why we don't talk of our personal spiritual experiences. Because we are shy, and people might not believe us. They'd think we were boasting; our inner experiences are too private, Srila Prabhupada didn't speak of his experiences.

Someone else asked what was wrong with overeating. And someone asked how we know that pleasure we feel is derived from our service to Krishna and is not just sense gratification. As that devotee asked her question, I saw pigeons flying in the distance. I said we can be bothered by a fly, yet remember Krishna or forget Him. It's a tangible experience to remember Him or forget Him. We should always remember Him.

A devotee asked, "Is it enough to do your service, or do you have to think of Krishna too?"

"Both," I said, "remember Me and fight." We want to use all material things in Krishna's service, and if we don't, thinking that matter is *maya* and therefore to be rejected, that is incomplete renunciation. As I said that, one *mataji* nodded her head approvingly.

Are we doing okay? Are we too worldly? Let's be otherworldly. Let's hear about Krishna's abode, be detached from this world, and see Krishna in this world. That talk and their response was important to me.

* * *

3:36 p.m.

We'll go on like this, Mr. Wind chimes

Beeswax Mr. O. P.

Strangelook (is that for Ominous and Peacechild?)

Let's gather for an Active Imagination session. We'll sit and hold the silence with a man who's already holding it. But we don't mean no harm.

He said, "A manager is someone who doesn't mind others disagreeing with him, but who still pushes through what he wants." I sat there in brahminical shyness, my management style in tatters. Oh you who are non-evasive and horn-smuggling, did he really ask you about, your "little problem," your

headaches?

Well, go ahead then and minimize them. You don't know my pain and

I don't know yours.

Love is a different thing. We all grow beards and say hello.

Hare Krishna.

* * *

It could be that a Hare Krishna person is actually worldly "I played upon the word while the Japanese woman played upon her koto and the harmonium droned. remember in the old days of ISKCON, when we wiped whisky from our mouths with the back of our hands (but only in our minds)? We had the gestures still. And a book distributor sat right in front of me and looking right through? Was I heavy or light by his estimation?

I couldn't tell. I will discover it in these days ahead, especially when we approach scripture, God. That's what I *should* have said: "Brothers and sisters, get it awakened "that hearing desire "so you yearn to go to where Krishna is and play with Him."

As for my spiritual experiences . . . what are they? Do I count only the times when I have "seen" Krishna? Because I have seen Him. In a picture. I don't claim more than that. Listen, man, I am spiritual, and so is Pharaoh. I am spiritual, and so is that pigeon flying out there, that preacher who wants to manage men and money (and women), even that roach. Even sports are spiritual, if they're not worldly.

I should have could have said . . .

* * *

Yeah, well, we could have a meeting and remember how Krishna sports in the spiritual world. But for that we need to find the *sva-jati*. Then we'll be mixed up rightly. In Vrndavana. Boy, you and me could *mix it up*, we're so compatible in character and taste.

I didn't eat so much; knew when to stop. Washed and dried the *thalis* and the floor, piled the leftover *prasadam* in a corner, and now I'm facing another night to myself while the weather looks fair and my head doesn't ache.

My Mom and Dad, my guru, Prahlada's demon father, his son, HiranyakaSipu liberated . . . We are bound to die and return to this world. How are we dealing with one

another? Why are we sometimes so averse to one another? Why do we have to come back to work it out again?

O *sva-jati*, may I stay peacefully in your association and give up all this Vaisnava *aparadha*.

* * *

This is the right pen, the right light bulb, and the wrong head, the wrong *yuga*. I'm also tuned into the wrong station, where they play Indian music. It is a sitar . . . No, it's Krishna in music symbols . . .

We have heard enough. I had better go out and wrestle with my mental tigers in the front yard (behind locked gate). No friendly intruder could make it in here unless he hopped over the wall. But I'll tell my mama on him. I don't recognize that pretty girl. And you, are you my disciple? What does that mean? Good-bye, everyone. Thank you for the shedding garland. Eyes glance away. "run the gauntlet." I am not unfriendly. You don't understand me.

Unless you have read a book called *Tom Sawyer, Pilot Writer*.

Unless you have felt my pulse.

I think it's better this way, but if you want to get together for a Prabhupada memory night, I suppose I can tell some stories.

But that's a bit old hat. It's a bit effete. We're post-modern now. We remember Prabhupada in our Cubist period, you see, and make a composite of his lectures and what we had to go through in separation from him.

It does the heart good in easy times to have memory sessions though. But I find it an excuse for passing the time and assuming we are close when other issues are hurting between us "I mean, just to come out with canned memories. Is it really enough?"

Rover, take me home.

* * *

5:09 p.m.

My writings are published for cult readers. That's because I am a cult member. Very good. I am

several things at once "

a religious monk of the Krishna consciousness Gaudiya Vaisnava ISKCON (Srila Prabhupada's movement),

a foolish person who writes spinning words depending on and trusting in the process, a product of my times, both pre-ISKCON and now.

Now we will begin the novel.

K. arrived at the village when it was deep in snow. He decided he wanted to start a new Active Imagination series. "It should be more scriptural this time, perhaps," he thought. Yes, take a chance and mix scripture with whatever comes into your head. But the only way to do that is to first read scripture.

No, scripture should not be mixed.

Be *careful!*

Like orange juice and yogurt, not every mix digests.

Produce the pure Alps novel of your times. I want to tell them about the kind of books people write which resemble diaries, but I want to go beyond that. Because I won't live long enough to tell everything, and I don't want to grant myself the so-called freedom of fiction.

It is better to be alone. I am glad to be back here. It was a big day for me "traveling fast to Dublin, lecturing, then bouncing back in the car, talking and worrying about things I heard. As for getting permission from the Justice Department to stay another year in Ireland, they say it is just a formality. We American passport holders are given good treatment in the republic of Ireland. Anyway, no matter where I have to live, even if I have to leave this wonderful place, I will continue to write and consider my life providential.

Thinking of a good way to springboard full speed in this book. I am on my own, so sink down into "real-time." I have chanted my basic sixteen and at least three *gayatris*. I am living under Krishna's protection. I should do things directly Krishna conscious. As I was speaking, I thought that was directly Krishna conscious. I felt good about it. When I review it, however, I will probably see that I didn't balance it enough in one way or another, or perhaps that it was too balanced and not assertive enough. When we speak, our messages should be simple and clear "accessible to the audience. They should have walked away from my lecture knowing how to become more otherworldly.

As I spoke, someone was trying to chase a fly out a window. Was she remembering Krishna as she did so? I pointed her out to the others. Maybe she thought, "He is pointing out that I am distracted and that I am also distracting him." No, I was tolerating and relaxed.

Oh, it was *brilliant* "the little pauses and anecdotes. It flew around their heads and out to the pigeons. None of the little kids "and there were quite a few of them "stayed in the crowded room. The room was overcrowded as it was, so I was glad they left to play outside. One kid tapped on the window to signal his mother to get him a drink of water. She signaled back that he should get it himself. Kids are demanding of their moms.

A man came to the car window as I was leaving and wouldn't let me escape. He wanted to say all sorts of things about what he was doing, and I was interested too, but ready to leave. By then, all the devotees were standing outside the house. We roared under the underpass and hokied our blunderbuss. We avoided being hit by the billboards. There was a series of them with humorous ads for a car called Golf. I think it's made by Volkswagen. One ad said, "I'll drive an old man's car when I'm an old man." Another showed a little boy saying, "Dad hit a tree. The tree wasn't hurt. He was jogging." Something like that. I wasn't sure what it had to do with the Golf car.

Ads get into your brain and come out in my sentences. Life is like that. The expression grist for the mill doesn't always mean that the writer is in control, because whatever he does or breathes becomes grist and grit and becomes his world. No one can write in a vacuum. I try to make the best of that fact.

I hope I can fall asleep when I lay down in bed tonight. Even if I don't, I'll set the alarm for midnight so I can be with Krishna in His *Bhagavad-gita*.

May 18, 12:10 a.m.

"One should desire and hanker after that supreme kingdom, for when one attains that kingdom, he does not have to return to this material world. (Bg., Introduction, p. 24)

Only the devotee can go to Krishna's abode. "The Lord further adds that "of this there is no doubt." This must be believed firmly, Prabhupada tells us. We should not reject that which does not tally with our imagination; our attitude should be like Arjuna's: "I believe everything that You have said." (Bg., Introduction, p. 25)

I'm thinking of what I see as imperfections in my Godbrothers, (or for that matter, my disciples and myself) "these flaws may be overlooked in favor of the great and rare good of a person desiring to be Krishna conscious. We can't be blind to an aspiring devotee's faults, because this material world has done a job on each of us. But we can and should work deliberately to see the good.

Sometimes devotees wonder how we can possibly associate with all these good qualities, even when they appear in people who rub us the wrong way. The *sadhus* allow us to offer our respects from a distance in such instances. That's a healthy response "respect without intimacy. Then we can see the purity of motive in another's heart and not have to always exonerate its execution. "Whatever he may be doing, I know he is motivated by his desire to please Srila Prabhupada." When we don't have to regularly see or be affected by any possible insensitivities, we find it easier not to judge. Don't be dependent spiritually or humanly on another's dealings with you. That can sometimes be too painful. We might, in our own inadequacy, misjudge our brother, or find ourselves falling into our own expression of false ego. Always follow etiquette, and no *aparadha* will appear.

And when we are apart from brothers and others, simply concentrate on your service and your self-purification. Think of Krishna while struggling in this world, and hear about Him as constantly as possible. Being an offenseless devotee requires love "love for Krishna and love for others. But love for Krishna comes first. It is that love for Krishna that allows us to love those others we would not normally love.

* * *

Restless, fickle mind, I want you to be a Vaisnava. A friend called his mind "evil." Dear mind, I don't want to bash *you* with such words, but you really do seem to get bewildered. You enter nasty places and phases. I want to rescue you by bringing you into the nectar ocean "or at least to that ocean's shore "of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's pastimes. If only you could hear those pastimes, and play in the waves of happiness that arise. Be blessed. O mind, and be delivered from the worst.

Dear mind, you are called *atma*, a synonym for "self." I wish the best for you. I know you become distressed when harsh words are directed at you, and that you both register what has happened and bounce off it, then drag your distress through my body. Be engaged only in work favorable to Krishna consciousness, and let us both be happy.

O Krishna, please release me from evil. Even though I didn't like everything that was said yesterday, I know it was nothing compared to how bad it could have been. Like in my dream. I went to pay a bill for a Canadian temple. The devotees there gave me the money to pay it, but I had to go to some huge utilities company. The line petered out and got lost, but a woman who was also there to pay her bill found the line's continuation inside. I followed her and finally managed to pay the bill. But the receipt was unclear. At least the money was valid currency. That too was suffering.

O Lord in my heart, I am too feeble to sustain *Krishna-katha*, but I wish that weren't so. Thank You for bringing me to this stage where I could even desire to hear and chant. Now please help me to attain Your lotus feet. And may I hear and then spill over the pleasing sound of Krishna's words.

* * *

Dream: I was in the Navy, on duty in the place where people board and leave the ship. I was accountable for my behavior, but I was soft, not strict in the Navy code or even the Naval essence. Another sailor was afraid to get too close in case I made a bad decision and he too was reprimanded. I was trying to learn from him how to be stricter.

On waking, this dream seems to parallel my behavior in ISKCON. I'm not so willing to be guided by strict Godbrothers, but it is possible that I am too soft or in other ways mistaken in this serious duty we all have. I am "on watch" as a spiritual master, and I have the responsibility to see that the people who pass before me are helped on their way to the Absolute. I'm not perfect. I need to improve, and this is a difficult job. It might benefit me to take advice from others. Still, I want to be myself in this service, and that includes being firm but loving, not cruel or insensitive in the name of offering guidance. How to balance all that?

* * *

4:32 a.m.

We are listening to the unhappy *lila* of Akrura bringing Krishna to Mathura. Krishna sent a message to the *gopis* just before He left promising to return. Radha is so shocked Her *sakhis* think She will die. Lalita tells Her that Krishna is probably still in the forest; they should go and search for Him. Radha accepts her suggestion. Radha speaks the pathetic verses where She mistakes different aspects of nature for Krishna, then realizing Her error, She expresses Her intense disappointment. This is all very sad. She stops by Candravali's place, Sakhi-sthali.

I can't seem to say more right now.

And so my thoughts scatter. Words can't bandage feelings. My own adventures can't bring me to the deeper satisfaction the soul seeks. That deeper satisfaction can only be achieved through Krishna consciousness. But I have committed too many offenses to guru, the Vaisnavas, and the holy names.

Or maybe I haven't?

I debated in my mind whether or not to give Radha a *cadar* this morning. I decided She could use one and that it was only laziness preventing me from offering it to Her. I selected the cream one and wrapped it around Her. If it feels warm later, I will remove it. Similarly, I debated whether or not to give Srila Prabhupada a knit cap or a cotton swami hat. I am not wearing a knit hat (and I would if it was cold enough), so why should I foist one on Srila Prabhupada? It would only make him feel too warm. But perhaps I don't need always to match my comfort against what I offer to the *murti*. He certainly looks nice in his matching *cadar* and knit hat. And it *does* feel a bit chilly in this room.

While chanting my first round this morning, I thought of the sweet rice they brought me yesterday for lunch. I went downstairs and put the leftovers into the refrigerator.

There was also some leftover rhubarb pie. I will save them for Madhu, who is supposed to return around 9:30 a.m.

The birds are singing. It doesn't sound so different than the birds that sing at Sanatana Gosvami's well at the Madana-mohana Mandira by the Yamuna. But I am not there, I am here in Ireland. Still, I once heard a sparrow there and wrote it into a haiku.

Tell us why providence was so cruel as to take Krishna from His *gopis* and parents in Vrndavana. I can't. It's His *lila*. Srila Prabhupada sometimes said it was to demonstrate His opulence of renunciation. Can we remember Krishna by chanting His names? Yes, if we chant in earnest.

* * *

O *kadamba* tree, did Krishna pass by here? Oh, tell us, where is the Prince of Vraja?

I am alone and it is nice. Please keep using this time in Krishna's service. Live without fear. Write something to assuage the pain of mortal existence. Clear away the gunk. See the form of Krishna within you, or at least feel the presence of that which makes life peaceful. It is another kind of gift from Krishna. One gets what one asks for. I do want to be a devotee, but I seem to want other things too, so I cannot be called single-minded. For example, I'm interested in crossword puzzles, smoking my pipe when it is filled with cherry-flavored tobacco, wearing comfortable slippers, sitting in a big easy chair by the fire. In summer I want to go out into the garden and see how the wisteria is doing. But I don't want to get stung by a bee. And I don't want much weed-pulling going on.

Oh, my eyes are tired. I have no recourse. There is no one here to amuse or distract me. I don't want to remain enmeshed by the modes of nature. The two lower modes are dreadful, and even the mode of goodness cannot take me to the spiritual world. O unmanifest Krishna, please help. K. calls out, but no one hears him. He goes on writing the magnetic things he wrote in his exacting prose. He has no money, but still he writes. What's going to happen?

* * *

Does anyone remember Prabhupada and ISKCON?

Yes. Prabhupada walked onto a TV show and did a good job explaining why we don't engage in illicit sex. No one could write answers to the queries he posed. There were pansies blooming in the garden, and a man with a viola sat in a chair and played while we chanted, a harmonium and sitar accompanying.

* * *

Through the Skylight
& We were asleep and woke to the sound . . .
of dawn, saw it through the skylight.
While we weren't watching,
night disappeared.

* * *

Pay attention "you'd love to be more
Krishna conscious than this.
Don't divide lines harmlessly
but be free of worry,
face the task
everything together.

* * *

The mama was soft. My life is
too thin. All this grit doesn't belong to
me. I go through other people's lives
to tell on them.
A pimple on his nose.
A rose in a garden, hurt his finger
on the thorn.

* * *

Then wanted a heavy-duty first aid kit
just in case. Wanted a bucket of
hot water to give himself a mild
shock treatment
"This is wanted," he said, sometimes
to no one
and, "Please be kind."

* * *

He was the rose of Tralee
He was Rodger Forsyth in a former
life. "You are crazy," said the panel
of judgmental brothers in his
Religious group. "We're getting *our* thing
together, more like
the Catholic church
except more exalted
more pure.
'Cause we are loyal to Prabhupada
and have every right to get you
to step into line."
"What about larger ISKCON?"
They simply smiled to one another. "Just
as we thought," they said, and faded out

as beautiful music almost like a violin
a group of them playing
a brilliant sonnet full of anguish
something that reminded him
of one-time Bartok.

* * *

Part II

This will end with me going downstairs to
prepare breakfast. What could be nicer?
I believe in the spiritual world beyond
this one. It is eternal and
full of bliss and knowledge. I don't want to
loiter on just any street or avenue

* * *

Then sit in this homeschool and
listen; learn to give up selfishness,
to believe in Krishna.
"But how come other people aren't
devotees of Krishna? Why is the world so
different from what you teach?"

* * *

Just listen to your mother who wears
a jewel on her forehead "cheap "because
she knows that youth is here only for a day
maybe two. Bared midriff, she smiles,
and hears someone say these words:
"Counterfeit system," against the gurus
and I could sympathize
to some degree
but not entirely.

* * *

I wanted to come down hard but
he asked if he could take dance
lessons because
he's good at it. He wanted
Roller skates too,
lilting, builting
wavering notes produced by moving

fingers over the
stops. reminds you of what you heard
of Krishna "
Krishna and the *gopis*. "

* * *

8:36 a.m.

M. returned at 7:30 instead of 9:30. The Ford's guttural engine woke me up. I went down and opened the gate for him, then told him there was rhubarb pie and sweet rice left over from yesterday. I also told him about yesterday's meeting with my Godbrother. We devised a strategy for me to stay here and not become consumed by real or imaginary worries, but to go newer and deeper.

So in EJW 25, now on its fourth day, I seek what to do. At the end of Volume 24 I dismantled all structured repertoire items, at least in their outer forms, and tried to simply take repeated sips of whatever I could write "Sastric reflections, a little free-writing, memories, anything. I'm continuing with that until something else presents itself.

When is the last time you heard a blue jay's call pierce you? Even the sound of a bird can remind me of my childhood. Sun out again. It's been an unusually sunny spell these past few days. The rays fall in a patch on my desk. return to *sastra*? Could I become a devotee that way?

I read of some incidents in Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura's life. In one story, Srimati Radhika appeared to him and settled his doubts about the twenty-four-and-a-half syllables contained in the *kama-gayatri-mantra*. After that, he wrote heavily under the influence of *Radha-bhava*, such books as *Krishna-bhavanamrta*, *Sankalpa-kalpa-drumah*, *Prema-samputa*, and others.

Another time he had *darSana* of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and later dove into gauranga-bhava and wrote from there. I too could have experiences that would affect my writing and markedly change it. O Krishna, please intensify my Krishna consciousness. Whatever I have now is a bit stranded, or dry in one sense. I tend to settle for what is real to me "a kind of compromise "but I want more *bhava*.

* * *

You've Got To Have Freedom

& You've got to have freedom. But *for* Krishna consciousness. Yeah, I said that to a brother. He knows what I mean. He said, "Mmm." Freedom from oppressors. You know, "Get off my back."

Freedom. Peace and Love. Fight for *those*. Peace and Love?

Who said that?

But it's true. They just don't know how to go about it.

Do I? Krishnaize the universe. run out and do it.

How? Oh, just sing in the streets "a great sacrifice of your so-called respectable anonymity.

We're singing Hare Krishnas
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna
over and over
with those famous drumbeats and ringing *karatalas*.
Stick the flag in the moon and other places stick
it and
be peaceful. As for me,
there is a freedom from all hassle they define as necessary
but I don't. I wail and they laugh at me. Hey, just forget me while I burrow beneath
your ground, under your buildings and don't worry I
won't upset the foundation. I am on the list for dangerous literature
but free-claiming my own
space.
Prabhupada looks on and asks, "What are you
going to do? What are you doing now? What is this underground?"
Well, it happened like this "Krishna Krishna Krishna and
Returning to freedom, free-
done on the
lone
quiet way.
That's all I can say just now. "

* * *

10:25 a.m.

Radhanatha dropped by with some paints. He mixes them himself, and creates softer tones than the store-bought tempera paints have. I haven't wanted to get into anything this morning. reading scripture would be the most likely and constructive thing to do, but I can't find the focus and energy-drive. "That's okay," I tell myself.

The *ISKCON Communications Journal* arrived. It contains scholarly essays on anti-cult movements and the governments in Western Europe; education within ISKCON; ISKCON and Hinduism in Britain; the need for *varnaSrama-dharma* in ISKCON; the structure of marriages in ISKCON; the place of interreligious dialogue, etc. I respect these topics and those who grapple with them, but none of them are my field. These scholars would place me on their own maps and define what I am. I have very little taste or ability to study what they are doing. It would give me a headache to do so.

In a playful way I was thinking of saying, "I love my headaches." I do love my little world, outside the topics I just mentioned. I guess you could call it a writer's world, and within that, a diarist's, and beyond that, a self-expressive (process-oriented) art. ISKCON . . . I'm definitely in it, floating, wounded, happy, eager to push on and get the *darSana* of Srimati Radhika and Lord Caitanya, then find a way to express that experience while falling at Their feet.

* * *

12:03 p.m.

Looking at the "Active Imagination" series I wrote on "something lost." The episodes read well. At the time, it was a breakthrough to admit I had lost my youth as well as the exciting dedication to spread the Krishna consciousness movement. Now all that seems obvious, and perhaps it's not something I want to disclose. They'll say something is wrong with *me*.

Another word instead of "lost" might be "change." Syamananda dasa wrote me that he sees me as a revolutionary in ISKCON. ISKCON itself is lurching forward through its changes. Am I merely admitting that?

The other thing that's obvious is that I'm not steering this institution. Old age and my physical weakness *and* my attitude "leave me to the side. I sigh there frequently, but it's where I want to be. Then I burrow. And I sing my own song. If only I could meet radha and Krishna . . .

Cleared away a stack (more like a sliding pile) of books that had gathered at arms reach beside the easy chair. That includes Issa's *Year of My Life, Four Huts*, Merton's *Letters to Writers*, Thoreau's journal, two Christian books, etc. In their place I put a books by Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura and Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. I don't know if I'll read them all, but at least they're within arm's reach. Better Radha than Buddha. Better Krishna than Kafka.

* * *

12:20 p.m.

Don't plunge into topics about Radha unless you are invited, you have the greed, you feel you are in expert hands, you feel Srila Prabhupada's permission, and you are in touch with the Lord in the heart. And especially not unless you are free from sexual lust.

Then will I have to stay with Buddha?

O Krishna. O Srila Rupa Gosvami, you wrote two beautiful plays, each of which has entered my life in a different way. O Narottama dasa Thakura, I relish your prayers. Krishna, please save me.

* * *

3:15 p.m.

The mind is *cancala*, fickle and flickering. One minute you think your life is great, the next you think it is lacking. Fortune is also fickle; going from wealth and fame to poverty and infamy can happen in a day. I'm tired today. I feel my shortcomings. But I must continue to make effort.

Walking around the outside of the house, I chanted two rounds. Ani was out there in a T-shirt with his saw, and M. was bare-chested in the rare Irish sunshine. It occurred to me that I shouldn't always think I know what's best for myself. And what happened to that schedule where I was more willing to read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* three times a day? Follow it again?

Krishna is the self of selves; because of His presence in our hearts, we love our own selves first. We are part of Him. Hare Krishna. Srila Prabhupada says it doesn't matter if we begin the Hare Krishna mantra with Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna,

Hare Hare or Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Somehow or other, get going on the rotation of those thirty-two syllables. Even so far from Vrndavana.

* * *

Maharaja?
& remember, you are on a journey, Maharaja.
Maharaja? Are you sad?
Need a drink of
water? Some *maha-prasada*? Would
you like to go out?
Would you be willing
to preach to me?

* * *

Maharaja?
"What?"
Uh, are you okay?
"Yeah. Why?"
Because you seem a
little apart and
you didn't eat much lunch.
"Oh, don' *bodder* me."

* * *

Maharaja, Maharoo, how are
you? Do
you think you can change
the world or
even just yourself? I
noticed you haven't been
Reading much spiritual stuff and
when we talk, I dunno,
something seems like it's
missing.

* * *

"I told you, don't bodder about
it. It's just the fickle mind.
That's how things
go, you know "they
come and go."

* * *

Maharaja wants to know
what's the best book he can read
and where can he go
to be satisfied.
Because he doesn't want
to be pushy them
old guys get down.
Lissen . . . The Krishna conscious
version has to persist and we just
got to wait a while and maybe
it'll come clearer . . .
If not . . .

* * *

ask a *maharaja*
to be the temple president or
become his disciple.
Is he willing to talk at least
write letters to a fella who
thinks he can follow closely on
a path already chosen? But we already told
him first do twenty straight years like
that Maharaja did. "You told him that?
Well, yeah, I guess that was right." "

* * *

4:08 p.m.

Don't stop me from coming into this room and writing, even though I'm operating on low energy and am not very Krishna conscious, not attracted to the holy name. Don't stop me. I must get through all this without interruption. It is not so late in the day. Krishna, Krishna, the leaves are doing their thing; even the sheep. The people in town are driven by karma and the sun is doing its work in the sky out of fear of You. How can I presume not to do *my* work?

A man told me he has worked for thirty years and now wants to retire. But what will he do? He will seek out entertainment if not some other kind of work. Otherwise, what is there to do but watch the days drift by, one seemingly aimless sunset after another. Gone quickly.

Issa wrote a haiku about old age. He said when you are old, just to see the passage of the days makes you cry. If you don't understand that, you will understand it better when you are old.

Hare Krishna words sprinkled until there is nothing left but those. Wisdom runs out like sand. He has read and continues to read about Krishna, in the beginning of the

chapter where Krishna kills Dhenuka and his friends. We hear the praise of Vrndavana Krishna makes in Balarama's presence. He praises the trees and bees as great devotees who come to Balarama to bow down and sing His glories. Above all, the *gopis* are praised for receiving the favor of being embraced by the Lord. This is Krishna's pastime.

See the braided hair on the women? A cat, the angry mood and the passionate people. How aggressive am I willing to be to protect my solitude? Someone asked me that today. Yes, I said "aggressive."

* * *

Chanting Hare Krishna with a dry voice, by one in the desert. He wants a drink of water but instead chants the holy name. Still, his thirst remains unquenched. It won't always be so. He has faith in that.

The sky is now covering that sunny day. Everyone out there is doing their thing "football players, men and women on the make, businessmen accumulating, time-wasters, dole-takers, bicycle-breakers, poets, scholars, students, and their parents at home cooking another meal, encouraging their children to rise up in the world.

But we need freedom. It is the pivot of the soul. We pray to the One, addressing Him by different names. O Krishna, Hare Krishna, why do I always grit my teeth when I don't know what to say? Just fill it in.

All right. Krishna.

Rhythms come, devotees working hard. I must justify myself on judgment day. Work until the end. Spiritual persons don't run out of energy nor out of things to say. They speak only about Krishna. How many times have I alone said that?

Chuang Tzu saw a frog imagining it was a butterfly. He told a wisdom story about it. That kind of doing nothing is not prayer; the moral of our wisdom stories is to beg for mercy.

Ksipram bhavati sarvatma bhagavan iSvaro harih. Very soon, the fallen person will become clear of all sins because he has rightly resolved to become a devotee of Krishna. We should not judge such persons as lesser devotees even if we find them doing something abominable. Their bad habits will pass. Philosophy "I have plenty of it. How much would you like? May it come to life "that's what I want.

* * *

5:35 p.m.

I painted. Srila Prabhupada's *bhajan*s kept me in line. Painted one face, Christ-like (at least in my mind), and some other stuff. Not so much. I kept remembering that advice to let the arm go as it wants, and not to judge it or make it appear "artsy," as if to nudge a viewer into thinking anything particular. It's all process work.

As I painted, I flashed on what I had just written upstairs and liked it. Write through your sorrows if you actually qualify for any, and your dry tedium, your fatigue; just write throughout each day. Get to the scripture somehow. That's all I ask. And to live without delusions of grandeur. That too.

May 19,12:08 a.m.

Come and pray to your spiritual master, whatever you can feel, and direct it toward the heart where his *vani* lives in you and where the Supreme Lord lives. Ask for a way to improve your devotional hearing. From good *Sravanam* comes good *kirtanam*. You need that channel open and flowing, and you need to receive everything with submission. You need it as a devotee, as a person seeking wholeness, for healing, and as a spirit soul desiring elevation back to Godhead. Seek ways.

"Those who are not faithful in this devotional service cannot attain Me, O conqueror of enemies. Therefore they return to the path of birth and death in this material world." (Bg. 9.3)

Faith is defined in *Caitanya-caritamrta* (Srila Prabhupada says) as the conviction that simply by serving the Supreme Person one can achieve all perfection "just as by watering the root all a tree's branches are nourished. "Therefore, after reading *Bhagavad-gita*, one should promptly come to the conclusion of *Bhagavad-gita*: One should give up all other engagements and adopt the service of the Supreme Lord, Krishna, the Personality of Godhead. If one is convinced in this philosophy of life, that is faith."

Hare Krishna. I have nothing to say on my own. I have something to say as a representative of God and guru. That may sound hard to take. After all, I too am a person in my own right, am I not?

No. I don't exist *unto* myself "I'm simply an eternal part of Krishna, an "eternal fragment" of the Supreme Lord. Forgetting this fact, I travel through this world led by the six senses, and suffer. I do have individuality and my own voice, but I am not a self-sufficient (or self-created) "god." I ought to reflect this truth. Part of our preaching is to summon up our individuality and then use it for Krishna.

One could ask, "I will accept that we come from God and should use our creativity to praise Him, but why be under another man, a guru? Can't you please God directly?" But God asks for us to come to Him through His pure devotees. "He's not My devotee who says he is My devotee. He who is a devotee of My devotee is actually My devotee." As devotional service to Lord Krishna exists eternally, even when one is liberated and active in the spiritual world, so loving service to the devotees of Krishna is also eternal. We are meant to seek out the service of an eternal resident of Vrndavana. Until we understand the emphasis on service in Vrndavana, we may serve as a *cela* of our spiritual masters. They will guide us through this world to the spiritual world.

And we should also look to ourselves. That's only natural. We may ask, "What are you doing, self? Are you feeling all right? What's the matter? Can you do better?" Vaisnavas sometimes beg their minds to please serve Lord Krishna. We beg ourselves to be real persons, self-sufficient in our God consciousness, and full of love for the Lord.

Otherwise, it's too easy to go through the motions of devotional service without knowing Krishna. "Those who have no faith . . . find the path very difficult, even if they are supposed to be engaged in devotional service". Lord Krishna is revealed when we actually *perform* devotional service with faith (*yasya deva para bhaktir . . .*).

Then how to gain faith? We already have some. We have some affection too. It's our initial capital, and we are meant to build on it. It is our inherent nature to love God, so attaining pure Krishna consciousness is possible for us.

Prabhupada helped us build faith by presenting both information about Krishna's inconceivable powers and discussion of His intimate dealings as the beloved cowherd boy of Vraja. These two views are not incompatible for one wishing to make progress toward Vraja-bhakti. We need both.

* * *

4:31 a.m.

Jaya jagadiSa hare. It is warm today, but still Srila Prabhupada wears a bright saffron *cadar*. No cap. I did not offer *cadars* to Radha-Govinda this morning. Instead, I covered Srimati radharani with Her gold veil. The Deities are wearing gold and purple. Hare Krishna. We've already heard the sad pastimes (although we know those pastimes are transcendently blissful for those who relish *rasa*) of Radha and the *gopis* crying when Krishna leaves for Mathura. The *gopis* keep Radha alive by fanning Her hope that Krishna may not really have left. Together, they search for Him in the forest. When Radha realizes He is actually gone, however, She tries to drown Herself, with ViSakha, in the Yamuna. Seeing the death of her dearest friends, Lalita gives up her life by jumping from the top of Govardhana. Radha's grandmother, Mukhara, wants to give up her life too, but a voice from the sky tells her not to do so. In the future, the voice says, she will witness a wonderful festival. Another voice announces that radha has been taken by the demigods to the sun planet. Rupa Gosvami relates all these intense scenes in his beautiful poetry.

* * *

I spilt some water on the kitchen floor from the eight-liter water heater. Wiped it up. In the bathroom, which is now paneled, I heard Srila Prabhupada tell the difference between *prakrti* and *para-prakrti*. I calmed my mind so I could hear it submissively, as a disciple should. My critical voice attacks like the hundreds of tiny midges that rush into the room when I open a window at 3 a.m. As I quickly shut the window to keep the hoards outside, so I shut my mind.

Krishna, radha, me "a fool, the typewriter, the Hammer and Sickle laundry detergent, the angle and angels and the grist for the mill "wanting to explain how I get into everyone's business in my writing. Should I join the dance?

This boy is tired and wants only to lie down on a beach and dream of lions with the hope of understand what they were doing in his dream. Some devotees dared to manage them. What did it mean? The expert singer of conjugal affairs, assisted by Madhumangala, who is sometimes called Krishna's guru in these affairs. That Madhumangala, son of Sandipani Muni, was rescued by Krishna and Balarama after he died. remind me that I have to be on time for Radha-Govinda's festival; remind me to chant Their holy names.

* * *

We have to be good now and tow the plow. The oxen got on their case, and the man yelled back. Sukadeva Gosvami explained why the mothers loved Krishna more than

their own children. It was because we each love our body because of the self within. We love the self because it is part of Krishna. We love Krishna more than anything. When we are pure, we will be able to see the truth in all this.

I saw the Deities' glance, but I won't say anything about that. Soon I'll have to start boasting just so I can get some words down on this page. My mouth will fall open and let fall some grand speech or other, or even a *sutra* expression, but somehow I won't forget I am meant to go back to Godhead.

She said, "I saw your house with the wall around it and the front gate. It looked like a palace in a fairy tale, and I almost expected to see you in a castle tower like a wizard, writing books." She wrote that in a letter in between tending her three children. She ended, "I must go now, 'Mummy to the rescue.'" Mothers have to rescue children before they fall off a cliff or fall into deep water or knock each other silly. Mothers are domestic super-heroes, solving the world's problems in every country. Mother *Veda* does the same. Even Krishna has mothers.

She said I was feeding my young child and simultaneously reading *Nimai and Gurudeva*. "Although it was fiction . . ." She found that it was alive and that it spoke to her about her own devotional feelings. I wonder if I have any more fictional characters left in me? Will I read *The Castle* and suddenly get inspired to make up a story? Probably not.

The mental jumble. remember *The Art of Prayer* is that book still on my desk?)? The advice never seems to stick with me "to stand before God with my mind in my heart. If I were to ask some Orthodox monk a question, he might scorn me because I am not practicing his tradition (although I was born into a similar one).

Well, let me scorn him. I have my own master, and he has given me entrance into the Vaisnava culture. I can perform *sankirtana-yajna*, the one good truth in the age of Kali, which is otherwise an ocean of vices.

* * *

5:15 a.m.

Morning walk "exactly half a moon up in the sky. I see a pale streak of white showing on the left side. Below the moon, streaking through the morning pale blue, is a jet followed by its jet trail. It resembles a slow, shooting star. The bright gorse, the green roadside hills "all beautiful. I'm not wearing a coat, but it's certainly cool. I'll warm up if I move quickly. O Hare Krishna, do I ever pray?

* * *

Morning Moon Walk
& We made it back from the walk
so fast we were cruising with
swinging arms in mythic land
pushing the body past

* * *

a crashed-out rusting car in
a meadow . . .
no sheep in sight . . .
me and rocks . . . so
what? It was a true dead-ho, me and
you, and Death, be not proud.

* * *

This is the way up
and even if I get a headache from so much exercise
I had to get out and see things for myself.
I mean, what was happening.
Saw bits of sheep's wool stuck to fences
here and there, but no one else in sight
unless you count jet-riders thirty thousand feet up
and a moon.

* * *

9:32 a.m.

It sounds like a children's story, Dhenuka, and Krishna and Balarama killing all the donkey demons. You could say that. But Vyasa was not a person to spend his time writing fiction. These are actual pastimes of the Personality of Godhead, and the *acaryas* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam* commentators accept it as real and worshipable. Yes, it's playful, and Those who perform it are children. Childish fun in the spiritual world with the liberated cowherd boys.

Combat the mind. I doze in my chair. It's a difficult time of day for me. Let me not berate myself for that. Perhaps my body needs rest, or I could be more clever and give myself a lighter engagement at this time. If I ignore my body's signals "if I just push ahead and force myself "I'll break down that much sooner.

I received a newsletter from the National Headache Foundation. The various articles seem to give contradictory messages. Some say we should get off analgesics, while others say chronic sufferers can expect to use medication as part of their health strategy. I think I'm doing the best I can right now by allowing myself only three pills a week.

I just paused in this writing to write a letter to the NHF, asking them about the apparent contradiction in their message.

* * *

Contradictory Swami
Swami, you think it's easy
to write poems?
When are you going to grow up?
Why not go easy on yourself?
Oh, always harping, contradicting!

Give me a break! Surrender!
May peace attend you may you
go to war "front lines
but I ask only to learn
how to please my spiritual master
by pleasing myself.

* * *

10:01 a.m.

I hear the next-door boys from this lofty peak. I'm writing as fast as I can (not so fast). I'm trying not to be disturbed by the growing pain sensation in my head. I'm trying to get my quotas done before the pain arrives full-blown. I realize that some suffering (I was going to say "a little suffering") is good for me. Or, at least I can use it in my favor. In the meantime, let me quickly tap into my imagination and use it for Krishna's pleasure. And let me shut my mouth on certain issues. I don't want . . . [private; censored] . . .

Oh, keep it to yourself.

But I want to wrestle with my mind. I am a respectable swami, and don't want to see you crawling at the feet of some counselor or a bunch of women, or asking some strong man to guide you. You are expert at throwing up smoke screens. Sometimes a man just has to be alone.

I was thinking of asking so-and-so for help. I was thinking of busting out . . .

No, I wasn't. I just wrote that here in my illegible handwriting so you would never know which way is true. I will give only polite confessions. And that's not the point either. I want smooth stuff to get us through, and when it becomes rocky, I have to stay with it. Sometimes I myself create the waves and wounds. No, I don't *create* the wounds but only try to cope with those that are created.

I do sing imagined songs. I love the improvised form. Out of all my drawings and paintings, I love the ones that pop out of me, even if they seem inaccessible to others.

I live in my art according to the rules of Custer's last stand. The Indians are the *anarthas*, the slings and arrows throw my fortune at me and I (and the army) go down in the fight.

Or do we?

Allegories always want to create structure, but our endings are so varied and personal that structure doesn't always make sense. May God be with us all, even as we die. I will meet death, my chest stretching to catch the arrows flying at me, and I will cry out "Krishna!" Nothing else will matter. To hell with everything else.

If I have to come back . . . (Hey, why don't I write a song by that name?)

*If I have to come back
and take a lot of crap
all I ask is that
the Lord allow me
to remember Him
as soon as possible.*

O devotees, I say unto you, use your talents in Krishna's service. And place my photo next to my soon-to-be-famous pop song.

Why did my brother call my headache syndrome "a little problem" the other day? Don't they understand anything? Or are the only serious pains in this world life-threatening?

Let there be peace in the world.

* * *

Hold Out My Hand

& Work it out for Krishna consciousness. This is the life so short so cagey "cat and mouse with pain "but get your licks in before you get kicked out "and make

as much progress as you can.

Heretofor.

You are blue

true

to master

in own way

I want to say I never quit.

And neither do so many brothers. I admire them each

from across the Grand Canyon of our lives

although we all have suffered

blues in the night.

I will hold out my hand to those brothers at my end (if I get the chance) and say, "I see now how you were right, but

I had to be apart a harmless

Steppenwolfe. I had to tell my dreams

and now beg you to forgive me

so I may go my way in peace.

My Swami (he's yours too, I know) is my master.

I'll go in peace no matter what they say

but I know for sure they will all get back to their work

and I to mine

slipping unnoticed into another life

to make further progress. "

* * *

2:40 p.m.

Mister, can you spare . . .

Hey, I'm not just one person, are you? My Krishna consciousness comes through in all persons pretty much though "that's the power of a living philosophy.

Someone challenged me: "I read in your books how you are doing what you want. I desire to follow *that*." But what if what he's doing is unorthodox or simply hard to dovetail? As long as he follows his initiation vows, maintains strong *sadhana*, and

makes a contribution to the Krishna consciousness movement "should I say these are the only criteria? O soul, find room to be what you are *for Krishna*.

And think it out. Write about it in your diary. You can't improvise a whole life just like that. Lives come in parts, over time, day by day. We say again and again, "I want . . . God wants . . ." and we look for balance.

List of migraine sufferers: Julius Caesar, St. Paul, Thomas Jefferson, Frederic Chopin, Charles Darwin, Leo Tolstoy, Sigmund Freud, and many more who will remain unmentioned.

Now reconstruct the colonies. Be someone your spiritual master can be proud of. One wants to be a modern dancer; he wants me to be proud of him. Do I have a prejudice against that art form? I don't want to discuss it here, but I can't deny the challenge.

Another writes, "I'll serve the movement, but *how* I do is between me and Krishna."

Did *I* say that? I thought I said, "Go within and ask yourself what you love, what you most want to do to please Krishna, and how you can honestly make that thing your offering." But what should I say when they keep asking my permission to do this or that? I want to say yes, but I also want them to get the point: *do it for Krishna*. I say "yes" to my own writing, but I have worked hard for that yes. If I tell a disciple "no," will he or she accept it? Better they do the internal work and then ask.

Another wants to know what I think about her getting married. I think . . . someday I may live in Vraja-mandala "but not yet. I don't expect to get relief for my headaches for a while, not, at least, until I attain a spiritual body. If I had to keep a headache-prone body but was given *bhava*, however, I would accept it. O Krishna.

Did you know that Irish cattle get goofy in the sunshine? Oxen mount one another from behind, not caring that the partner is a male. Then they butt heads. They have pitiful, fat ungainly bodies, old inmates in the death camp in the clover. The livestock men calculate the best time to murder them.

I'll continue to speak against them.

And to speak what I know. Krishna's aura contains the entire *brahma-jyoti*. I am wary of sharp sounds and bright lights, and I keep extra house and car keys in my pockets. Those are called contingency plans. I often carry twice as much as I need and arrive at an airport at least an hour before I need to be there. Before flying, I refuse to eat citrus fruits, old cheese, and nuts of all kinds. I remember Krishna and try not to forget Him.

I also prepare for lectures, but try to remember to improvise when I'm facing people in real-time. Next lecture topic: Krishna is a person. He has two aspects, *aiSvarya* and *madhurya*, and we should know them both. He's the greatest of all. His energies are all-pervading. Therefore, He is quite capable of protecting His devotees. Beyond that, He is the sweetest of the sweetest. Why not make spontaneous lists of what appeals to us among His *aiSvarya* and *madhurya* qualities?

Puff, puff "I feel like I'm out of writing breath. Never out of ink, though. I always have more pens.

O Krishna, I just lay down and heard delicious silence, as soft as the movement of leaves on the trees. I heard no bombs nor angry shouts, no sirens, no whoosh of cars, but I'd face all that too if my Lord wanted it.

* * *

Once I was a temple president. They said, "He did twenty years of surrendered service before he started doing what he wanted." My disciple asks, "Why waste so much time? Why not start right away doing what I want, if that's the conclusion I'm going to arrive at anyway?"

See how interesting this dialogue can become? Those who follow ISKCON life as I once followed it "can they claim they are offering more personal service to guru than this fellow who claims he's ready to follow my revolutionary mood? "I got it from your books," he said. At least he's not writing the way I am; what would the world do with two such presentations?

Another wants to be a contemporary dancer for Krishna. He enrolled in classes despite the fact that he's a beginner, and they told him, "You have a very fast mind." His body is fit and flexible.

Mind isn't. Then let that devotee dance for me who can't dance. Let him follow Gauranga, Nataraja, the great dancer. Let him . . . let me . . . O Lord, I of the cracked head seek asylum in Your outer reaches. I seek to love You, sweat for You, and to suffer not in vain.

Shall I take a pill? But I only get three shots a week, and it hasn't yet moved to the right eye. I'll wait for that eventuality, because that's what the ammo is for. You know what they used to say? "Don't fire till you see the whites of their eyes."

* * *

4:15 p.m.

It's one of those days I mark on a calendar pink and squiggly. I also keep a medical journal and rate the pain's intensity on a scale from 1 - 5. My boat is rocky right now, but the pain still hasn't moved into the number 5 position behind the right eye. It's still in the "tolerable but partly incapacitating" category. But carry on, soldier, and suffer with nobility. Still no medication.

Did you know "author Lewis Carroll may have had some of the visions described in his *Alice in Wonderland* books during the 'aura' period prior to the onset of a migraine"? And we already know that headaches are frequently misunderstood. People joke about them, or consider them not medical but psychological (psychosomatic) ""a hollow plea for attention."

Krishna got a headache once. Or maybe He didn't. He might have just said that to see how His devotees would respond. He said He could only be cured by the foot dust of His devotees. Narada couldn't collect any foot dust because the devotees thought they would go to hell if they put their foot dust on the Supreme Lord's head. The *gopis* gave plenty of foot dust, prepared to suffer eternally. That's the standard of their love; they cared only for Krishna's relief.

Krishna Krishna he. Krishna is all-pervading, all-knowing, all-everything. But I'm just rattling off to distract myself at this point. Too much pain.

Let me try to say something I care about. Krishna . . . I don't know. Maybe I should care about more. Krishna is sweet.

* * *

5:23 p.m.

I'm going down with the sun on my chapped knees. The land surveyor, K., arrived at the village in the deep snow. He stayed at the inn. remember the opening scene? There's a phone call.

* * *

He searched me. "I'm a *sadhu*, I said, but I lifted my arms and he patted my sides, slid his hands along my legs, looking for a gun or a knife or a pack of explosives. Then he said, "Hare Rama," and I: "Hare Krishna." He stamped my boarding pass.

I'm searching for a title. One writing teacher said a work in progress ought to have a title. If it doesn't, it means you don't know your subject. Maybe. It doesn't mean, however, that your subject, whatever it is and whatever it is in the process of becoming, is dead in the water. Anyway, possible titles this volume, based on what I am feeling and doing so far:

1. "Handling" a Godbrother in Dublin.
2. Staying Aloof in My House.
3. Dealing With *The Castle*.
4. *The Castle*.
5. Desire To Use Imagination.
6. National Headache Foundation on Analgesics: "To Take or Not to Take, That Is the Question."
7. Desire to Go Back to Godhead.
8. Less *sastra* reading But . . .
9. Don't Bash or Berate Me.
10. Twenty Pages Per Day.
11. Flirting with *Radha-rasa-Suddha-nidhi*, Then Backing Away.

But none of these are all-encompassing enough to become a title for this volume. How about, "Whatever Krishna Sends"? Or, "No Fiction, Please." I am a man of several habits, but fiction isn't one of them. Why pretend?

May 20, Midnight

It's time to read scripture. I want to be touched by Prabhupada's words and to read in faith. It doesn't matter how many (how *few*) pages I read. I want to pray. reading leads me to prayer. I'll start here: Dear Lord Krishna, I met You previously in *Bhagavad-gita*, Your wonderful book presented by Srila Prabhupada. How easy it was that first summer to enter the *Gita*, when Prabhupada was personally teaching it to us and filling our bellies and hearts with Your *prasadam*! I knew then that You were the most relishable Personality of Godhead. "It is hopeful," I said one night to Swamiji.

I like to remember myself then and the change I underwent. I approve of what I went through. I only wish I could have developed more over the years, and that all my doubts would by now be banished. Still, I am grateful for what I have received.

Please, dear Lord, help me to rise to the occasion of hearing Your words with a pure heart. It is late in my life, and my powers of concentration are waning, I sometimes feel I

cannot read strongly anymore. You can give me what I need to know You through my master's books.

* * *

M. helped me to prepare a letter to a Godbrother explaining why it's difficult for me to meet with him. I expressed to M. that I was afraid if I actually send this letter, the Godbrother will tell others that I'm distant, cold, unfriendly, or "off." M. wants me to send the letter. He left me this Post-it:

Unless you meet with him and others whenever they want, and show up regularly at ISKCON functions, you will be seen as "a little distant." You get headaches. What's wrong with being "a little distant"?

I liked the phrase, "A little distant." (Sounds like it could even become the title of this volume.) Nothing wrong with it. Be a little distant. In an entirely different way (the difference between God and the conditioned *jiva*), Lord Krishna states His own aloofness from the material world: "Although I am the maintainer of all living entities and although I am everywhere, I am not a part of this cosmic manifestation . . ." (Bg. 9.5)

The soul selects its own society. I've seen out of an ample nation the soul choose one, then close the heart valves as if they were made of stone. So don't tell me with whom I must associate. You *may* tell me that I should not disrespect anyone "I already strive for that "and that advanced devotees love everyone. Jesus Christ taught a kind of communal love, and *maha-bhagavatas* in our tradition have certainly exemplified it. But even they are free to find their *sva-jatis*.

The *sva-jati* list tends to be small. It rarely includes everyone in a crowded temple room. We can respectfully associate with everyone however, even when we do not speak our full hearts.

* * *

Rise and read scripture "don't be distant there.

"Understand that as the mighty wind, blowing everywhere, rests always in the sky, all created beings rest in Me." (Bg. 9.6)

Krishna is like no one else. We ought to give Him special attention when we read and think "and feel. He's the dearmost. Sages go to Him in their solitude, and our ISKCON society is meant to cultivate consciousness of Him. "The Krishna consciousness movement is especially meant for cultivating an atmosphere in which people can take to the chanting of Hare Krishna mantra." (NOI text 7, purport) That's why the principle of *sva-jati* is so important. Part of that atmosphere is collective, and part of it is not.

Chant to develop attachment, *asakti*. Every stage of advancement from *Sraddha* to *prema* can be seen as a step in developing attachment and love for the Lord. One preaches out of that love; compassion means we want to bring people to their beloved Krishna. But we need the same for ourselves. Lord, I certainly do.

Right now, I think the head fog is preventing me from loving Krishna, but if I were pain-free, would I love Krishna more? Let me love Him now, even if I can't chant so vigorously or read at length. One sentence can save me. Here's a purport:

"So, from the Vedic literature we can find evidence that this material manifestation, which appears to us very wonderful and great, is under the complete control of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (Bg. 9.6, purport)

When we are thrust into the overwhelming power of nature, as in a storm or earthquake (or even a man-made catastrophe), we can think, "This is Krishna's universal form." Don't be carried away by the waves of material nature. Find Krishna in everything.

Even in the pain in my head. He's reminding me of something; He's not absent. Everything can be a way to remember Him, to not forget Him.

"In all activities just depend upon Me and work always under my protection. In such devotional service be fully conscious of me." (Bg. 18.57)

"Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are My very dear friend." (Bg. 18.65)

* * *

In a dream, I told Jayadvaita Maharaja about my inability to read whole volumes of Prabhupada's books the way I used to. He said I should thank my former self, because despite his imperfections, he was able to read so much, and that was to my present benefit.

In the same dream, I also spoke to a policeman about Hare Krishna being an "express." In some of the other scenes, I said aloud that I felt like a village boy "I didn't understand all the surveillance equipment the other devotees were using. When one of my disciples looked at me, I winked back at him, and we continued with our escape.

* * *

4:31 a.m.

I purchased some pain-free time at 1 a.m. by taking an Esgic. It's my first pill in four days. Now let me use my time properly.

I have banished *The Castle*. What do I think reading it is going to do for me? I and my readers would have been cheated by this brilliant new translation of the brilliant classic, which they say rivals Dante and Shakespeare.

Instead, let's hear from *Mukta-carita*, "The Story Of The Pearls," by Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. The story is about Krishna growing pearls in a garden. I won't tell the whole story "I think I've told it before "but recap this much: Krishna asked the *gopis* for a donation of pearls to grow in a garden. They thought that was a ridiculous proposal, so they refused. When Krishna took some pearls from His mother and began to grow them in a garden, the *gopis* were astonished to see them actually grow. They then tried to grow their own pearls. The story goes on, but later, when the *gopis* realized they had lost all their relatives' pearls, they asked Krishna to sell them some of His. Krishna's behavior and joking were outrageous as He set a price on His goods. I'm up to Chapter Two in my reading "the part where Krishna speaks boldly to the *gopis*. (radhika is hiding in a nearby bower.) At this point in the story, Krishna definitely has the upper hand, which is quite

different from other scenes in Rupa Gosvami's plays. So that's why I don't have to read Kafka; I have Krishna.

A voice: But isn't *Bhagavad-gita* enough?

Yes, more than enough. I pray to be able to read it more often during the day, even if only a little at a time, and to draw Krishna's words into my prayers. *Bhagavad-gita* can fulfill all my desires, because in it, Krishna tells each of us to surrender to Him and promises to deliver us from suffering. He invites us to become His intimate friends. *Bhagavad-gita* is actually my main strategy for avoiding authors like Kafka, and for not needing to invent special repertoire items in this writing. Still, I'm quite happy to also hear Krishna's *lila*.

* * *

When I took the pill at 1 a.m. with a full glass of water, I had a tight vise sensation along the front of my head. It had been there all night. It disappeared quickly after taking the pill, and I was then able to chant thirteen rounds. During some of the first minutes of *japa*, I even felt better than usual. I realized that it's rare that I can chant alone in a peaceful environment. I also felt awareness that I'm supposed to chant with attention, and that attention is wed to devotion. And I remembered to ask Krishna to please make my chanting attentive. I wasn't able to maintain my concentrated pace, but neither did I descend to the worst sort of *japa*. Therefore I feel inspired to return to my beads throughout the day, even if only for a few moments here and there.

Thinking about that, I realize that if we want to chant frequently, we need to simplify our lives and our desires. Now let me see what the Lord allows.

* * *

Thinking again of the phrase, "A little distant." What does it mean to me? It means I keep a little distant from the society of devotees in its institutional form. It doesn't mean I am against the institution, or that I am choosing to live outside of it. It means more that I am keeping distant from the wrangling and from those who wish to drag me into the wrangling.

Okay, then that's all right. But why give this "a little distant" phrase the status of a possible book title? I already rejected so many other possible themes because I felt they didn't encompass my whole experience. Does trying to remain a little distant encompass my life right now? I mean, I doesn't seem to apply to my Deity worship or my reading of *Bhagavad-gita* or *Mukta-carita*.

Or perhaps it does to some extent. It could be said that I am a little distant from the nectar of *bhakti*, even though I am trying to approach it. But that's really not what I mean. I don't wish to be aloof from any of the main sources of Krishna consciousness, including association with likeminded devotees. By maintaining distance in other ways, I am able to come closer to hearing, chanting, prayer, and the offering of my writing as devotional service. Stay a little distant so I can get closer to the essence. That's what I mean.

In Ireland in early summer, it's already light by 4:30 a.m. Late spring is the best season to take early morning walks. Still, I won't go out today since I am trying to keep the head vise subdued. But the air is sweet out there.

Krishna is our dearmost friend. I intend to bring two books with me to the restaurant next Sunday. I'll do a little show-and-tell. One will be Bhurijana Prabhu's *Surrender Unto Me*, and the other will be ViSakha Prabhu's children's book, *Our Dearmost Friend*. The main topic of my talk will be that we should become acquainted with Krishna. We can never know Him entirely, of course, but He is the most important person in our lives and we should want to know Him.

* * *

Take The V Train
& Not much time/ get on this train
of thought for swamis
it speeds up until it's clear
of
varzibad
then rollington
to Vrndavana.

* * *

cracked my head on my
knee
cracky happy glee for free
Ride
although "You pay later."

* * *

Free ride to Vrnda
despite monkeys
with ugly faces
and scurrying rats
and mundane books
brought from the West
imprinted
in mind
if not on paper

* * *

until we see Govardhana
visualize it "read *Krishna* book
what Krishna did there

* * *

in His youth and
power. "

* * *

9:24 a.m.

Don't avoid writing time, but avoid foods on the "headache triggers" list. Starting tomorrow, no more nuts of any kind, no yogurt, no raisins, no figs. A small ration of bananas allowed, but try to choose apples and pears. What else? Don't worry.

Simplify. read only about Krishna "no need for other works "and cutting down breakfast may also eliminate indigestion. (Cutting down on nondevotee reading is bound to reduce mental indigestion. No Tums for *that* problem.)

Hare Krishnas "chant many of them from deep in the self, even sometimes without counting them on beads, and even when they seem to be associated more with drowsiness than vigorous prayer. I'm no Taoist trying to do nothing; I'm trying to chant Lord Hari's names with devotion and to stay alive to hear His teachings and pastimes.

* * *

I hear a buzz in my brain that reminds me of the buzz I used to hear coming over the telephone wires. Get close to it and tune in to the actual voices coming across the lines of your own body and mind. Tap into the world of the sages, into all that has ever impressed you past and present.

Hare Krishna. read of woman raped in park. Black ink of tabloid headline told the details. And something about Idi Amin, Saddam Hussein, U.S. President, Congress Party, Senate, shoo-in football team conquering rivals, fans erupting, mobs on the march . . . Fear. What was that contingency plan again? Oh, yes, turn to *hari-nama*.

Our team goes to the Olympics. I'm not attached to such material things. I am somewhat attached to staying in this house, however, after all the effort we made to get here. This is my white-cloud haven and my house of pain. Employees only; no big shots allowed. How dreary to be somebody admired all the June-long day; how public, like a frog.

* * *

10:05 a.m.

Wicklow has no sky-and-water vistas, only a small window looking up at a small portion of the sky from this room. I see the top of a leafing tree. The leaves resemble small ferns. Does someone know what kind of tree this is?

In the other room, one window opens out onto the cow and sheep pasture, which begins just over our wall and continues toward the horizon and into the hills until it reaches the Wicklow Mountains, which are too steep for cattle to graze. Just over our wall, I can also see the muddy path used by those cows and sheep. It's spattered with their dung. If there was just green and sky and hills and vales with no cruel reminders

that this country slaughters millions of animals, this would be a beautiful place. No utopia anywhere around here.

Hare Krishna. He'll be carrying that letter. Things on the way. No intercontinental missiles, because the Cold War is over between the two great powers, and the small-time, crazy nations who would love to sail ICB missiles at the U.S.A. don't have that kind of fire power yet. But they will one day, or at least to gather a bag of germs to drop from the top of the Empire State Building.

Give me more flowers and tell me their names. (I didn't write followers but flowers. Even Lord Caitanya said He didn't want followers.) If someone gave me some flowers, I would offer them to Radha-Govinda. Lord Caitanya and Srila Prabhupada would like that.

How to offer flowers, as well as how to turn yourself into a happy chanter, is all contained in the *Bhakti-vrksa Handbook*. It's based on biology: we create cells, and they duplicate themselves. The key is that they aren't told to move into temples or shave their heads, giving up their jobs. They are also not told that they are inferior members of our society just because they want to chant Hare Krishna at home. At least that's what I've heard. I don't know if there is any small print. I mean, how can we say it doesn't matter whether or not people shave up? But I think we have learned how to say that and mean it.

Now we will want to hear from you about the holy names, and how over the years you became proficient despite set-backs, and thus arrived at your present humble position where your tongue forms Hare Krishna mantras without your even trying, and you can talk about chanting to others, sincerely recommending it as the best technique to overcome the blues.

* * *

2:27 p.m.

"The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is the post-graduate study of knowledge for one who has thoroughly understood the principles of the *Bhagavad-gita*. Unfortunately people have no taste for them, and therefore they are under the clutches of *maya* for repetition of birth and death." (*Bhag.* 1.10.22, purport). We are spirit souls and don't actually have names and forms and national, racial, and sexual identities, as we assume we do in the material world. We are madly attached to these false designations, but that's insanity. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and *Bhagavad-gita* are teaching us how to break free of the false and to take up our relationship with the real.

* * *

Lying in bed, waking from a nap, I heard M. making his last in-and-out noises before he leaves for his trip into Dublin. I stayed in bed a few extra moments and thought, "What shall I do when I get up? read?" Let me reenter *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, if Krishna will allow me. "O dear friends, here is that very Personality of Godhead whose attractive and confidential pastimes are described in the confidential parts of Vedic literature by His great devotees. It is He only who creates, maintains and annihilates the material world and yet remains unaffected." (*Bhag.* 1.10.24)

* * *

4:03 p.m.

Now I am alone and I had better get on the trail of Krishna consciousness. We expect a *sannyasi* like you . . . out in the yard, the beech's lush leaves hang low over the thatched roof. This is what I wanted to tell you: I'm reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* again, and that's good, and I'm accepting whatever Srila Prabhupada is giving me. When the afternoon gets long, I don't think about my lack of energy but just look at those green leaves. They give me some creative juice.

M. will deliver my letter and check our mail. I'm facing my one headache per day, a man dedicated to Krishna, to verse, to that music . . . this ancient tradition. I wish others could taste it, but it's up to them.

* * *

Orthodox minister "no scandal. Just finishing his days. We can go to Mayapur, Srila Prabhupada said, and just chant and hear. We say it too, but who will be the first? We wonder whether we could sustain an alone life. Perhaps we would be too restless and want to come back to take up our lives where we left off. Even our preaching programs. There would be some duplicity there: he's *restless*, so he is saving souls. But he hasn't yet saved himself. *That* work was too tedious; he left it unfinished to give a bunch of other people the mercy. Presumptuous? But let me take care that I don't judge others more strictly than I judge myself or presume to see into their souls. After all, I can barely see into my own. We can know, however, that sometimes ecstatic dancing is a sign of loneliness.

* * *

Some words don't come cheap. A man wrote to me, "I read a book by a bespectacled person who regained his eyesight through this amazing process, so I tried it." He thinks I too might benefit. Similarly, someone hears that someone else has begun to practice Krishna consciousness. It's not popular, but it catches a very few. It has its own appeal "pure, love of God, and leaves people transcendental to suffering. The scriptures seem solid. Nothing wishy-washy. You think, "Why don't *I* try that?"

I hear a devotee (my older blood brother?) confidently telling me what it's like to be a soul, what is wrong with Christian churches, and bashing the follies and cruelties of the mundane world. Somehow it all caught my ear. O Krishna.

If someone came to take this place from me, I'd give it up. This is, after all, the world of *maya*. I will have to leave it in one way or another. Nothing belongs to me but comes and goes through the hands of many people. The Supreme Lord is the proprietor of all lands. I only want to develop my devotion for Him. *Janma karma ca me divyam* "if I learn about Krishna's appearance and activities, I will not have to take birth again in these worlds. rather, I will go to the spiritual world. I think about knowing Krishna, and know to some extent I'm bluffing, unrealized.

* * *

5:56 p.m.

The sun is still bright at this hour. Crows land on telephone lines and the wires shake. The wind spins the leaf edges. They twitch as if they feel ecstasy.

I just read a description of Prabhupada in *Prabhupada Nectar*. Noticed some correction or change in my attitude over the years. I was more prone to condemn anyone outside ISKCON, or anyone within ISKCON who wasn't strict, in the days when I wrote that book. I thought you couldn't be loyal to Prabhupada unless you were loyal in a particular way. I'm not like that now. Now I'm interested more in Krishna consciousness that goes beyond the merely official or knee-jerk response. I'm interested more in the heart of an offering than in what package the offering comes in. That kind of Krishna consciousness costs something. In the early '80s I used words that remind one of "over-enthusiastic," "fanatic." That doesn't mean everything I wrote back then is worthless; it's just in a mood I've since moved past.

* * *

My pens and colors are laid out, waiting for me to be desperate enough to reach for them. To be lonely enough? I'm not lonely, only alone. I just did a drawing that shows a profile of a man wearing an orange hood and *dhoti*. He's facing a temple, and the colors of the drawing appeal to me. It makes me think of a devotee who bares his heart to Krishna and calls for help. Or something a little less clear than that. My hand breaks barriers. That gives me satisfaction. Working on the bigger sheets demands more passion, but it also makes me feel drained. I notice when I work on smaller pages, the emotions portrayed are cooler and the are more playful.

* * *

Krishna speaks to each of us in *Bhagavad-gita*. I am only one person in the huge chorus "a drop in the ocean. I will never be able to merge. I will always be simply a little person trying to feel welcome and to follow my teachers who will eventually invite me to participate in Krishna's pastimes. Then, all I will want is to please Krishna.

May 21, 12:10 a.m.

"O Dhananjaya, all this work cannot bind Me. I am ever detached from all these material activities, seated as though neutral." (Bg. 9.9) Srila Prabhupada quotes the *Brahma-samhita* verse, *atmaramasya tasyasti*: "He is always involved in His eternal, blissful, spiritual activities." I would also like to stay neutral to material activities as far as possible. The world goes on its own path no matter *how* we meddle to improve it. People act out their karma; taking the time to judge that is mostly a misuse of our energy. I'm getting older, and that fact is becoming more and more clear to me. No more position papers for me. May I learn to simply glorify Krishna.

* * *

We understand much by accepting *Bhagavad-gita* and Prabhupada's purports. For example, we understand how God creates but that it's His material energy that acts directly. We also understand why there is evil and suffering in this world "that they are a result of the misuse of the *jivas'* free will and the punishing laws of karma. And we understand how to become free from suffering. Without Vedic guidance, we have no way of knowing right from wrong. We become liberal or conservative in our opinions based on our association with ordinary men and women. We have the jewel of *raja-vidya*, even when we sometimes use it in dogmatic ways.

After explaining how He personally supervises everything in the universe, Lord Krishna states, "Fools deride Me when I descend in the human form. They do not know My transcendental nature as the Supreme Lord of all that be." (Bg. 9.11)

* * *

The night is slowly being replaced by dawn. I hear wind in the hills and moving the leaves enough that they swish and sway. Things are rattling out there, but I am secure at this desk.

O Krishna, You are above all. This world is not only a collection of humans living in the void without direction or protection. Please allow me to go now and say Your names over and over "simply that, to chant with the prayer in my heart, "Please engage me in Your service." I pray to Your internal energy, Srimati Radhika. I am already serving You because that is all I am capable of doing, just as the wind serves You by moving down the hills and through the trees. But I pray for the enlightenment to serve You with love, in the spiritual energy. Please bless me to pray the *maha-mantra*. At the least, please allow me to hear Your holy name. That is sufficient; the mantras will do their work on my heart.

* * *

4:35 a.m.

Jaya Nrsimhadeva. Listening to the excessive *parakiya* talk in Raghunatha dasa Gosvami's *Mukta-carita*. Excessive? My capacity to hear such purely *madhurya* narration is small. This story is laden with joking words and loving innuendoes. I remember a Godbrother telling me, "I started reading *Mukta-carita*. I cracked up laughing. I thought it was a riot, but I also told myself, 'Hey, what are you doing, listening to this? You have no right.'" A materialist will become agitated upon hearing Krishna's pastimes with the *gopis*. He will think them mundane. Am I not essentially a materialist? But he who hesitates is lost. Let me hear at least according to my capacity.

My Radha-Govinda need Their paint touched up, but so far I haven't found anyone willing to do it.

Some things are done out of obedience, some out of freedom. Perhaps there is an area somewhere between the two. Anyway, I'm a fool. I can't lay eggs. Let me change the subject. A man entered a village as a land surveyor. He said he was both wealthy and bankrupt in spirit. His wealth was *ruci* for the holy name. Well, fill your belly with tiger balm. What a fortunate guy.

Krishna speaks outrageously in *Muktacarita*. Is this the same Supreme Personality who controls the Visnu expansions? Lord Brahma appears when Maha-Visnu exhales. When He inhales, Brahma's life will end. *That Krishna?*

Night is over. At this time, Lord Caitanya would still be dancing at Srivasa-angam, or perhaps just coming home. *Jiv jago!* "Wake up, sleeping souls, wake up! How long will you remain on the lap of the witch called Maya? You have been given the human form of life, which is a great boon." Use it by rising up and chanting Hare Krishna.

* * *

Swami, when your dream ended, where were you "on the balcony, in bed, or in a temple?

Swami, when you ate those pesticide-sprayed apples, you got candida and had to take doses of acidophilus. Now they say you need iron and B vitamins. Swami, I heard you stopped eating beans.

* * *

8:28 a.m.

You never know, friend, when you'll be cut off. Could be any day. It will be over. Of course, the soul never really runs out of days altogether.

Received a first letter in our Tallaght, Dublin, P.O. box. Hello. Now they know I'm really over here in Eire.

Should I be interested in selling my own books?

Yes. But even more so, in writing a unique breakthrough.

You must find a way
to write more powerful with
turbo jet, bulldozer, dynamite
earth plow. No, that doesn't
sound right.

* * *

I thought you agreed you would float
down a stream and let it get
as quiet as possible, just
notice what happens?

* * *

Yes, but fast or slow,
make it brilliant literary
or how can you expect
to be a writer
who is read

* * *

before he's dead "no
butter (just
olive oil) on
his bread baked fresh.

* * *

Krishna Krishna. Wash your face and turn to face me. "I am Your dear friend," said Subala to Krishna, "Just look me in the face." The *gopis* appealed to Subala to become their agent in getting a good price when they tried to buy pearls from Krishna. Subala took up their cause and asked Krishna to let them have the best pearls at a nominal fee. Madhumangala was ready to take the hard line, as Krishna's attitude seemed to indicate. Stay tuned for the latest.

* * *

The ladies in Hastinapura praise the Lord's queens in Dvaraka and the Vraja *gopis*. Srila Prabhupada states that the ability to relish *madhurya* topics, as Sukadeva Gosvami and Lord Caitanya did, is "earned after many lives of penance." Hare Krishna. Whatever comes down the pike in Prabhupada's books we may take as mercy. receive it with gratitude. This is an important point for me. I may supplement my regular doses of Bhaktivedanta purports with other Gaudiya Vaisnava texts, and even sometimes with nondevotee texts (from those who seem to give insight into the material sides of our natures), but I am steadily reading the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Don't be left out of this nectar. How else can we learn to follow Prabhupada as Prabhupada teaches us to follow him?

The ladies in Hastinapura mentioned the *gopis* only briefly. They mainly thought of Krishna's queens in Dvaraka since that is where He was going. But they had heard of the *gopis*, and that "the damsels of Vrajabhumi (*vraja-striya*) would often faint just by expecting such favors." (*Bhag.* 1.10.28)

Lord Krishna married the queens after winning most of them in their *svayamvara* ceremonies. He also accepted the 16,100 women who had been kidnapped by Bhaumasura as wives. After Krishna killed Bhaumasura, He "accepted the humble prayers of these girls and married them with the adoration of queens."

I'll be interrupted at any minute. M. has been sleeping late because he was out last night, playing Irish traditional music. As soon as he comes in, he'll want to have our daily business meeting. But I feel good that I'm getting in this session of reading and writing "the double barrel of the open *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and the open notepad on my desk.

The kidnapped girls were "without individuality and without purity," yet Krishna accepted them. They prayed sincerely for their own deliverance, "and their sincerity of purpose made them at once pure by virtue of devotion."

Thank you, Lord. I hope that happens to me too. I specifically ask to throw off envy of others. Let me do my own duty and look neither left nor right.

As Lord Krishna traveled to Dvaraka, Maharaja Yudhisthira provided Him with four military divisions to accompany Him. Out of his affection for Krishna, Yudhisthira was concerned for the Lord's welfare. Of course, Lord Krishna was capable of taking care of Himself, but He enjoys subordinating Himself to His devotees. He places Himself in the care of Mother Yashoda as a helpless child, and is also under the protection of Balarama and other boys when He is out in the pastures with the cows. All these exchanges between the Lord and His devotees allow us to derive "a transcendental bliss for which there is no comparison, even up to the level of *brahmananda*." (*Bhag.* 1.10.32, purport)

* * *

10:32 a.m.

Having a busy but not pressured morning. It's certainly easier to handle things through the mail than in person. I read the mail that arrived from the GNP workers "the first to arrive at our Dublin P.O. box. Wonderful news about the nitty-gritty details of book-printing and distribution, all of which seems to be going well despite the usual obstacles. These devotees are dedicated.

I also got a letter from a man in Scotland who read the first volume of PMrB. He asked me to please be assured that the PMrB format is valid, and asked that I go on writing for "the poor men of the world." He says reading this book has induced him to buy a full set of Prabhupada's *Bhagavatams*. What shall I tell him? Dare I say that I have stopped that series and am now writing EJW? The same man also mentioned that after reading PMrB, he read *Begging for the Nectar of the Holy Name*. He liked that too, although not as much as PMrB.

Heave-ho, keep rowing. Don't miss out. Be happy (or sad, if you must) in Krishna consciousness, but don't leave the spiritual master's lotus feet. Thank your lucky stars a hundred times a day that your life is so successful. At the same time, soak your couch with despairing tears because you have not yet attained even a bit of *Krishna-prema*.

* * *

Just Before Noon On A Sunny Day

& I'm just on my own no
funeral today happy sunny
day good
mail me chipper.

What more can I ask?

That Krishna guide me not to be crazy. The strait is narrow and I don't want to miss
the entrance the Ganga gushes from a glacier
in such a tiny stream
building strength as she heads
downhill.

O Krishna You

are the source of all good times and
bad and I pray to stick with his books.

A man tells me he's crying and I do too

sometimes
but I know You will rescue us all.
A Ford Mercury compound of
slipped out words makes
no sense. I don't know why I do that unless
I'm under the influence of this world which dents me in so many ways.
It's a crazy place. O KeSava, how strange are we
creatures
who inhabit this space. "

* * *

Make Hay
& Come on, come clean you're so cool and
controlled sedate "not after any wild scenes
but determined to relate right
to people who write me and want
a new book.
Krishna Krishna Krishna/ I say the word like a goody-goody but
I don't even *know* Him. And I don't say it only in a Vedic way but
Western-style too. Man, you and your
Levis are about to start some trouble? No, calm.
Today is almost too good
to be true but I take it
gladly. And when it rains or headaches comes
or *real* worse, I pray Lord preserve some inner turning to You.
They say you should make hay while the sun shines
and I interpret that in my life to mean
read and chant against the end
because even now
all we have is the hope
that He will come to us. "

* * *

3:05 p.m.

The places Lord Krishna visited on His journey to Dvaraka are mentioned. Each evening, He suspended His journey to perform His evening prayers. He did this to set an example.

My too-good-to-be-true morning has changed to headache fog. Now I will have to internalize my joy and try to think of Krishna.

Two devotees were over at lunch time "Aniruddha, who fixed flat surfaces onto three boards so that I could continue to work on paintings after I have taken them from the main room (but where's the physical energy for such work?), and Hare Krishna dasi, who arrived to touch up Radha-Govinda.

Now let the waters become still again.

When the Lord was just outside Dvaraka, He blew His conch. "The white and fat-bowled conch shell" appeared reddened by the touch of His lips. Srila Prabhupada: ". . . spiritual enlightenment takes place at once by the contact of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna . . . By ardent love and devotional service to the Lord, or in other words by spiritual contact with the Lord, everything becomes gradually reddened like the conch shell in the grip of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 1.11.2, purport)

May He touch us. The *paramahansa* knows how to contact spirit in a mixture of matter and spirit. This does not give devotees a cheap license to do whatever we like and claim that it has been favored by Krishna. But it does give some room for creativity in devotional service.

We can contact Krishna in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and the holy name. Then, reddened by that contact, and before it fades, we may express our love "Krishna, Krishna, Krishna.

There is no matter in spirit. A person like me, however, has to keep strict in regulative life. Before I start looking for Krishna in hinterlands and obscure places "or in hell" better I stay close to Him in authorized ways as given by my spiritual master. Stay a little distant from matter.

The citizens of Dvaraka are the Lord's eternal associates, so even when He was away, they were never separated from Him. The *Vraja gopis* also thought of Krishna when He was away. "The devotees of the Lord know no one else as their protector." Out of the four problems of material life (also known as the four animal propensities), "The fear problem gives us more trouble than the others." That's because we associate with *maya*. But all fear is vanquished as soon as we hear the "sound of the Lord . . . represented by His holy name, as it was sounded by Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in the following sixteen words: *Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare.* (*Bhag.* 1.11.4, purport)

* * *

3:50 p.m.

Here you go, off to the races. But this is a walking race, so take your time. Fill in the spaces. Leave behind all attraction to women, fear, lust, sloppy greed, material need, and keep on walking, O Buddhist monk turned Krishnaite, O fearful, skinny cat perched in Manhattan, leave behind that awful lot. Enter that matchless storefront. That was the happiest day of my life, although I don't always realize it. The earth didn't rejoice with me on that day, and even I didn't realize what a corner I had turned in my life. Otherwise, I would have cried out in relief. But to have found my spiritual father and true home. O Krishna.

I'll write a letter to Bhurijana and tell him how each morning I listen to Rupa Gosvami's plays while I worship my Radha-Govinda. I'm hinting that I'm listening to that forbidden flute music. And I listen to his *Bhagavatam* lectures, which are very fine.

If my head pain increases, use biofeedback like the woman in the illustration. They have a machine that shows how heat enters into the hands. Scientific proof. They should have a machine that shows how the body changes when we engage in *Sravanam kirtanam* just to convince us skeptics.

What do we doubt?

What do we *not* doubt?

Ride this pen home. I need to reach my quota of pages, but I'm straining.

He said, "If you have any doubts about whether or not you are being loyal, you could write to this year's chairman." Is he kidding?

Now, Comfort McDumfort, did you know that *tapasya* is the high road? The lecturer said that when we reach old age, we try to become comfortable "we think we have deserved it since we have worked so hard throughout our lives "but we can never attain ultimate physical comfort.

Was he making fun of *me*?

No, he said he was repeating Srila Prabhupada.

Oh, then that's okay. I thought he was mocking my easy chair.

* * *

5:55 p.m.

"Surrender unto Me"; He is our dearmost friend. Do we want to see the Supreme Lord as He to whom we must surrender, as the one who calls the unsundered rascals?! Or do we prefer to see Him as our friend? We're four years old and can't take much surrender. We don't like our friend to raise His voice or worse, His stick. Krishna is Krishna. Love Him however you must.

"I can't analyze the differences. I just like it," he said.

I tape up more blank white drawing pages around the house. Later I'll fill them with forms and praises and snatches of Sanskrit. I'm neither Brahma nor an imitator but a Vaisnava craftsman who wishes to remind people of their greatest self-interest. Anyway, all these funny forms exist in me.

Time. He asked the class, "What animal is time compared to?"

Tiger! That's what I thought, and that's what Prabhupada called it in his introduction to *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*. He said we are followed by the tiger of time.

The lecturer, however, chose "snake." Time is called *kala-sarpa*. It sneaks up and strikes, blessing us with the bite of death.

So much for Time's winged chariot. And this day is ending.

* * *

Night Notes, 6:15 p.m.

Good night. Radha-Govinda are also going to rest now. They are beautiful. I hope They will stay with me always. When I leave my body, They can go to someone else. Please forgive me. Please let me approach You.

The birds are chirping "their merry-ness is almost too much for those who seek early sleep. Earplugs.

"ISKCON is breaking up in a good way," he said. I don't know if it's true. Best I stick to my duty and look neither left nor right. Develop *prema-bhakti* and get out. He agreed.

May 22, Midnight

Krishna's claim (and the claim His devotees make on His behalf) is the greatest of all. We either accept it or we don't. Krishna claims He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the one controller of all creation, the one maintainer, and the one cause of annihilation. There are many *iSvaras*, but Krishna is the supreme *iSvara*. We don't have to analyze these statements to death as to (1) why we do or do not totally accept them; (2) what that means to other monotheistic traditions; and (3) how the statements can be defended against arguments from the nontheistic camp. The statements *can* be analyzed against these concerns, but at some point, we have to stop the wrangling and speculation in our own hearts and fall in love with Krishna.

So, do we or do we not accept Krishna's claim? It reminds me of the time Srila Prabhupada asked his GBC men, "Do you accept Krishna as God? Are you convinced? If you are not convinced, you cannot help me spread Krishna consciousness." He added, "For myself, I am convinced," and not on sentiment, but based on Vedic authority. He then referred to Lord Brahma's prayers in the fourteenth chapter of the Tenth Canto. There, Lord Brahma tells Krishna, "You appear to be a village boy, but I have just seen all the universes emanating from You, and all Visnus and material elements come from Your body. I beheld all those expansions worshiping You. I cannot comprehend [or measure] Your body and Your activities."

"The foolish consider Krishna an ordinary human being because they do not know the confidential activities of the Supreme Lord and His different energies. They do not know that Krishna's body is a symbol of complete knowledge and bliss, that He is the proprietor of everything that be and that He can award liberation to anyone. Because they do not know that Krishna has so many transcendental qualifications, they deride Him." (Bg. 9.11, purport)

I don't deride Lord Krishna. I seem to say that I accept Him as the Supreme Lord, but that it's obvious to You, Lord (who knows me and knows everything), that I fall far short in my conviction, faith, and devotion. Yet I won't deny that I have faith in You. I carry impressions within me of the truth of Your existence and Your protection on this soul. I do have a desire to worship You. My worshipable object is You, dear Krishna, and even when others deride You, my faith is not shaken.

I can only pray to Govinda to increase my devotion. I shouldn't have to ask this of Him, since He has already given Himself fully to Me in so many ways. Not only that, but He appeared as Lord Caitanya just to extend the limits of His own mercy and to make Himself completely available. He also sent me His beloved Srila Prabhupada to become my spiritual master, and who carried to me the order to chant the holy name and to become Krishna conscious. Am I really asking for more than all that? Yes. Somehow I have not been intelligent enough to separate myself from matter and absorb myself only in Him. O Govinda, please draw me to You.

But even this prayer comes out in a feeble whisper. Because I am afraid to be drawn to Krishna behind a speeding chariot. I don't want it to be *too* hard, too painful. But my awareness of my fear and my consequent lack of surrender is in itself painful. I admit it.

"Although the foolish cannot imagine how Krishna . . ." (I want to know You in my life, as my friend. I know Madhu, Ani, Bhurijana "so many" Srila Prabhupada himself. Why not Krishna? There is no shortage of Krishna conscious literature, Krishna conscious topics, Krishna conscious methods of intimate exchange) " . . . who appears

just like a human being, can control the infinite and the finite, those who are pure devotees accept this, for they know that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore they completely surrender unto Him and engage in devotional service of the Lord." (Bg. 9.11, purport)

"After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare." (Bg. 7.19)

"I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who perfectly know this engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts." (Bg. 10.8)

* * *

I'd like to improvise on Sunday in my lecture. Improvising when I speak is for me an act of faith "faith that Krishna will speak through me and that I won't get stuck. When I outline everything I'm going to say, then speak straight from the outline, I feel as if I have already given the talk and I lose the spontaneity. It begins to feel like a performance. Neither do I actually preach, in a sense, because I don't speak completely from the heart. Is it that I think I won't be able to remember something important? Can I dare be there, speaking in real-time to real people? Dare I expose myself?

I just paused in this reading and writing to look at some books Caranaravinda bought for me and which arrived last night. One is about reading the scripture aloud. Another is an eight-hundred-page book "a translation of Cassian's *Conferences*. I don't know exactly what I'll do with them. I can't seem to settle once and for all to avoid all non-Gaudiya *sampradaya* books. Fortunately, however, I don't allow myself to take long digressions into literature outside the Krishna conscious *sampradaya*.

After praying to Lord Krishna to grant me more faith in Him, it seems odd to look at Christian literature. From a letter by a Godbrother friend: "But I notice that with me, many inspirations I have in Krishna consciousness come from nondevotee sources. The intellectual stimulation seems to trigger something in me." Yes, I understand what he means.

* * *

4:25 a.m.

Red and gold dresses today from the original stock of clothes I got from Vrndavana. They are regal. Listening to *Muktacarita* while I dress Them. Inspired to remain a strict *brahmacari-sannyasi*. Only those free from mundane sex become eligible to hear Krishna's *madhurya* pastimes.

Prabhupada in tan *cadar* and pink saffron scarf. It is not so cold today. We have had some unusually clear days.

Nandimukhi and Madhumangala are always on Krishna's side. They defend their *sakha*, their master. The *gopis*, led by Radha's friends Lalita and ViSakha, attack Krishna with sarcastic words. They call Him thief, cheater, and many other names. Krishna delights in their words because they come from His beloved *gopis*. We know if

a demon insults Krishna, the demon will die. The *gopis'* words, however, are most pleasing to the Lord, and to those who share a taste for their *rasa*.

Prabhupada said this world is a mixture of the material modes. The modes may be compared to colors "yellow for goodness, red for passion, blue for ignorance. Whether one color predominates in us or another is not so important. It's all material. Prabhupada says we should quit this colorful world. Then, should we remain in a state of nothingness? No, he says, that is but a small gain, a hint of truth. Perfection is in the actually colorful world of Krishna consciousness, chanting and dancing and serving Krishna.

It was nice to hear Srila Prabhupada say that we should give up the imitation colors and join the truly colorful life. He gave the example that a devotee dresses Radha and Krishna with colorful cloth instead of using the opulent cloth to decorate himself. Color should be used to glorify Krishna.

Get out of the crazy bin known as this world. A crazy man is kept in prison. When he sees his father, he tries to attack him. That's how we are.

Let words slide down the embankment. We have no structure, no novel, no dialogues with sages. These words lead me to the spontaneous joy of service. Krishna moves through each of us in various ways. O reader, bring your attention to the lotus feet of the Lord. He is the origin of the Visnu forms. He comes as the perfect *sannyasi* to distribute *hari-nama*. O Krishna, Hare Krishna.

* * *

He said he's learning the material side to help his soul. If the different parts of the self can coordinate . . . something like that.

Chant Hare Krishna and don't be bound by the ropes of bad desires. I'm giving advice because I am a sage. People can come to me and say, "Dear sage, how should we live in this world to develop our God consciousness?" Given such a general question, I could discourse on the need to chant Krishna's names "*harinama eva kevalam* and all that. And remind them that Krishna is our best friend.

But what if they ask for something more explicit, say, about how to fix the movement, or something similar?

I can't answer too many questions. Maybe I'll stare into space, then go back into my hut and read Chinese poets and write modern Vaisnava versions.

* * *

Govinda's restaurant is open six days a week, then opens again on Sunday afternoons for the Love feast. That's the day I do my lecture. If a man muscles in on that territory, I'll let him.

Because it's not mine.
I have only this house,
and that's not mine either.

Let's hear from Krishna. He is roaring; He is quiet; I can't talk about Him from direct experience. But I know God loves me, even if I feel I don't deserve it. He loves me anyway because *He's like that*. He is very, very kind.

Did you know that I have a gate here, and a wall, and that although we put in a doorbell by the outside gate, it doesn't work? One devotee suggested I hang a gong and hammer over the doorway, but that sounded too inviting. I can imagine lots of people walking by unable to resist striking the gong. Maybe we should just fix the doorbell.

* * *

6:15 a.m.

I'm reading the introduction to Cassian's *Conferences*. It's interesting. The translator, Boniface Ramsey, tells us that the book consists of conversations between two young, submissive monks, and the wise elders they meet in the desert. He says the author, Cassian, is self-effacing, "Yet when he refers to himself, as he occasionally does in *Conferences*, he does not appear as a distinct and developed personality in any modern sense but rather as one whose whole being hangs tautly on the words his mentors speak, and his joy and sorrow at any given moment is a direct consequence of what they have said to him. . . . With rare exception we look in vain here for a fuller and less stylized self-disclosure, but self-disclosure was not a priority among the Church's earliest writers, and there is reason for delighted astonishment when it sometimes occurs in a few of them, notably of course, in Augustine." (Introduction, pp. 6 - 7).

This interested me: that extreme submission is not derided but is seen as customary in monks of a previous age. Implied is the idea that such submission is probably not possible today. Modern-day monks are more "persons," and the disciples ask more doubtful or even challenging questions.

Boniface writes about the two young monks: "Finally, when they are actually engaged in dialogue with the old men, they prove themselves models of docility, listening to the elders with the most tense interest and eagerness.

"Alas, however, Cassian's and Germanus's model behavior is purchased at the price of a certain pallid characterization. In the presence of the old men, they are generally self-effacing, little more than mere listeners, asking only the questions and making only remarks that will draw out the speakers still further." (*John Cassian: The Conferences*, translated and annotated by Boniface Ramsey, Introduction, p. 13)

Boniface goes on to say that this depiction of the young monks seems artificial and inadequate to the contemporary reader. These words strike a chord in me, both in relation to my desire to become a model disciple, and in the sense of upholding our *parampara* against the criticism that we expect disciples to be too submissive to authority. On the first point, perhaps the fact that I am questioning more the nature of my relationship with Srila Prabhupada can be admitted, because to maintain a false but absolute docility may be a cover-up for the more honest relationship "just as the reader of Cassian finds Cassian's depiction of himself somewhat unreal.

* * *

8:58 a.m.

Hare Krishna dasi sent me the first rose of summer (at least, the first to appear in her garden). Each week she sends me one type of flower and I get to know it. She sends each type of flower with a note. A real rose is a "double flower," with many rows of petals.

The one before me now is a *rugosa* hybrid, which means one of its parents was a *rugosa* and the other was not. It is a yellow-apricot color, and stands poised on its stem. "And the leaves seem to be going 'Haribol' at a gentle angle, not shouting loudly or jumping up and down."

Hare Krishna dasi writes, "When I look at this rose, it is *so* beautiful, *so* exquisite, *so* perfectly designed and fashioned; that's the proof for me that Krishna *is* here. I can't imagine that such a gorgeous thing could be in a place where Krishna is not present."

* * *

"O dear friends, here is that very Personality of Godhead whose attractive and confidential pastimes are described in the confidential parts of Vedic literature by His great devotees. It is He only who creates, maintains and annihilates the material world and yet remains unaffected." (*Bhag.* 1.10.24) As stated in *Bhagavad-gita*, all the Vedic literature glorify Krishna. So it is also confirmed in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Sukadeva Gosvami tells us of Krishna's confidential pastimes. The *Upanisads* go to great length to distinguish the Supreme from matter "so much so that some interpret the *Upanisads* as stating that the Absolute is formless, not a person. "But factually He is the Supreme Person, Bhagavan, and He is partially represented as Paramatma or impersonal Brahman."

Still thinking to speak on Sunday about Krishna being a person both all-great and the close and delightful friend of His pure devotees. No outline though. What is it I want my audience to take home with them? That they should aspire to know that friend Krishna. Knowledge of His greatness is required for inspiration and conviction. I'll leave it simply implied that only Krishna consciousness teaches about God as a friend "because we get to know so much about Him. He is the best.

The citizens of Dvaraka rushed forward to give the Lord gifts and presentations. "These presentations were like the offering of a lamp to the sun. Yet the citizens began to speak in ecstatic language to receive the Lord." (*Bhag.* 1.11.5)

Sometimes as I read (and as I write out a *Sloka* or purport line) I have nothing of my own to say. Fine. No mental chatter; the self is satisfied to serve the Lord. One doesn't imagine that the Dvarakavasis, while offering their gifts to Krishna, were living in their own mental monologues and not giving Him their full heart's attention.

Tell the restaurant crowd that we want to be *attracted* to Krishna, not merely afraid or in awe of Him.

Those who are conscious of the vital relationship with Krishna as the Supreme Father can make filial demands upon Him. But right ones: beg to be His sincere worshiper; escape from *maya*.

The citizens said, "O Lord . . . You are the ultimate rest for those who are really aspiring to achieve the highest benefit of life." (*Bhag.* 1.11.6)

"O creator of the universe, You are our mother, well-wisher, Lord, father, spiritual master and worshipable Deity. By following in Your footsteps we have become successful in every respect. We pray, therefore, that You continue to bless us with Your mercy." (*Bhag.* 1.11.7)

How juicy and substantial these verses are. I needn't stop to ask, "Are they *madhurya? AiSvarya?*" They are full of *rasa*, devotional flavor.

Nowadays we may laugh at the virtue of obedience, but Krishna likes to see it in us. Obedience is not a shallow quality, not a doggish or childish quality. Obedience moves the Lord to revive our forgotten relationship.

"Oh, it is our good luck that we have come again today under Your protection by Your presence, for Your Lordship rarely visits even the denizens of heaven. Now it is possible for us to look into Your smiling face, which is full of affectionate glances. We can now see Your transcendental form, full of all auspiciousness." (*Bhag.* 1.11.8)

No wonder I don't have the Lord's full *darSana*. That *darSana* is only attainable by pure devotees. remember *The Nectar of Devotion*? Devotional service is so rarely achieved because Krishna gives Himself in that exchange.

* * *

I found something else in Cassian that struck me. He states that the monks in the desert were always on guard against various kinds of deception; they were afraid to fall into illusion. The best remedy against such falldown "was to precisely unburden oneself to the elders and to obtain from them a word of wisdom . . . No matter how otherwise gifted a monk was, if he did not seek guidance from without but trusted in himself, he was susceptible to illusion and deception." In another place, Boniface Ramsey states that discretion (the virtue of distinguishing between good and bad) "was ordinarily practiced by submitting oneself humbly to the judgment and the insight of others. This submission to others was the surest possible guarantee in a fallible existence that subjectivity would not becloud one's judgment, thereby confusing the good with the spontaneous object of one's desires." (Introduction, p. 18)

I have already stated how I don't trust others with the most intimate matters of my soul. When I think of the devotees as individuals (especially the ones with whom I have been associated, or the ones that I would be most likely to approach for guidance), I can certainly think of many good things about each of them. They *are* trustworthy persons, qualified in many ways, and very dear to Prabhupada. *Their* disqualification is not the problem; rather, I doubt they could know me well enough to guide me for my own benefit. Nor do I think it would be so easy for anyone in an institution to guide another without considering motives other than that persons' best welfare. Giving others guidance actually requires that we love them. I'm not sure we really have that between us.

So how do I face the desert father's viewpoint that without guidance we are sure to suffer self-deception? I say that we are never lacking guidance. We have Srila Prabhupada's guidance through our experiences and his tapes and books. Through Prabhupada's association, we have the association of the other sages and devotees in our disciplic succession. It's not that we should trust ourselves totally either, so when we pray for guidance, pray while we read or hear, we can also approach the Lord in the heart to receive His enlightenment. We should practice unflinching self-examination. That too attracts the mercy of guru and Krishna.

* * *

11:30 a.m.

Took an Esgic an hour ago, but the twinge has only just gone down. Express your gratitude. How? By reading more *Srimad-Bhagavatam* this afternoon. Chant a few more rounds too, and push to reach your writing quota. (My No Nonsense pen just finked out on me; switched to a Pilot V7.) Srila Prabhupada, I'm glad I went ahead with your *puja* despite the head pain. I performed it in silence, though. I didn't want to push my limits by playing a lecture or even listening to *bhajan*s. I did look up through the skylight and wonder, "Should I pray to Krishna to relieve my pain? No." But I guess I turned to the chemical "god," the pain reliever, and shook his hand.

The yellow "Agnes rose" is blooming wide and leaning toward Srila Prabhupada. I placed it between he and Radha-Govinda. Now I feel ease and can enjoy my EkadaSi lunch.

* * *

Hare Krishna. Hare Krishna dasi sent me a poem about a flower, by Seamus Heaney. She sent it in response to the poems I sent her, some by William Carlos Williams, including "Asphodel." On the same page as the poem about the flower was Heaney's "requiem for the Croppies," describing the massacre of thousands of Irish farmers turned warriors who died waving their scythes at the British cannons. I passed it on to Madhu.

O Krishna. When the pain didn't go down immediately after taking the Esgic, I lay in bed and waited. I heard children shouting and wished they would be quiet. Then I was disturbed by the vibration of Madhu's *japa* coming up from downstairs, so I asked him to stop. A little later, an electrician pulled up in his car, and the noise was irritating. But what are these mild interruptions compared to full-scale war and the sacrifice of life? Am I wrong to desire peace? Oh, face your traumas by doing inner work.

* * *

EkadaSi, but I don't perform austerities. As I said, I seek ease. We may read of the monks at Skete, where the Abba recommends fasting, vigils, and constant prayer. They were athletes of spirit. But their austerities sound dry compared to the festival that is Krishna consciousness. Krishna's pastimes would probably blow the minds of the desert monks of Christianity. They could never accept Krishna. Still, I like their sober dedication to purity of heart and to attaining the kingdom of God.

I heard about a debate in which one devotee spoke about "the greater ISKCON." The other devotee said, "That means you're a covered *rtvik*."

Debate, hate.

"He used to be so stalwart."

"Oh, but I don't think people listen to him."

"The *rtvik* movement is growing because devotees are so dissatisfied with this institution. The *rtviks* give them a clever way to be faithless and to avoid having to trust in any living being."

Trust means taking a risk. Why take it?

Don't look left or right.

Anyway, it's time to have lunch. No paradise there, just a filled belly.

* * *

2:35 p.m.

We can't see anything, not even ourselves, without Krishna being present, just as we can't see anything without the sun's light. We cannot be separated from Krishna, because we are eternally related to Him. Once we reawaken our eternal relationship with Him through attraction, nothing can sever it. We are only artificially separated from Him by *maya*. When that covering is removed, we see Krishna. Then our miseries are also removed.

In describing the natural beauty of Dvaraka-dhama, Srila Prabhupada speaks about the *ugra-karma* factories, mills, and impious trees. My interest wanes. I don't want social descriptions but faith in the Lord. Well, hold on and take what *Srimad-Bhagavatam* has to offer, including how the commentator is pacing the delivery.

The residents of Dvaraka stopped what they were doing to run out and see Krishna. Even the prostitutes. Krishna reciprocated with each devotee according to their rank and relationship with Him. Some of the great Yadus are mentioned. Krishna was equally affectionate to all His parts.

Yes, my interest waned at the social description, but that's my own shortcoming. Or maybe it's not a shortcoming; maybe it's natural to favor certain parts over others. Still, I'll be a better reader if I'm always alert to whatever *Srimad-Bhagavatam* gives. Use each verse and purport to bring the image of Lord Krishna into your mind's eye. Here, He is entering the city and exchanging glances with His various devotees. None of them were envious "so don't *you* be either, or you'll be cast out while you hear it! "Here comes the Lord, for whom we have waited and never forgotten, and now our life is returned."

* * *

3:21 p.m.

I must admit I'm a splayed-out friar. Can I walk in my yard? Sure, why not? Krishna comes to Dvaraka and I could use some discipline to control my mind. Otherwise, I'll be sent to the back of the class, even to the principal's office. A mark permanent against me sat on my report card "Mr. Katz did that, remember? Because I made that sound. "You've got that rebel streak, a bad boy potential." But now you are a good boy; all ISKCON regulars are in that category.

Oh, don't be down on me. Although Vidura cut through to Dhrtarastra: "Get out of here immediately! You are eating the scraps Bhima throws you as if you were the family dog." I *can't* get out. Or so I think. How would I *live* without Madhu (or some other secretary) helping me through my tottering steps?

God giveth and God taketh away. We try to show Krishna that we are sincere. Some say suffering is more of an asset than our good qualities, especially if those qualities are rewarded in the form of temporary benefits.

This is called philosophizing, thinking aloud. I realize I am for comfort and am not a Narottama, willing to go out and live like a mendicant, dying where nobody knows, depending entirely on Krishna with no material support. Let me take one day at a time.

Krishna knows what's best in any condition, even in mine. He will see me through. He is the sound in ether. At the concert with the rock beat, an aging *sannyasi* had to use earplugs. The younger men thought it was great, however, and would have liked to have stayed longer.

When those Dvarakavasis came out to see the Lord, nothing could hold them back. Us poor-hearted persons need a special hand from the Lord so that we too, one day, will not hold back.

* * *

5:14 p.m.

I won't call it bragging that I said I didn't know what I was going to write sentence by sentence. It's true. I'm improvising. Anyway, I don't think I'll get into that right now.

But let me say this: I avoid structure because I want my writing to come from the life. It's true that my life may not amount to much externally, but all life is mysterious, and is filled with things we can't see or fully understand. The heart is hidden, the motives not fully clear to anyone but Krishna. That's what internal life is about "getting in touch with those motives, but not always spilling them out externally. Making them spiritual.

Of course, the scripture describes so much, but to personally understand our own hearts is different. We take our first lessons in introspection from *Bhagavad-gita*. There, we learn that the movements of body, mind, and ego in this world are only external. When we think these external movements are the whole show, that's called illusion. What about the life force that drives us? And the Life Force of the life force? The world is moving under the influence of the spirit soul, who is moving under the influence of the Supreme Spirit. Krishna consciousness is not vague or dreamy; it is a science. And not an ordinary science. We can really only understand it properly when we meet a pure Krishna conscious scientist, a pure devotee.

I met such a devotee and it changed my life. He changed me. He gave me the chanting. He freed me from following the nondevotee artists and authors of the world. It seemed to me that he wanted me to completely change everything I was or did because it was based on such false principles. I was willing. I knew he was offering me the liberation of Krishna consciousness.

I have since reclaimed some of those things I gave away, but it's different now. That's because over the years, I have learned how to use more of myself in Krishna's service. Perhaps I'm not as strict (fanatical) as I once was. Whether that's good or bad, I don't know. I still strictly follow my vows. Perhaps the many disappointments I have felt, especially after Srila Prabhupada's disappearance, have helped to alter my mood. I don't judge myself too harshly on that point. Instead, I try to help others who may share the same disappointments find something worth living for within our Krishna consciousness movement. Of course, I can't solve those persons' particular problems, but I can point them to the magic of the holy name.

* * *

What was I saying? Oh, that the Krishna science is wonderful. To study the soul, the mystery of life. What most people aren't even *interested* in. The covering over the soul reminds me of the covering over Vrndavana. My soul is dressed in Kali-yuga dirt, and my unpurified senses are like the cheating merchants. My mental "streets" reveal spiritual poverty, monkeylike desires, piggish habits, and the filth of the open sewers. They say that Yogamaya purposely covers the *dhama* in this age in order to keep insincere people out. Perhaps ISKCON is covered for the same reason. Why else would so many people see the Krishna consciousness movement as inaccessible?

It takes an adventurer to become a devotee, someone who can look seriously at something which others ridicule. When I met Prabhupada, Krishna consciousness seemed so attractive to me "the swami, yes, but also the whole approach to God consciousness. I was serious, thank God, and Krishna has allowed me to build on my initial commitment. I myself don't know the mystery of commitment, except to say that we are able to make the commitment by Krishna's grace.

Dear Srila Prabhupada, you once prayed that I may be saved from all calamities. By your grace, your blessing is being fulfilled. If I am to be born again, please bless me that I may return to your camp, break through any barriers, and resume my Krishna conscious practices. I want nothing else.

On Sunday this is what I want to share with the audience: *bhakti* is the most valuable commodity. I want to speak my appreciation so that I can feel it and they can feel it. We all know the philosophy already. I want to give the audience hope that they can come to know Krishna and really love Him as a person. They can find Him ever-present in their lives because He is there.

May 23, 12:04 a.m.

Whenever God comes, the opposition also rises. I once asked Srila Prabhupada how this could be so, since God is all-powerful. Prabhupada said simply, "They hate Him." When I asked for scriptural proof for such a strong word as "hate," Prabhupada cited Bg. 7.27: "All living entities are born into delusion, bewildered by dualities arising from desire and hate."

Not long after, Prabhupada's Damodara dasa left ISKCON, saying that Krishna was foreign to him. Srila Prabhupada told us that Krishna was close to us, but we are rascal sons who claim their own fathers are foreign. Prabhupada's remarks made a deep impression on me. His words, even when not addressed to one or another of us, were part of our milieu. We believed what he said.

Lord Krishna appeared many, many years ago and performed many acts just like a human being, but He also performed acts impossible for humans. People don't believe that. It does stretch one's credulity. I mean, how can someone control both infinite and finite space, yet appear to be a human being? Of course, all religions teach that the human form is created in God's image. God also has an infinite, impersonal form, as well as a form in each person's heart. We cannot see much of this, and even our inquiries tend

to be covered. All questions are answered by our submissive aural reception to Vedic knowledge.

When Krishna appears as a human, His apparent ordinariness is His disguise. "Lord Sri Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, along with Balarama, played like a human being, and so masked He performed many superhuman acts." (*Bhag* 1.1.20) I have probably heard every conceivable challenge to and doubt against God and against Krishna as God. The *parampara* always provides a good rebuttal. God is everywhere and in each person, but His all-pervasive feature is not the fullest manifestation of His presence. Rather, we seek to see Him in His original form. He is both all-pervading and the source of all. Don't become a victim of atheism or heathenism. "In that deluded condition, their hopes for liberation, their fruitive activities and their culture of knowledge are all defeated." (*Bg.* 9.12)

"There are many devotees who assume themselves to be in Krishna consciousness and devotional service but at heart do not accept the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, as the Absolute Truth."

Srila Prabhupada took on all opposition. He used reasoning that we can understand. He tried his best to overthrow arguments and doubts by using Sastric examples as well as his own. He convinced me, overthrew my doubts, and I thank him every day for that. I also work at keeping my mind clear.

"O son of Prtha, those who are not deluded, the great souls, are under the protection of the divine nature. They are fully engaged in devotional service because they know Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, original and inexhaustible." (*Bg.* 9.13)

Lord Krishna is inconceivable and thus beyond our finite understanding. Our doubts are tired old things. They are easily overcome by love for the spiritual master and respect for God's greatness. When we are prepared to stop offering excuses why we cannot surrender, we will stop doubting. Kierkegaard said it well: doubts should not be given the status of scholarship; we should admit that our failure to serve or even accept God is due to our own cowardly, unredeemed natures.

Mahatmas are undeluded, and they don't divert their attention from Krishna because they know He is the Personality of Godhead. "There is no doubt about it. Such a *mahatma* or great soul develops through association with other *mahatmas*, pure devotees." (*Bg.* 9.13, purport) *Mahatmas* are not even attracted to Krishna's other forms, such as the four-armed form. This ex-Stevie, now Satsvarupa dasa, accepts once again, this 23rd of May, 1998, that Krishna is the Supreme Godhead and I one of His infinitesimal, infinitely numbered servants. *Ekala iSvara Krishna arasaba bhrtya.*

* * *

Swami, rise and fight
by hearing your own
voice and Prabhupada's
Running over and over
the *maha-mantra*.

* * *

You met yourself once again, prone
to weakness and
doubt. Yet you are called Swami.
Control your lower nature. Fold
your hands and offer respects to the
all-great Supreme Person.
Don't be the one He calls *mudhas* but
stay with the *mahatma*.

* * *

4:32 a.m.

In *Muktacarita*, Lord Krishna told Satyabhama (to whom He is narrating the story of the pearls) that *raga-bhakti* cannot be attained by *vidhi*. Those on the *raga-marga*, such as the *gopis*, don't think of Krishna's *aiSvarya* feature, or the rules and regulations of Vedic religion. Those who approach the conjugal *rasa* in *aiSvarya* become Krishna's queens in Dvaraka. I don't know how to apply this to what we have heard about the importance of knowing Krishna's *aiSvarya* feature (such as the *Bhagavad-gita* statement where we are told that knowledge of Krishna's inconceivable greatness will inspire us to worship Him). If we abandon the rules and regulations prematurely, we will become *prakrta-sahajiyas*. I will simply follow what Prabhupada teaches. In the morning while worshiping Radha-Govinda, I will continue to hear the Gosvamis' books, which were written for the liberated souls situated eternally in *madhurya-rasa*. The rest of the day, I will hear from Prabhupada. Time will answer all questions.

Cooler today. Tomorrow we go to Dublin and stay overnight so I can get to the Justice Department office early the next day. I'll bring the *Bhagavatam* with me. Unfortunately, I won't be able to bring Radha-Govinda or Srila Prabhupada.

* * *

Nandimukhi argues with Lalita. Then Krishna asserts that He owns Vrndavana. The *gopis* say it belongs to Radha. They want Krishna to pay a tax for having grown His pearls in radha's kingdom. Krishna challenges Radha to a fight to settle who is the ruler. Nandimukhi suggests that it would be better to approach Bhagavati Purnamasi to settle the dispute. Just imagine, the extremely renounced Raghunatha dasa Gosvami wrote this. No doubt he delighted in the play of the Divine Couple, and all Their Sanskrit puns.

The birds are chirping. The electric lights are on in the house because it's not quite dawn. My heart, and the hearts of my friends and millions of others, beats away. We are not simply material machines. There is a life force present in each body which causes the machine to run. For some, that life force is preparing to leave even at this moment. On this earth, someone dies every second and someone is born every second. The souls are in flux, entering bodies in the 8,400,000 species according to their respective karmas. Some insects live and die all in a night. Humans, elephants, and trees live longer. The demigods live still longer. No one lives longer than one inhalation of Maha-Visnu.

It's 4:50 a.m. I'm pushing myself now, approaching five hours after rising. A headache seems likely to appear today. If it *is* vascular, which it seems to be, the arteries

contract, then expand and cause pain. I've read why this happens "theoretically, it has to do with my blood sugar dropping "but just now I can't recall the details. I'm not worried, though, because I still have a third pill to go this week.

A shoemaker went home to his shapely Italian wife. She asked, "Giuseppe, why didn't you remember my birthday?" He said he was busy with the stereotype. Then they decided to chant Hare Krishna and forget all the nonsense. I'm happy to report that they have been well ever since.

* * *

Despite The Noise
& Do you remember how these
things were done?
Yeah, you get along you
Remove yourself from static
you sing your song
dance on a hill

* * *

ignore shivers and bumps and
dumps and don't
explain *everything*
or apologize
too much.

* * *

What's happening? What's all noise?
I just want a little peace so I
can concentrate on God in my
heart

* * *

but the neighbors and my roommate
have different ideas makes
it seem like the
earth is quaking

* * *

and I'm telling you this
because I
can't seem to drown it out with
the sound of my own

concentration.

* * *

Once Krishna came to town He
said, "I declare Vrndavana
is My land "it doesn't
belong to anyone else.{
Radha said "Vrnda
said Lalita retorted
Madhumangala bellowed, "Krishna
give me sweets and I'll
help You attain . . . "
They threatened that Kamsa
would come
and decided to bribe.

* * *

You can just imagine.
Krishna is the Lord of sixes
and sevens and twenty-fours and
Christians and Muslims and politicians
of no particular religion.
He's Death "can you beat
that? "

* * *

6:02 a.m.

I find it hard to accept the doctrine I read in Cassian that the highest virtue is total submission to elders for judgment. Boniface doesn't seem to like it either. He says young monks ought to have more responsibility than simply accepting someone else's judgment on their own lives. Then it occurred to me, in ISKCON, *I* am one of the elders. Maybe that's the problem.

* * *

9:09 a.m.

"Therefore, the ladies or men who observe festivals in the temples of the Lord just to have a look at the transcendental form are a thousand times more glorious than those who are non-believers in the transcendental form of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 1.11.24, purport) *Arca-vigraha* worship in the temple is not idol worship. Those who don't know the science shouldn't "poke their nose into that to which they have no access."

I dreamt some people came to Madhu, treating him as a guru even while I was present. We parted after that. I went to an ISKCON temple in New York City, seeking a

place to stay for the night. It was crowded. Storms and high tides were threatening to flood the place. I couldn't find an empty bed. Yamaraja and Bhavananda were there too. They were trying to help me find the guest facilities.

Is life like a dream? Was Kafka onto something? The dream doesn't have to be interpreted; it just has to grip you as if it is real. Because ultimately, awake or asleep, we're dreaming. Only Krishna consciousness is real. O soul, don't simply dream on. Give us Krishna consciousness.

"The inhabitants of Dvaraka were regularly accustomed to look upon the reservoir of all beauty, the infallible Lord, yet they were never satisfied." (*Bhag.* 1.11.25) I know it's an odd mixture to put a dream snippet beside a *Srimad-Bhagavatam* quote and comment, but that's how it's happening; that's how I write.

Although the residents of Dvaraka had seen Lord Krishna many times, they never became bored. The *darSana* was always new and exciting.

Today was cool enough that I draped *cadars* around Radha-Govinda's shoulders. That was at 4 a.m., while I listened to the teasing and jokes going back and forth between Krishna and His *gopis*. My worship of Them is not on that platform of course; I simply tend to Their bodies with reverence and very little realization of what I am actually doing. If I did realize it "that "*this is Radha, this is Krishna* "I'd be in the same ecstasy experienced by the Gosvamis of Vrndavana.

Although the Supreme Lord comes to earth, He is infallible. Here is that point again "that we are expected to preach things in our lectures which I haven't fully realized. There *is* a way to do it, but each time I do, I feel a pang of hypocrisy. Or worse, I feel a sense of emptiness within *myself*. I wonder if that's what happens to those who hear me speak? If I say, "Krishna came to earth and acted in many ways like a human" "carefully choosing my words, of course ""and yet He is the Supreme source of existence," what potency will it carry? We sometimes hear that even a *Sudra* can start a yajnic fire, which implies that we do not need any qualification other than the blessings of God. Similarly with speaking, our qualification is not always our ability to speak from deep realization but our willingness to be the mouthpiece for whatever Krishna wishes to say through us.

Here, practice saying it: "Krishna is God." Now qualify it: "Krishna is God according to the *Vedas*." Okay, I got through that, but still, when I speak a longer lecture and attempt to speak more from my heart, I feel those momentary glitches. I prefer to say things that feel right, that I can say wholeheartedly.

"The transcendental name, form, qualities, entourage, etc., are all spiritual manifestations, and there is no cessation in chanting the holy name of the Lord . . ." Try saying *that*. I'll have to add, "If we *do* feel cessation, or if we feel disgust instead of ecstasy when we can't chant, if we can't chant more than our prescribed sixteen rounds, if we have no taste, that is due, according to *UpadeSamrta*, to our own *avidya*. rupa Gosvami compares such ignorance to jaundice."

See? I *can* do it. I *can* speak honestly and present the *sastras*. Now go further. "This jaundice is an unfortunate condition. If we find ourselves suffering from it, we should take action."

That's the hypocritical part: do *I* take action? Of course, whenever we speak like that, we say we are preaching to ourselves. We say we aren't telling others to do things we don't do ourselves. But is it fair to split ourselves in two like that?

"And what is the remedy for the jaundice of *avidya*? Simply to go on chanting." I can still save myself: "This is Srila Rupa Gosvami's advice."

Then I sigh and say, "Alas, I wish I could follow such excellent advice."

Flowery pose. Do I even feel the "alas"?

Yes, sometimes.

* * *

"And those who are artists, overtaken by the beautiful creation, should better see the beautiful face of the Lord for complete satisfaction . . . What they call beautiful nature is but His smile, and what they call the sweet songs of the birds are but specimens of the whispering voice of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 1.11.26, purport) The Lord is the essence of all (*saram*). Those who sing about Him are *sarangas*, pure devotees. Srila Prabhupada then quotes a song in which Rupa Gosvami is asking to taste the honey of the lotus feet of the Lord. My mind is after honey. "O Madhava, I know also that I have no genuine devotion for the service of Your lotus feet, but . . . You can do what is impossible to be done."

* * *

10:05 a.m.

M. dozing in his cabin. rain shower now. Put your hood up and rush back to your house. Time is limited; what's *your* song? How long can you solo and with what ideas? Let me get ready for Srila Prabhupada *puja*, and to hear him speak *Krishna* book. I'm trying to play the safe bet to get to Krishnaloka, but He knows who I am at heart. We can't go to Krishnaloka just because we want to escape the miseries of this world. There, I won't be able to sit in a quiet bower while a disciple brings me lunch. Give it up "all of it. What are the signs that I am ready to serve Krishna day and night in Vraja? I may have discovered some essence of it, but I have not yet fully surrendered.

* * *

12:18 p.m.

Sitting waiting for lunch. read a little Cassian, then read my a few of my own poems aloud. What can I report? The birds twitterings as the whispering of the Lord's name? Don't expect to convince nondevotees, although that's also possible. Anyway, got my propaganda and I want to make converts.

But what does one do when he takes to Krishna consciousness nowadays? It seems awkward. He tells his wife; she's not happy about it. He sets up an altar in his room. Starts to read the books. Converses with devotees. Some become like friends, relax and joke and tell him how to offer his food. What's his relationship with ISKCON? With the GBC? Is he expected to give money? To go out and sing on the streets? What's his relationship with Srila Prabhupada? With Krishna?!

I'll try to help such awkward persons if they come my way. They're dear to Krishna. We're *all* awkward, like geese on land, quacking, straddling, fighting, seeking place and position. Who can deny that they are awkward?

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. Please accept me; please allow me to chant with devotion.

* * *

2:40 p.m.

Lord Krishna was beautiful as He walked on the road to Dvaraka, attended by His followers and relatives. Then He entered His 16,108 palaces by His *vibhava* potency. That means that each expansion is of the same transcendental quality.

One should not become astonished upon hearing that the Supreme Lord expands Himself 16,108 times. He's all-powerful. 16,108 is a small number for Him. After all, He has already expanded Himself into the hearts of each of the innumerable living beings.

The queens overcame all the social conventions that dictated that they should remain shy and went forward to meet their Lord. "And that is the perfect stage of meeting the Lord of the soul, Sri Krishna." In other words, we should aspire to break through whatever formalities hold us back and rush to Krishna in love with no other desire than to serve Him.

Woke with a hint of head fog this morning, and now I'm sleepy. Just four hours to go. Come on, read a little more of this sweet pastime. It's so nice how He comes home and His queens overcome their natural shyness. They embrace Him first with their eyes, then within their hearts, and then by sending their sons to be embraced by Him.

"The spiritual relation with the Lord is so enlivening and resourceful that one cannot leave the company of the Lord, once having taken shelter of Him." (*Bhag.* 1.1.33, purport) Be safe always under the Lord's protection. Fools miss the opportunity to surrender to the Supreme Person. I won't be such a fool. Go to Him and ask for deliverance. Actually, I am a fool, but I'm the right kind of fool.

We develop relationships here in this world with spouses and others, but they are all temporary and therefore are sources of grief. "But if the same relation is established with the Lord, then we are transferred to the transcendental world after leaving this material body and become eternally related with Him in the relation we desire." (*Bhag.* 1.11.35, purport) Perfect your devotional service here, then go there. I'm thinking like that. Be detached from this world. Lord Krishna has personal propensities, as we do. He's not impersonal. But His relationships and happiness are never material.

* * *

3:15 p.m.

Krishna in this world, but in the other world too. There, He is eternal; here too. He gives us so many chances to become attracted to Him. Otherworldly. Whatever we are, we should be alive and remembering Krishna.

There is no toast, no
most just fooling around
showing off.

Nothing but mundane boasting.

You can't be happy in this world because
all material pleasure is illusion

temporary
and that's how it goes down
in this place.

We used to preach like that (and still do), but we never stepped out of our roles. We wanted to open our mouths and tell the folks that Krishna was God.

I'm still a preacher. Let's see if I can give the goods.

Otherwise, I'm living for the quota.

Man, you harass me sometimes with your quotas.

Well, what else would you have me do? Go for a swim at the pool? Waste a day traveling between Point A and Point B? Talking nonsense or sleeping it off? Come on, the quotas are just to ground me.

Okay, then live for it. Make it your goal.

Living for quotas. That's the theme of this book. Maybe it can be the title too. reach the mark. Twenty pages a day. Make hay "break at twenty.

Second theme for this volume: "A Little Distant." both of these sum up my life lived in the groove. I try not to do anything that inhibits the attainment of my goal. The outer form of the inner truth expressed as a number. That sounds good, don't you think!

Like chanting sixteen rounds. A quota. Interesting you should mention that. (I chant eighteen usually.) I can chant eighteen rounds in a couple of hours; it takes me from midnight until about 5 p.m. to write twenty pages. That's because I spread the writing out throughout the day.

Boy, I didn't know this was such a serious thing for you. Maybe it's just an attachment.

No, it's art dedicated to Krishna. He knows my heart. The quota is how I live and breathe as a person in Krishna consciousness.

Do you understand? A football flies, a dark bird sings atop a telegraph pole, a sentence comes to the end and another begins. I drink water in between.

Heard the polecat was embarrassed. It watched a saint sit atop a column all day and night for twenty years.

No, we're not like that. We move around and even eat strawberries and cream for dessert. Fresh May strawberries. Delicious bread with olive oil too, all offered to Radha-Govinda. We are not so austere. But there is a good chance of dovetailing everything in Krishna's service.

Now I'll tell you a story. Someone drove to Baltinglass to get a ladder and a bell for our front gate so visitors won't get stuck out there. I played a merry song of praise for Lord Krishna.

This Dvaraka Krishna is the same king of the Yadus whom we have heard is most at home in Vrndavana, where He sports with His friends, the *gopas* and *gopis*, cows and calves, the river Yamuna and beautiful forests, and Govardhana Hill. Why is He not there now?

If it is not raining, I suggest I go outside to chant the thirty-two syllables of the Hare Krishna mantra.

May 24, 12:10 a.m.

Am I attempting too much by going into the restaurant today and then staying overnight at Bhadra and Sile's? But it seems the most sensible plan, because we have to get to the Justice Department office early tomorrow morning. Still, maybe I should cancel the restaurant-lecture and go just leave early tomorrow morning for the Justice Department. Let me think about it. I was just building up to two shots of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* a day plus the *Bhagavad-gita* reading at midnight. I don't want to disrupt that. Plus, maybe I don't have anything really to add to people's lives by lecturing today "my little half-hour speech about how God is both *aiSvarya* and *madhurya*. Anyway, let's look at the *Gita* now.

"O son of Prtha, those who are not deluded, the great souls, are under the protection of the divine nature. They are fully engaged in devotional service because they know Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, original and inexhaustible." (Bg. 9.13)

Reading through the purport, my mind is unable (or unwilling) to settle. I keep remembering the dream I had last night. Try again. From the purport: "One can become free from the control of material nature as soon as he surrenders his soul to the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

I can't claim this has happened to me. What do we say "that we are partially free of the material nature? That would be true, perceivably. Is it possible that imperceptibly we are (i.e., soon about to be) completely free? The clutches of *maya*. Thank God, we'll say, and sigh in relief. But she may return. She's clever. As soon as we're not interested in serving Krishna, she's there.

Maybe I should go today, even if I am feeling a little reluctant. I could write on that desk in Bhadra's room. I could meet my quota. Show interest in outer preaching, despite the inconveniences. My main concern is that I find it difficult to sleep in that room. I manage to get some sleep, at least, especially if I use earplugs. I'm also afraid the traveling will leave me more open to headaches, and that I don't want to disrupt my precious solitude. Then let me preserve the solitude within. If it's real, I will be able to keep it within myself.

Back to the *Bhagavad-gita*. Becoming free of the material energy promotes us to the spiritual energy. We *mahatmas*. "The *mahatma* does not divert his attention to anything outside of Krishna, because he knows perfectly well that Krishna is the original Supreme Person, the cause of all causes. There is no doubt about it." With us, it seems we know Krishna is God, but it doesn't make much difference to our lives. We live so superficially; we don't become empowered; we don't go deep.

Here is a sentence from the book, *Free Play*, which intrigues me. It's about improvisation. "If you are giving a public talk, it is fine to plan what you might say in order to sharpen your awareness, but when you arrive, throw away all your plans and relate, in real time, to the people in the room." That's what I want to do when I speak today.

Pure devotees are not attracted to other forms of Krishna.

Do you want to live in this house forever? You can't.

What's the best way to develop my spiritual and creative life, and to heal my health? Is this little overnight jaunt going to be that disturbing?

It will be good for me to break out of my little world here and to make some sacrifice. For me, that sacrifice is to live somewhere where things aren't only my way "to preach

outwardly at a restaurant where there will possibly be scruffy, crazy fellows to challenge me like the last time with that pro-killing "Christian."

Satatam kirtayanto mam: "Always chanting My glories, endeavoring with great determination, bowing down before Me, these great souls perpetually worship Me with devotion." (Bg. 9.14)

Srila Prabhupada states, "The *mahatma* cannot be manufactured by rubber-stamping an ordinary man." Did we (*do* we still) do this in ISKCON?

Oh, the critics! Do I fuel their fire when I talk this way? But I have to talk. My criticism is meant to drive us toward introspection, not to make a vicious attack. I speak as much to myself as I do to others. I go through the pain of the self-examination too. That gives me some right to speak.

* * *

Let's Go Out And Greet The Morning
& Obeisances to Sri Krishna in any condition.
The day I already said holds wind-tossed tree tops.
I ought to go out and greet it with my chants God's
names right after these lines.
I don't own anything
but my singing and dance
O Lord, let me dance
for You. "

* * *

4:32 a.m.

Jaya Nrsimha. What am I doing? I am celebrating a festival of Krishna consciousness. I have been listening to Vishvanath Cakravarti's story of the time Krishna hid in a box. Abhimanyu carried the box on his head and presented it to Sri radhika, citing a blessing from Mother Yashoda that She should decorate Herself with the contents of the box. I heard it while bathing and dressing the Divine Couple. Srimati Radharani seemed pleased to hear Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura's glorious words; he was Her great devotee.

And now we must move on in time, not trying to grasp that which is past. Make each new moment an act of service. That is how to become creative in Krishna consciousness.

The yellow Agnes rose is now fully bloomed and bending heavily on its stem toward Radha-Govinda and Srila Prabhupada. We decided we would leave here around 1:45 p.m. for Dublin lecturing. I will ask the Deities to wait for me in suspended time. They may continue Their pastimes until I return to my humble service. I ask Them to please care for Themselves, to be served by Their *sakhis* and *sakhas*, and to allow me to resume my service when I return late Monday morning. If I don't get back too late, I could still do Srila Prabhupada's *puja* to express my gratitude and happiness. It doesn't matter how the meeting at the Justice Department turns out, I will still always be the eternal servant of guru and Krishna. Although I don't seem to be pure and fixed in Krishna

consciousness "I'm carrying quite a load of karma from this lifetime as a New Yorker "I beg that Krishna will accept my attempt to serve Him and to think of His Vraja pastimes.

* * *

How did *Muktacarita* end? The *gopis* walked off in a huff. But Krishna was pleased with them. He took His very best pearls and personally strung them into necklaces, placed them in boxes covered with fine cloth, and inscribed each box with the name of the particular *gopi* to whom He wished to give His gifts. The first box He prepared was for Sri Radha. Madhumangala, Vrnda-devi, and Nandimukhi delivered the boxes. The *gopis* were all pleased to receive their gifts, and Srimati Radharani cooked an excellent feast for Krishna, which Madhumangala delivered. That's how the story ends, followed by Raghunatha dasa Gosvami offering obeisances to Rupa Gosvami.

This morning through the skylight I see the heads of trees tossing in the strong wind. Not much light in the sky, but the scene is delightful. May I continue to use my time in beneficial ways, begging Krishna, the Lord of knowledge and poetry and the master of Goddess Sarasvati, to allow me to use words to please Him.

My immediate objective is to rid myself of forgetfulness of Krishna and to make interesting true-to-life writing. I want to give something nourishing to my *sva-jati* friends. O likeminded devotees, please take solace in Krishna's shelter, because it is available to all of us.

A quota is something assigned to someone either as a reward or as a duty to perform. It is a share of something, or an amount of something one is expected to remit. I take it in both ways. My writing assignment is a gift from the Lord, a special mercy. I get my share of bliss through the twenty pages Krishna allows me to write. It is also a quota in the sense of an amount of work I promise to do. One may say, "Who has given you this quota?" I say, "My spiritual master and the Lord in the heart." Krishna has created in me a desire to serve Him through writing, and like everything else we do in Krishna consciousness, it should have numerical strength. It's a *vrata*.

The swaying trees are built to endure. The female sheep have been shorn, but not their lambs. The lambs now look almost as big as their mothers. Sad to see how they follow her. Send out the holy names of the Lord. Tell people what to do. As stated in the *ISopanisad*, we may accept our quota, knowing well to whom it belongs. remind them of this.

* * *

8:15 a.m.

I never know if I'll be well enough to do what I said I'd do. If pain erupts behind my eye, I have my first recourse "and it's a big one "the Esgic gun.

I'm not yet sure how today is going to go, so I didn't label the tape ministry tape, "SDG lecture, Govinda's restaurant, May 24, 1998." I haven't given the lecture yet.

So . . . how are you feeling?

There's a little static in that weak place, but I feel well enough to look at the *Bhagavatam*.

The queens, despite their magical feats and attractions, could not agitate Krishna's senses. Louts could ask impertinent questions here, which would sound more like insults than sincere queries. We could answer them, of course, but we are taught not to teach the glories of the Lord to the faithless.

Someone asked how the Supreme Personality of Godhead could be attached to His thousands of wives, since association with women is forbidden for advanced transcendentalists. Of course, the Supreme Lord is not attracted by mundane lust for His queens, "but they satisfy Him by their sincere affection and service."

I'll have to agree to speak certain things today because they are Vedic philosophy. Still, I want to try for a spirit of improvisation. And don't get stuck on, "Do I actually realize this?" That's not the first consideration. rather, the first consideration is, "What is the solid Krishna conscious theme you want to convey? Is it solid *parampara*?" The adage to *trust in the process* means one thing when I am free-writing and another when I am lecturing. When lecturing, it means to trust that if I speak authentic Vedic sound vibration (*Krishna-katha*), it will have a good effect.

The second consideration is, "Is this authentic for *me*? Is it hypocritical to say this?" That's also important. Have confidence that you can carry off the performance with what's needed. Just look at them, those familiar and friendly men and women devotees, the few new faces who although not recognized, are typical of faces seen at Hare Krishna lectures, and do what you have done many times. It doesn't have to be the world's greatest lecture. Don't ramble or merely stack up texts and analogies. As soon as possible, find the thread of the theme and go for it. You already have your verse. Let it guide you.

The assumptions of the philosophy may come across as dogmatic, as unproven and unconvincing. It's not convincing if our method of gathering knowledge is empirical or based on speculation. We must choose *brahma-Sabda* and stick to it. Devotees are not interested in argument, although we may use it to preach. Not everything in Krishna consciousness can be proved empirically or by logic. Just accept that fact. *Brahma-Sabda* tells us that Lord Krishna is independent; He can do what He likes. "But all His activities are full of bliss, knowledge and eternity."

Here is my moment of biggest crunch "when I assert Krishna's credentials and the power of the Vedic literature to speak truth. Don't apologize for it nor be overly liberal. Don't hammer it at people. Remember, what's hammering for me may not be hammering for Srila Prabhupada.

Anyway, just don't worry. I'm writing it down here so I won't have to think about it while I speak. Hey, maybe I'll even be able to laugh at myself, at the wonder of my having accepted Krishna as the supreme truth. I still have to admit that I don't know everything. "I just work here." Be humble and face the mystery.

* * *

9:25 a.m.

Feeling a twinge. Spoke with M. Admitted that at midnight I thought of canceling the gig today. Then read from *Free Play On Improvisation*. I usually don't improvise in life

"or rather I try to plan a trip as much as possible. Now I'm foregoing that to control pain. I think I'll take the Esgic soon. Yeah, man, go for it.

Don't play tired riffs. Look out at them (the people) and play what comes.

* * *

10:22 a.m.

Took Esgic "layed down in bed. Got some good ideas there. Pain went down.

Now I'm up and it looks like our venture to Dublin is on. What if pain returns today? Another pill? Don't think about it now.

To be true and honest, I may want to admit more how writerly my life is. By that I mean I ought to write about writing, if that's on my mind. I tend to avoid doing that because it makes the writing look too much like writer's notes. I put some of that type of writing in the appendices "how I think about shaping EJW, etc. I'm usually feeling out what genres to use, too, and waiting for something new to evolve. I suppose it's not always necessary to discuss it. I simply have to trust that whatever I'm writing is bubbling.

Anyway, my point in bringing this up is that I don't want to censor a whole area of my life just because I don't think it will interest readers or look good in my book. I still like the writing section in *Wild Garden* as much as or more than any other section. *Sadhana* comes through; everything comes through.

Why Not Fiction? was another bold admittance that my thoughts are preoccupied with what might seem to most non-writers as shoptalk. I mean, does it matter to most people whether it's worth working in fiction or writing in some other genre? Probably not. But that's who I am; it matters to me.

That's because I'm going to Krishna through writing. readers can substitute their own vehicle of approach for "writing": when I say writing, you say Deity worship or cooking or spinning or gardening, working oxen, book distribution . . . Because we are all interested in pleasing Krishna through what we do.

* * *

11:45 a.m., Springboard From *The Castle*

Take the SIrT southbound from Great Kills. First stop, Eltingville, then I think Annadale. It was a quiet place back then. Walk a few blocks, anticipating pain, to the house and adjoining office of Dr. Crewse.

The doctor wore glasses and had an official smile. He was both entirely professional and relaxed. Of course, we Guarinos did not accept Novocain; we had to save a few dollars by suffering. I used to go through a whole trip about it with my mother. Why wouldn't she pay a few more dollars for pain relief?

It was a question of budget, she said. And some members of my family thought the people who accepted Novocain were sissies.

And why travel to Annadale when there were so many dentists in Great Kills? I don't remember. I think it was because Dr. Crewse was lenient. That is, he didn't think he had to fill all our cavities at once but worked on our teeth over a period of years. A really bad first visit would reveal as many as five or six cavities. A light one meant only two or

three. From then on, we visited every week with complete dread. It was compulsory; a blue slip had to be filled out every six months and handed in to the high school phys-ed teacher.

It was after graduating from high school "I was probably in Brooklyn College by then "around 1960, when I paid one of my last visits to Dr. Crewse. I was carrying Kafka's *The Castle*. The cover illustration showed the village under a blanket of snow. At that time, I wanted to love whatever literature was considered great, but I didn't always like what I was reading. I always plodded through it anyway, and sometimes a flash of something would come through. I remember feeling that way about Proust. I also thought of myself as a writer, and thought by reading many books by literary giants, I would be able to absorb some of their technique. I defined "the greats" by what my professor, Dr. Alexander, called great "Dickens and Mann, for example. As time went on, I also began to make my own selections. That day, I was carrying Kafka.

Kafka was "in" in those days. I found him tedious, but I was also intrigued by the way he wrote in such an emotional dream-state. It was all so far-out. And you *have* to like Kafka, or what kind of intellectual *are* you?

Dr. Crewse saw the book and asked about it. I was eager to show it to him, but I said something terse. He said, "It's an intellectual book." He didn't know much about Kafka. I was showing off. But that wasn't all of it. I did really want people to love literature the way I aspired to love it.

I don't write fiction, but I do envy fiction writers the freedom they have. I'm just not willing to live in such a fantasy world. To read fiction means agreeing to suspend disbelief. I can't do it. I also don't like it that the author remains ever aloof in his story. He is the detached artist.

* * *

K. has come to the kingdom of the Castle. Everything is threatening. There are many touches of surreal, things that don't happen in real life, such as the twin assistants he gives the single name Arthur. And the whole vague, mysterious existence of the Castle. The modern-day (1990s) interpretation of *The Castle* states that Kafka was not intending a metaphysical allegory. The Castle is not a symbol for God; K. is not a person trying to establish his lost relationship with the Supreme. When I read the book in 1960, I was led to believe the story was metaphysical and symbolic. I read the translation by Muir, and he stated, "The theme of the novel is salvation." Today's translator, Markham, writes, "The allegorical reading . . . is now widely discredited."

Too bad. I'd rather read a religious story.

* * *

2:20 p.m.

Peak blooming season for white flowers "blackthorn trees, milkweeds, and others "all growing along the roadside, in the valleys, on the hills, and beside yellow dandelions, buttercups, and gorse. A bit of lilac here and there. Saw a dead magpie. Further on, I saw a live magpie pecking at a small wounded bird in the middle of the road. Two other

small birds were trying to harass the magpie to leave its catch. Now caught behind a line of cars.

* * *

3:00 p.m.

Spent twenty-five minutes dozing on the floor. Did I think of Krishna?

Yes, *about* Krishna. Thought as a lecturer "how to convince others.

The lecturer should be the most advanced devotee.

But that's not usual. in ISKCON, lecturing is just a service, and we all take turns.

Anyone can do it.

But I think of some of my first impressions of Krishna after hearing from Swamiji. I think I'll try to speak of that "becoming acquainted with the name by hearing from a pure devotee.

Now we are approaching city center, where they keep the more dangerous billboards. The eyes seek them out like fish to colored bait.

* * *

4:35 p.m.

Driving to Inchicore. Lecture was fun, hearty. I said we should be acquainted with Krishna. He will reciprocate with us. I invited Trivikrama Maharaja to answer a question. He answered it differently than I would have, but of course, what he said was correct. There are different ways to represent the *parampara*.

Head tired. Raindrops on windshield.

* * *

5:10 p.m.

At Bhadra and Sile's house. My head is a bit stuffed. The pain began while I was lecturing and feeling emotive energy (unusual for me). Now I can't do much. Waiting for it to be late enough to rest. Maybe I can try to sleep by 6 p.m. What else is there to do? I can't read or write, or even answer letters. Do something.

How can we lowly devotees reciprocate with Krishna? I suggested Deity worship. Is it better for us to concentrate on God's greatness rather than the sweetness, as in the five *rasas*? I said don't like to speak in either-ors. Srila Prabhupada presented both. How can we be with Krishna all day? Through our practical service. I felt the presence of that senior *sannyasi* Godbrother. I ended up speaking more conservatively than I might have otherwise, emphasizing that we have to follow the pure devotee and perform our service. The "extra" that would have been my own slant didn't come through much.

The house is quiet except for the sound of a motor and the clicking on and off of the heater. Madhu has gone off to practice with a fiddler. Bhadra and Sile and their children are at the Sunday Feast. *Bhakti* is that confidential service, I said. Be confidential and become acquainted with Krishna. He's the most important person in your life, and you should come to realize that. Oh boy, I spent myself.

* * *

5:45 p.m.

Go to bed. Go ahead, you'll be fine. Until you die. You're not the best. You've got your nest in Wicklow. Go there and write your way behind the twinkling windows. After you get permission in the morning to reside in the republic of Ireland for another year. And if not, return to America and find a place to hide. You could live around Gita-nagari on a small piece of land "I dare you. Or go upstate. Come out to write books, speak lessons, give looks, bow to superiors, think of antecedents. See you in Maine.

May 25, 12:41 a.m.

Stayed in the soft bed here thinking the extra rest might help me avoid a headache later. How nice the Wicklow situation is, where I can get up promptly at midnight and make noise without fear of waking anyone, and where the outside is as quiet as any countryside. I'm eager to return there, if Krishna desires.

How can we reciprocate with Krishna? How can we feel Krishna's presence throughout the day? Questions asked after yesterday's lecture. I could have answered them with more care for the person who asked them, I suppose, but I felt a little constrained by a Godbrother's presence. I usually try to be more tender and considerate when I present the philosophy. Under his gaze, I spoke straight and uncompromising.

Now no time to read *Bhagavad-gita*. I'll turn to whispered *japa*. May Krishna guide us all. Actually, the answer to those questions about Krishna's presence and reciprocation can be found in the holy name. I am not competent to answer like that from personal experience anyway.

Gave my garland to a mother of three young children. What quality does she bring to her chanting? Perhaps if we *yearn* to chant and hear, even if we are distracted while we actually do it, Krishna will still be pleased.

Hare Krishna. Thank you for the opportunity of a lifetime. I'm thinking of the ease I crave, the going right of events without setbacks. As if death and going back to Godhead are events like that "something at the end of a journey for which we can hope all goes well. No, even now I know that's not true. Those final events will be formidable. I prefer not to think about them too much; they are things I can't control. O Krishna. I trust You to wash away my little affairs and hopes and to carry me where You will.

* * *

2:40 a.m.

Getting the year's residency is important. It forms my persona. When I first got permission to stay in Ireland in 1996, I presented myself as an author who wished to live in Ireland. When the Justice Department gave the permission, I began to think I *should* be an author who would like to live in Ireland.

But I'm detached, ready for change if that should occur. If they don't let me stay . . . I daydream where I would go to seek seclusion. Perhaps I would have to settle for less of that. The neighborhood around Gita-nagari? To Italy? Puerto rico?

I'm not satisfied by how I answered Praghosa's question yesterday. He asked, "Wouldn't it be better to focus on Krishna's greatness than on a confidential relationship?" By giving the analogy of a meal with both savories and sweets, I implied that the sweets were included but not as important. What I should have said: Yes, concentrate on God's greatness. And what is the greatest of all His glories? That He is *bhakta-vatsala*, so inclined to His devotees. He expresses His love toward His devotees in confidential loving relationships.

The room is cold. Fourteen rounds done. No usual schedule.

* * *

On The Floor At Inchicore
& I want an art smart/ a devotee a
Mack "two people who would
bug me detain me an
Afton to flow sweetly
while I sing my song.

* * *

I want You Krishna in my life
and no one else. Said, "Who is the most
important in your life?"
Listen to this with me.

* * *

Now he said I bug You Krishna
brother: I'm buying a house
for a Krishna temple that I'll run.
Good I say I have my
headaches and you have yours.

* * *

Behind the windshield, nose in a book, head in clouds
over Dublin
mail hail shale "and they want to know
"Why aren't you in church?" Begging woman collapsed
sitting against wall on street at entrance to the chapel
of the Blessed Mary
open to passers-by
like in Vrndavana.

* * *

Our Krishna is the best friend He's
the Person in our life/ He's the
better-than-great
she wrote a poem to her husband "
"I gave my life to you and you're too busy for me.{"

* * *

These bits of life coming to me fast
he said, "I don't wanna go," but
we will go wherever
we are sent because
we believe in God. Told how
Swami introduced me to Krishna my
best Lord.

* * *

I have my own way of teaching
this philosophy.
My tender-wender-bender and others
have their way, closes eyes as if to draw
from within. Patience?
Where's he at?

* * *

Krishna is the God of all/ He's not just for Hindus.
After my lecture a young man said
his name was "Krishna."
Wow, what a name! I said,
putting him on. He said he was
from India and had some questions.
I said no, no time, no health.

* * *

Now good-bye to you I wrote this
song on the floor
at Inchicore. "

* * *

4:10 a.m.

They have a poorly reproduced (printed in India) *Bhagavad-gita* here. The color plates are a mess. Still, I can read that those under the divine nature are protected. When

I traveled with Prabhupada I felt protected in that way. A Godbrother on a plane with me said he felt we wouldn't crash because I, a zonal guru was onboard. But no one can save those whom Krishna has chosen to kill. The divine energy is the stage for spiritual protection.

This is not the usual time I attempt to read scripture. Usually I am sleepy at this time of morning. But I'm sneaking in a little anyway. The devotees are not even attached to other forms of Visnu "only to the two-armed form of Krishna. "Always chanting My glories, endeavoring with great determination, bowing down before Me, these great souls perpetually worship Me with devotion." (Bg. 9.14)

* * *

5:29 a.m.

Don't miss out on Krishna consciousness. This is your life. If you can't do one thing (such as read *Bhagavad-gita*), then do something else. All day long, be engaged in Krishna consciousness. Stay alive in it. Be with Krishna all day long. I prefer to be mostly alone, or with those who support the way I like to live. I don't have to practice Krishna consciousness in suffocation and neither do you. We are allowed to think for ourselves. Sometimes we are told that we shouldn't claim we can recognize Krishna's presence in our lives, that we just have to hear from the bosses, but I don't agree.

Did they understand what I was saying? Did I understand it? The implications, I mean? "I agree," I said to a Godbrother, but I didn't agree. I did, however, respect his seniority, which is special. Anyone who has been with Srila Prabhupada for such a long time must be doing something right. So mate, soul mate, how are you going to get through this day? You are fragile and dilapidated. You may take an Esgic "I can't have you going to the Justice Department in sharp pain.

I am averse to pain, but pain will come and I will be forced to meet it. Some say it's up to me how much I have to *hurt* or *suffer* from it. For example, I don't *have* to become depressed just because I have pain, do I? That would be a choice I make. But here I am saying my life is about meeting my quotas, and that those quotas are my secret devotional language, but when pain comes, everything, including quotas, is put aside. That, you see, is the problem. It's not exactly the pain but the loss of useful time.

I can see a church tower from here. O Hare Krishna. I can be with God in His name. When I am in that government office as an alien registrant, I can chant softly to myself. And I can write. Maybe they'll catch me on some technicality and make me come back for another appointment. They might even detain me in Dublin. I hope not. But if it happens, may I go with it in peace. Don't be anxious that everything must go my way. That causes worry and stress and triggers headaches. I try to avoid anxiety by controlling every step of the way. We will leave here just after rush hour traffic has peaked. I want to get to the office before they open because I know other immigrants do that, and I don't want to have to wait in a long, long line. If we leave the house late . . . but even if we leave early, we'll be stuck in even worse traffic. I could spend my energy looking out a window at each car ahead of us, wondering whether we will make it through the next green light before it turns red, or I can sit here in peace and leave at the right time. I am not the controller.

I dreamt the devotees were making a film, but each one was splayed out by his own mini-drama. I had the idea that we ought to get together. I was lying in bed and wanted someone to prop me up so I could speak to the devotees and explain this important point. I seemed to know what to do to bring the splayed forces together, if only they would accommodate my weak condition and prop me up in bed.

* * *

Swami put your teeth in "
Wow! You look good now!
As I've told you many times, "I like you."
Make sun while the hay shines or
is it raining (as usual) in Dublin?
Swami it's almost time for breakfast.

* * *

Rescind bad desires, regret harshness
and eat with a hearty appetite,
always remembering Krishna
and never needing
Kafka.

* * *

8:20 a.m.

Dreamt I was Srila Prabhupada's servant, going in and out of his rooms. He asked to see the young boy, Aniruddha, Pradyumna's son. When the boy arrived, I went in and stuttered, "Do you want to see Aniruddha now?" Srila Prabhupada replied, "Either I can see him or you can talk with him. That's all right too. I just want a report of how he's doing." Srila Prabhupada was concerned that after living for so many years in Krishna consciousness, a person like Aniruddha shouldn't be lost.

M. and I agree that there is nothing to lose at the Justice Department. Even if they tell me to leave Ireland, we'll take it as Krishna's direction and gladly make a home somewhere in the U.S. If they allow me stay, that's fine too. I'll continue, then, to live in the gray house behind the gray wall and write colored EJWs.

* * *

9:00 a.m.

At a parking place near the Justice Department. We'll leave here in fifteen minutes for a fifteen-minute wait at the office door. This is the city. My hand pauses over the notepad and trembles. White skin and bones, write your message and don't attempt to pour out all your impressions of the city. Just give us a few whooshing cars or thudding feet. People going to work and school. M. and Sile in the front seat chanting *japa*. I'm an oddly dressed person. *All* men wear pants. Women wear pants too, or skirts. We saw a

Christian-built, stone, Gothic church converted into a mosque, with a crescent replacing the cross. At the nearby street crossings, I saw a few Muslim women, their heads covered.

Ten minutes to go. This body is a fragile container. To get into the Immigration Office, I have to pass a policeman in a guardhouse. He will ask me to show him my passport. Sometimes those policemen make small talk. Then I'll go inside and feel anxious about the people ahead of us, especially the refugees seeking asylum "because they don't have to take a number. They are allowed to go right up to the counter and be treated as urgent, while the rest of us wait to have our number called. Why worry? Use the opportunity to pray to Lord Hari, my best friend. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. Go inside the mind and wait. Or think of *Gita* verses. Or talk with Madhu. Say hello to spiritual thoughts.

* * *

9:18 a.m.

Twenty people ahead of us! We should have come earlier. They've been giving out numbers for ten or fifteen minutes. We'll have to sit it out. Be calm and don't overwatch the progress of the people ahead of you. Hare Krishna. Calculate: If the office opens at 9:30, and each person takes only five minutes, that's one hour and twenty minutes before my turn. At that rate, we won't be out of here until 10:45. But there is more than one window "maybe as many as three will be opened. That could make it say twenty people covered in . . . Oh, Hare Krishna.

* * *

9:42 a.m.

Two people have been at two windows for well over five minutes. It may not go as fast as I thought. At least it's underway. They called #40; I'm #51. In the meantime, I'm reading for correction (and inspiration) EJW 22. M. says it's probably better I not talk. He thinks I should save my energy. reading can also use energy, but I just can't just sit here and look around at the people in this room. There is a group of men who look like Mormons "maybe from America "with white shirts and ties and plastic I.D. badges. Indian and Eastern types, fair people, dark people. And two Hare Krishnas. M. chanting *japa*.

* * *

9:55 a.m.

This wait is easy compared to being driven out of a home or imprisoned or starved. Imagine the famine the Irish went through in 1841. This austerity is nothing. Breathe in and out. relax. Hare Krishna. Write holy words. Just called #45. The group of Mormons look like they are being seen all at once.

* * *

Immigrant in this country
means you don't belong but
they may let you stay.
I want to go home to Goloka
grant me *that* passage I pray.
Real desire is shown in blood
and words chosen and lived "effort, love,
and the Lord's permission.

* * *

After they called #48, everything stopped. All the windows are empty. Is it a coffee break? M. says, "This is our reality for now, waiting for our number to be called. Soon we'll be on our way back to Wicklow and we won't be back here for another year."

"Once a year," I say, and look at a woman's foot. She is wearing white socks. He's right. This present reality will pass. Is that what I want? Be here now but deeper. relax and see Krishna even here.

* * *

Swami, control your senses
wounds, do you feel
at home in your ISKCON?
My attempt will soon be
measured in totals
in a cup.
Hare Krishna floats up
from my practice.

* * *

We wait calmly. I write calmly. Like an exercise in relaxation.

* * *

10:35 a.m.

The woman took my documents, then cast at me a calculating look. She didn't seem friendly. She has asked us to return to our seats.

* * *

Everything went well. She stamped me for another year. I'll be back by May 24, 1999.

* * *

2:40 p.m.

Back in the house and returning to my schedule. But I can't just hook back in with that subtle and clear quality required for reading the *Bhagavatam* this afternoon "too much has gone on today. I give thanks that at least I am physically here and stamped to remain for another year. I don't intend to leave Ireland for at least another few months. I don't even have to go to Dublin for another two weeks. Look out at lambs and sheep and love them, even though you are powerless to save them.

* * *

If the quotas are my life, what does it mean if I don't reach them? And, should I just fill up a page with *anything* in order to reach the quota?

Quid bird, stuffed head portion I
stretch forward.

No quid quota yet step and fly.

I'll find my Krishna

position forward over cement sidewalk
with cracks jump giant steps for Krishna.

Yes, for Krishna, my Lord.

"Just be yourself," is our philosophy. The trick is that we have to know the self. We don't recommend being just *any* self.

Be kind and considerate, learn how to encourage followers. Ultimately, they have to fly their own planes. Hare Krishna. They are getting old now, so how can I expect that I'm not already old, since I lead them in age?

Saw a man walking ahead of us as we drove into rural Wicklow. He was old and used a walking stick. Do I want to be reborn in Ireland?

What's the nature of peace between the North and South Irish, and what does England have to do with all that? Will I need to understand that?

The Supreme Lord protects His devotees, even if they appear to be fallen for the time being.

That "passion" or emotion is strong, where you act like a compassionate mother trying to care for her children. I mean, as a guru or preacher reaching out. You want to convey the philosophy in the best way, and you want to be satisfied that they are taking it. Communicate. But be calm. Just be out here. When you remain alone, you are calmer. First, however, you allow your feelings to approach Krishna. What's the point of rushing your feelings toward others until you do that? Calm yourself, and be patient. Allow the subtle mind to grasp what the *Bhagavatam* is saying and accept it as real.

Flailing head pressure,
babbling,
waiting for something . . . like a
drunk,
dazed . . .

Yogamaya makes the Lord's intimate devotees forget Krishna's immeasurable glories. "The Lord can be known by the mercy of the Lord only, and no other means." (*Bhag.* 1.11.39, purport)

* * *

When you are not strong enough or capable of beginning Chapter Thirteen, "Dhrtarastra Quits Home," because you are too old and feeble (like Dhrtarastra), at least say so. M. went out to find an electrician. He wants to bring him here to do something that should have been done months ago. Determined, late or not, to do that thing. That's what I mean "keep making the effort."

Did you see something of interest in Dublin? Did you avoid the billboards? Stay otherworldly? Saw the little banners of green, white, and orange, and the American flag. Saw a young man with a goatee and a backpack and signs for Guinness and Miller Highlife. How much can they drink in this one, tiny nation?

Yes, I saw it all. If I sit in the easy chair, maybe the day can spin around me more quietly. I have a busy subtle mind. There's no way I can reach my quota today. I have no repertoire either, except the flailing Australian crawl in four feet of water. But can only go a few yards.

* * *

3:40 p.m.

The year's clear residency in Ireland has to be certified by Krishna, but the government's stamp assures me that I can relax and grow like grass this summer. I know it's temporary, but it gives my moment a little more peace. I can ask for a garden now, since I'll be here to watch it grow. I can also seek mornings, rest at night, and smile at the folly (my own) in thinking I am Somebody. From there, I can see through to the essence of Krishna consciousness "whatever it is I am capable of "and live no other way.

* * *

Harribol. It's past 4 p.m. and I can't write? I don't remember how? I'm too spaced out. No taste. Then taste water.

Krishna time

sprinkle of rain leaves

flutter. All over hill and

vale the white-blooming of common trees "blackthorns and others "and milkweeds.

And grass. You won't see it this plentiful at any other time of year. The brief Irish spring. Irish summers are not scorchers. They barely know what hot weather is. Winters are mild. I'll be here to see all those seasons, because I have a year. In Ireland, all the seasons are rainy, with a chill in the air that never lets up.

Krishna is above the modes of nature.

Now the house is filled with the sound vibration of M. and the electrician. Get him to do the job. How long will it take? I'm planning to rest by 7 p.m.

O inner being, I sit back while you spin and

spin

slowing

more restful

and my stuffed head

holds me back.

May 26, 12:08 a.m.

Head still stuffed overnight. Lots of mail arrived. I thought to not worry about the quota today, although, of course, I'm not referring to my *japa* quota. We can't say, "The *japa* quota is external. Krishna accepts whatever I offer. I'll chant when I feel like it." No, we don't say that.

When I turned to the letters, I realized I couldn't answer them right now because of the head pressure. I can't seem to read *Bhagavad-gita* either. I'm tempted to take an Esgic, but I really should save it for when the right-eye twinge comes. Plus it's only Tuesday morning, and I've already had one this week.

With a stuffed head, the pressure pushing upward, I am beginning to feel more and more uncomfortable. I'm afraid if I push and chant vigorously, the pain will worsen. Each mantra will create a painful sensation "just the opposite of what I try to achieve when I chant. I want to be able to chant in a relaxed state, so I can have the best chance to hear with attention.

A friend sent some tapes of psychologists speaking about "woundedness," which apparently is a popular discussion in therapy these days. I'll listen.

Hare Krishna. Nice white pages I'm using, produced by Cambridge Co. of England. Inexpensive pads, not too thick, but as serviceable as my No Nonsense Sheaffer pen.

O soul of the universe, O Lord of the universe "that's Krishna. Please sever my ties of affection for the Vrsnis and the Pandavas. It would be nice to be a devotee fixed always at the Lord's lotus feet.

Whom do I need in my life? Who needs me? Article in ISKCON health journal states that if we want to die and be cremated in Vrndavana, we must act now. We must write out a will, have it notarized, then approved by two ISKCON ministries. We will also need to obtain permission from the Indian government, and when we get to India, we must also obtain permission from the U.S. Embassy. Otherwise, it is a criminal offense for the devotees there to cremate us. Those who do it anyway could be punished. We shouldn't make such devotees' lives inconvenient by our dying without preparation. If you stay at the hospice run by the author of this article, it costs a hundred rupees per day. So get your act together now.

What a turn-off. Maybe I'll just die in Ireland.

But that's risky. I might be reborn here. It's bound to be easier to reach Krishna from Vrndavana. I'll plan to go there if I get enough warning.

Write one more page and then I am on schedule with that. I am going to have to answer those letters. They are vibrating on my desk, calling me to tend to them. Answering letters is not as demanding as being with people in person. Stuffed head, stuffed pepper, I can't do much today.

If I read *Bhagavad-gita*, Krishna will speak to me. I'll enter that realm instead right now. Hare Krishna.

Indulekha sent two sets of clothes for my Radha-Govinda. I'll try one on Them today. And earrings. O Lord of the universe.

* * *

4:35 a.m.

Hare Krishna. New outfit for the Lord and His Radha. Listening to Krishna's astonishing pranks, described by Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura. One time He disguised Himself as Abhimanyu. Abhimanyu's sister, Kutila, was low-minded and dull. She thought Radha and Krishna's pastimes were sordid affairs, and she went to spy on Them. Part of me is like Kutila and thinks the worst of the best "Krishna's pastimes with the *gopis*. The better part of me is loyal and knows that Radha-Govinda's pure sports are completely transcendental, with no connection to mundane lust. It resembles lust "to someone like Kutila. So let Krishna trick her, and let me be on the right side. I don't want to be pelted by dirt balls!

That yellow rose has fallen over, dead. It only lasted a day or so. It withered while we were in Dublin. Hare Krishna. We leave our bodies in this world, but no one dies. The soul never wilts or is cut down or drowned.

Squeezing out something to say from a head already squeezed by dull pain. Can I relax? O Lord of the universe, O tender of the delightful cows of Vraja, O player in the groves of Vrndavana, will I one day become a worthy servant of Your servant of Your servant?

I dressed Srila Prabhupada "he allowed me. Sometimes I dream of him. He is my spiritual father. That is not something easily understood. The *gayatri-mantra* presents a prayer to understand that our spiritual master is dear to Krishna and situated in blissful Krishna consciousness. *Dhimahi*: let me mediate upon him.

It is 4:45 a.m. Birds chirping dawn. Soon the sheep and cows will stand and begin to graze. I have asked for prunes and opened letters. One young man says he loves me because I am like his own spiritual self. He says he is skinny like me, and was born under Sagittarius, and, like me, he likes to write and wants plenty of alone time to pray.

Where do they get that idea about me?

* * *

Sing, dawn birds, sing. Once I saw a blackbird singing in various tunes. Was he imitating other more colorful birds? I thought blackbirds only said "Auk!" But this was not crow. It was a smaller blackbird sitting atop a pole.

Tell us about Krishna, please.

Yes, I told you of His pranks. He is *purusa*; we are *prakrti*. We may pretend to be enjoyers, but that is illusion.

Go and read the mail. They send poems and diaries and incense and one man told me he was the guru . . . I am

tired,

do you hear?

I am tired of being on the library party. Bhakta X. writes, "New Vrindavan was a drag. I am not meant for going out in the rain 'like a fanatical Christian' and saying, 'Here, take one of these and come to our feast and stuff yourself.'" He wants to stay indoors and

write.

"I am like you,"

he says.

A woman wrote, "I read *Discovering Our Voices*. The writers seem to be imitating *you*. But I don't want to do that."

I did not think they were imitating me. I told her, "Sister, the most dangerous thing is to imitate yourself "to write a poem that you think will please others or that you think is the kind of poem you are expected to write." Write without preconceptions. Discover that you actually want to become Krishna conscious.

The Dublin mosque. They pray to Allah in there. I saw another Gothic church converted into a lighting store; another had a "For Sale" sign in front of it. Hare Krishnas don't have places to buy or sell.

The Roman Catholic boys on the streets slagged the Krishna conscious book distributor. They said, "There are thousands and millions of roman Catholics in Dublin. How many Hare Krishnas are there?" One of his friends jeered, "Seven," and they all laughed. It was not befitting of true Christians to be so boorish, but that's how it is in this world.

A devotee who is in jail wrote, "They cannot harm me, because Krishna is in control. If harm comes to me, it is from Him "for my good." He said he reads the entire *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and *Caitanya-caritamrta* every month, and he feels more free and content than he ever did.

I too am in prison, in a sense. I live behind a wall just like that devotee does, and I too have a yard for exercise. I too read scriptures and answer mail. Am I freer and happier than ever before? O Krishna, Hare Krishna. Look at the mug (your face) in the window's reflection as you chant.

* * *

I want a series to write on or be driven by. Need to fill up these pages, you know.

Oh, match-maker, find me a happy-sad Krishner, so I can anticipate all the ruffian slogans. See the demonesses with wild hair and pitch forks? Be prepared.

* * *

"Matchless Gifts" newsletter. Our regulars went out to lunch with the Mayor of New York.

No, they didn't, they went to an antique store, maybe. We don't know what "we are.

* * *

I'm trying to write a story.

Well, what's it about?

It's about rabbits. Hare.

Hare Krishna.

It's about dull heads and a temple president's wife. A court case. About those who write to their guru and say, "I presume you know what your disciple and his family are

doing here? They are testing my tolerance." The guru, however, is a traveling man. He absorbs himself in scripture, and doesn't know nothin' about nothin' relative. Instead, he tells that disciple to obey the GBC resolutions, and to negotiate his relationship with the man who governs his local temple. Then he goes out for a walk.

Is this bona fide?

Are you a sagging Sagittarius?

Do you have a noose around your neck?

Are you mentioning the mail again?

What's your series about, anyway?

* * *

It's a Krishna conscious shout blues blind, "We want Krishna!" All civil service employees took up the chant in a dream I had. They stormed City Hall, demanding vegetarian *prasadam* and time to chant their *japa*.

* * *

I asked, "What's your series about?"

It's a long haul.

I don't know.

It's uncovering itself. Gradually.

It's about a shouting-down party man. It's free to be a collage, a pastiche of people letting go and

finding out how to befriend themselves without the big-brother attitude toward themselves or finger-pointing guilt trips.

* * *

My series is about the sad and happy and cruel magpies. It's about the open, Krishna conscious secret that bad things happen to people due to their own karma and nothing more than that. Nature is neither blind nor malicious.

My series is open "you can come in "but it's mine, my offering to Krishna. You will believe in God by the time you get through with it, and you will also be able to convince others.

My series is left to rot.

Is the old flower dead? Is that Russian devotee who has been dead for three days in Delhi waiting for the papers to be processed before he could be returned to Vrndavana and cremated on the bank of the Yamuna "to the chagrin of his survivors who had to go through a hassle for this guy they probably wouldn't have gone through for him if he were still alive "that unfortunate, fortunate man?

* * *

In other words, the only series I foresee is the long, open blues shout. The collapsed weak voice, whisper-silence of head-pressured suffering.

Leave me alone.

* * *

10:22 a.m.

Sacrificing EJW to answer the mail. Thus I go against the literal meaning of this volume, *Living For the Quota*. Sometimes I insist on doing my twenty pages and sometimes I admit that I live for more than those twenty pages. EJW is certainly important to me on an ongoing basis, because it's my service. But I am kept from it by headaches and other duties. That *lack* of access to my writing quota is also my life. By answering the mail, I clear space for other types of writing.

But I am kept away, for example, from the delicate business (intuitive) of finding a new series. Or does the process want me to write without one? What if I tried again to springboard from *The Castle*? No scripture reading at all today; just struggling with head pain and pushing through, leveling the mail pile. Letter answering is definitely of primary importance. They write and I must answer. So dear EJW and budding projects within, please spare me any criticism if I don't make it today. Maybe with a greater effort I can finish most of the letters and be clear by tomorrow. Then I'll try to boost my output for the next few days to make up for lost time and still hit the weekly average. (Sounds like a baseball player trying to better his batting average.)

* * *

Decided to take an Esgic, even though the pain hasn't hit the right eye.

* * *

12:40 p.m.

O Krishna, I don't have to push myself to do those twenty pages, but neither do I have to push myself to finish all the mail today. No harm if there is a little stack left over, and I chip away at it gradually. My production-oriented (fruitive) self loves the sense of accomplishment when I do get something done, though. Still, that can get overdone.

Listening to the "woundedness" tapes. It occurred to me that my concept and experience of pain is centered on the sheer physical pain of the headache. I'm not dealing with my psychic wounds, although I have admitted to having some ISKCON traumas and a sense of loss. Maybe I should think about those more. But I recoil from pain. I take as many painkillers as I can (which isn't many) and only suffer what I must. Pain is another kind of reality, one I don't see as holy or enlightening. It simply calls for endurance, patience, and the hope that when it is over, I will be able to reorient myself to what is important to me.

* * *

1:10 p.m.

"I myself shall telephone," said K., and he phoned the castle. Classic lines from classic lit. But *The Castle* wasn't a classic when Franz wrote it in complete obscurity.

So? Why bring it up? Do you want people to appreciate good writing? Are you hooked on art? Addicted to something mundane that has no direct connection to Krishna?

Stand by, I'm going to try to connect it.

"From the mouthpiece came a humming the likes of which K. had never heard on the telephone before. It was as though the humming of countless childlike voices "but it wasn't humming either, it was singing, the singing of the most distant . . ." I think the Muir translation may have used the word angels here. This made me think K. was in touch with heaven.

This book is so dense, so deep into a world to which I don't want to belong. Perhaps in my former life, I could have pursued it with more interest. Not now. As K. is told on the phone that he can never enter the Castle (but immediately after is given a note encouraging him to stay in the kingdom), I say, finally, "No, I won't pursue reading this novel. Forget the daydream that you can springboard from it."

Back to my own life.

After my nap, I'll try reading "Dhrtarastra Quits Home." I can springboard from *that*. Hare Krishna.

As for now, I just want to tell you that it's pleasant to be pain-free. I feel like a millionaire (except when the damn pen conks out). Hare Krishna.

* * *

2:34 p.m.

Vidura was on pilgrimage for years. While he was away, he met Maitreya Muni and inquired from him. He was also "established in the transcendental loving service of Lord Krishna." When Vidura returned to the Kuru palace, everyone rushed to hear from him.

* * *

3:05 p.m.

I'm stalling. Just don't feel like writing right now. Don't feel like doing much of anything. Body stalled. Have to tolerate it.

He's going to build a deck around this house. Tomorrow, an electrician and his assistant will spend the day here. That will disturb the peace, I suppose, but it can't be helped. I'll write over them. But there's always something going on around here "hammering and sawing outside, fiddling with the electricity, drilling downstairs. It's not so hard to tolerate when I feel all right.

* * *

4:45 p.m.

Head pain rising again. I should go to sleep early tonight. I'm a young man, yet my head is old and tired. I can't heal it. I call it a "goddamn head," but I don't mean that literally.

Snooker champ weds ex-nun.

Bedizer bulldozer ferrets rut material.

Cursed from beyond the grave "Diana.

Minnie Mouse opera singer . . .

You get the idea.

Enough news from outside. Head refuses to do more.

A psychic, a reiki master, a massage expert, a pill, and a glass of water "and the prayers of a community "work wonders.

Thought, "Oh, let's not read this Dhrtarastra chapter. It's just about renunciation. Vidura's going to tell the old guy to leave home. I already know what it says and I can't follow the instructions anyway. I *stay* home, although my home is in the *sannyasa-aSrama*." Let me pray, Lord.

Oh boy.

Do you believe . . . they say old people require less sleep. A conservative outlook. I'm listening to a person who is a medical intuitive; she can diagnose patients, and says something about how the soul can heal. She sells herself as an authority. God gave her her talent.

What can I do? Am I a writer intuitive? A glamorous diva?

Believe in Krishna.

I didn't do so well today, but maybe tomorrow. If not tomorrow, then the day after tomorrow.

She says you can heal yourself. Create your own reality: you can create your disease and then uncreate it. Bring your soul, "home" to the center. And . . . ? What's there? Stayed tuned to see if she knows.

Some saints die ill. It's not everything to gain good health. Krishna may want otherwise.

* * *

The new series will be interesting when it happens. It will rattle with Krishna consciousness. It will cure me and my readers. Imagine that right now, you're getting a charge of something that vibrates to clear your head. Intuitively, you get just what you need. Then you reach for the water glass and drink. You sit alone. You breathe. What does Lord Krishna think of this? If it works . . . then I'll go back to *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Do whatever works? Hare Krishna.

It's just therapy, see? I am willing to try anything that will rattle my *chi* and disperse insidious *amma*. All the things I have taken into my body were not good for me. Pray on a kazoo.

I quickly realized, however, that all this will be held against me. He's in Mayapur studying, and what in the world am *I* doing? I'm a burnt-out log. Can't get it together. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna.

I will have to ignore the treatment they are giving me, these doctors, and just concentrate on the lessons I learned from my master. That's the only way to get through the last part of the day before hitting the Dead End.

O Krishna, I'm down on my mental knees, praying that You will be present in everything I am and do. It is You who has roused that worm, that weak artery in my head, and it is for You that I suffer. I think. But I do know that the Hare Krishna mantra will see me through.

I'll be there at midnight. Because I didn't read *Gita* today, it may be harder to break into it tomorrow, but I'll try. In the end, I'll be grateful or whatever I get. I promised You, Krishna, that I would be true, and I'm really trying.

* * *

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. New picture of *Santa* Nrsimha on my wall. I like that. I want His protection.

Stand up and sing the Hare Krishna mantra. Deliver the old best. Go back to beginnings. Do the things all the other people say they have to do "got to get done the dishes, the floors, the lawn, the homework. You know, I feel a little better. This mental sweat lodge may have helped. Still trying for the quota, though.

Fork it over. No rigor, Bhakta Sal went down, was even suicidal, but he evened out and is helping the temple to collect funds.

I keep asking this: "And me, what am *I* doing?" Of course, I'm waiting for the bus.

You mean, my mind is causing my physical disease and my soul can heal it? Tell me about it.

No, I don't believe it so much. I just want Krishna. Attaining Him is my only attempt at self-resuscitation: *prema-rasa, rasa-prema*.

* * *

5:55 p.m.

Night notes. Worn out. Dear Prabhu, take shelter of the Lord. Don't be envious. Keep on doing (fill in the blank). I'm sorry to hear of your falldown and that you are not chanting. Pick yourself up. Don't despair. I'm glad you're happy. read my books. I'm staying in Ireland. I am not angry, are you? Glad to hear. Sad to hear. Follow Srila Prabhupada. I am trying my best. I'm writing and reading. Ear of corn. Glad to hear you are growing and owning. Be true. Be honest. Be clean. Be smart. Don't be tricked by *maya*. Good. Not good. Do your best. Be silent.

May 27, 12:10 a.m.

"But those who always worship Me with exclusive devotion, meditating on My transcendental form "to them I carry what they lack and I preserve what they have." (Bg. 9.22) By performing some or all of the ninefold practices of devotional service, a devotee becomes perfect in self-realization, "so that his only desire is to achieve the association of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Such a devotee undoubtedly approaches the Lord without difficulty." The Lord helps him to become Krishna conscious, and when he's successful, the Lord protects him from falling backwards.

It's cold in this room. I'm feeling clear in the head now. Ashamed to write of my little life. The Lord protects what we have and carries what we lack. He is referring to His pure devotee, who may neglect his own maintenance while remaining absorbed in serving Krishna. The Lord enjoys serving such a devotee. This is straight Krishna consciousness. This is what we're after. Chant Hare Krishna, you(expletives here

insulting myself). Because I did not attain pure devotion even after the opportunity was handed to me by His Divine Grace "that's why I write such expletives.

By not knowing of the ultimate destination, those who worship lesser persons or places have to remain in the material world. "The Krishna consciousness movement is therefore distributing sublime information to the entire human society to the effect that by simply chanting the Hare Krishna mantra one can become perfect in this life and go back to home, back to Godhead." (Bg. 9.25, purport)

"If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, I will accept it."

A temple president told one of my disciples that when I visit a nearby temple next year, he wants to invite me to visit his temple too. No need to think ahead to that. But I do. I imagine giving a lecture and praising his management, reminding the devotees that I was once in charge there but failed to improve things. At least I kept it open long enough for this manager to come in and make it work.

You'd say all those things? Would it be a bluff?

I'd say, "Folks, I'm a great guy. ISKCON is moving beyond me, though. I have written so many books they fill a long shelf."

You'd say *that*?

I'd say I was doing my bit as zonal guru and was there to hear the first stirrings of those who were disrespectful toward us. "What is the world coming to?" I pondered. Little did I know we'd be shaken to our foundations. One politically astute guru warned me, "We had better step down, or we'll be dragged down."

Now some of my readers find such disclosures to be among the best things I write. What do you think of that?

If they love that, what have I loved (or at least liked)?

I liked going in the morning from Delhi to Vrndavana (or Calcutta to Mayapur). I don't know if I could say that anymore, that road is so built up. Things change. I hear American devotees say that there are hardly any Americans at the Mayapur festival anymore; the festival is attended by young devotees from "foreign" countries (read, former Soviet Union) and there exists a great difference between the leaders and their followers. The old-timers feel strange in such a setting. So guruship has triumphed after all. But what about the old days?

Let's hold something in place, frozen for moment in a tableau. Let's rant and rave and write position papers. I liked it, I liked it. I like Shiki saying in a haiku "reading thousands of haikus all day, (he was the editor of a haiku magazine) ""In the afternoon/ a few persimmons." Or, "In the afternoon/ the striking of the temple bell."

What else do I love? I love hearing how Krishna personally delivers His devotees. I like it when Srila Prabhupada tells that story of Arjunacarya. I like . . . ah, what does it matter? Shifting sands, what we have to suffer, we're not the controller, we are fools to think so ""With a song in my heart/ I adore your adorable . . . "

* * *

4:39 a.m.

Hare Krishna. "You get attached to your wounds," says Carolyn Myss, who speaks of woundology. We get clout or mileage from our wounds, so we don't let them go so easily. We bond with others on the basis of wounds, and manipulate others by showing them our pain. Our *prana* (life energy) goes into our wounds, which came from past bitterness, victimization, etc. This makes us less capable of living in the present and healing our physical illness. She says we have to "call the soul back" to the present moment and learn to be forgiving. Don't perceive things according to "an eye for an eye."

When I heard this on tape, I exclaimed aloud. It seemed so right on. I'm certainly getting mileage out of my headache syndrome. For example, in the letter I wrote last week to a Godbrother I said, "Leave me alone, because I get terrible pain." Myss says we have to have the courage to show people that we have changed, that we are now happy. I'm afraid to show the ISKCON world, and especially to signal to its controlling body, the GBC, that I am now living the way that I want to live, and that I am no longer willing to accept assignments from them. My chronic illness gives me the strength to resist a way of life that I no longer want to live. No one can defeat my pain. Others have no choice but to back away when I pull out my headache weapon.

I don't see, however, how this translates into wounds, by which she means traumas that happened to me in the past and which *caused* the headaches. But if I could accept more the responsibility for my choice to live a solitary life, I may not have to lean so heavily on the fact that I have headaches. I mean, I don't have to let the headache syndrome protect me. I can stand on firmer ground.

Still, the headaches *are* a fact, and they are the reason why I must live with solitude. I can't really separate these two points: my desire to live alone from the fact that I'm *forced* to live alone by the recurring headaches.

I'm trying to understand, at least intellectually, the concepts of woundology. I don't know how her ideas can heal me. At least I can say openly that I would like to be free of these headaches. And I'd like to be able to tell the world that I no longer want to meet people "just because I don't want to.

Other than that, I like the idea of calling the soul back to the present and paying attention to the holy name. That's the ultimate healing. I don't want to be splayed out, living in wounds. When I chant Hare Krishna, what am I doing with my life force? I can't seem to concentrate because I'm always splayed out worrying about headaches. I can't concentrate enough to pray because . . . I am splayed out. Hare Krishna. Look at the man who is chanting. He should not use his pain as the way to get what he wants.

* * *

Radha-Govinda have a new outfit today. It's yellow with a green waist sash. Radharani is wearing a reddish *choli* and a blue skirt with a diaphanous red veil. I hope They will be happy to accept what I have offered to Them. No one can understand Deity worship except the Lord's devotees. Others will think it idol worship, or only ritual. Who

can understand that God is actually present in the *arca-vigraha*? Someone who is too materially sophisticated will never accept it. Spiritual knowledge is a different kind of sophistication.

Big shots, lecturing before a thousand people, making money from what you teach, are you guiding souls? O makers of the times, interpreters of scripture, people with a message that blows minds, what does it all actually mean? Who is ordinary and who is special? When the fanfare is over, what do you have? Is your health better? Are you happier?

* * *

Here Too
& I want to be with you
I want to be free
gorse
sheep
yellow buttercup
weedful grass

* * *

I walk alone
creek bubbling "I call
my soul to be present and hear me
chant the Lord's names.

* * *

Up in clouds in sky on earth
a tiny person walking thinks
he'd like to love his Lord.

* * *

How nice to be walking like this
at 5 a.m. sky all light and
me in my own kingdom I
don't own but no one
to spoil it or figure it out "

* * *

just walking "rip or break a
branch of white thorn blossoms?
No, let it be, it grows for
Krishna, I said. The editor replied,

"I thought flowers bloomed for
Krishna only in Goloka."
I thought not "here too.

* * *

So back into your gate don't
be late for breakfast. If
you remember the blossoming
world

* * *

the sheep asleep against
the wall protected from
daylight now
moving into their field. "

* * *

8:32 a.m.

Lord Krishna protects His devotees from danger. Vidura protected the Pandavas and their mother from Duryodhana's attempts to kill them. Yudhisthira asked Vidura to describe how he lived while he was away on pilgrimage.

Oh, the uphill-downhill struggle. You've got to be kidding. This can't be *life*. Oh, yes it is, if only you'll awaken to it. Hear yourself speaking in the language of wounds, she suggest, and then you'll know how you are protecting the pain from healing itself. *Sri Krishna caitanya prabhu nityananda*. Lord Nityananda wasn't "wounded" by Jagai and Madhai.

I don't know what happened to me as I grew up. I survived. That's all. Don't think of yourself as a victim of something. But right now, today, I feel the first twinge of a right-eye headache and I can't stave it off with a pill. I don't have to advertise it or use it to manipulate someone "it's just a fact.

* * *

Prabhupada dasa distributes books once a week on the Dublin streets. He likes to write about his experiences, and I recently encouraged him about a piece he wrote exposing his vulnerability. He replied by asking how he could avoid being repetitious while writing about his adventures on book distribution. But he can't avoid it. Our lives are inevitably repetitious. Just write more. If I worry about repetitiveness, then I won't be able to write at all. We have to go deeper. That's easier said than done.

I had a headache yesterday and have the symptoms of one today. I took a pill yesterday and may take another today. But if I do, that's it for the week. I'll have to face the next rise in pain nakedly.

I read only a little in the *Bhagavatam*, then began to fall asleep. right after that, I felt the twinge. Now I'm sitting in my easy chair and feeling the tension in my neck that often goes with the smoldering behind the right eye. Myss's talk on woundology suddenly becomes abstract. I can't use it. I'm not conscious of holding past feelings or of being victimized by anyone. I feel fine emotionally, and I'm also free of the stress of management. I had a full career in ISKCON, and now I'm aloof. Maybe the headaches have helped me become aloof, but I don't need them to help me maintain my lifestyle. I'm ready to stand up for the sage's life. This headache isn't here to help me prove anything. I'd like to be healed.

But that's not the issue at hand, it seems to me. The issue I am facing is, can I take a pill without causing rebound headaches, or is this headache one I have to allow to flare up? I'm facing no bigger issues than that.

* * *

Woundology "I want to think more about the perception of being victimized because it provides mileage. In real-life terms, my headaches allow me to live alone, to refuse managerial responsibility, and to be free to be happy that I am able to be myself. When I think of the pain as giving me clout, Myss says, I "fuel" the *cakras* to send a "hold onto pain" message to the different parts of the body.

I took the pill and lay down on the bed. But M. was drilling downstairs. I asked him to stop. Now the electricians are here. I feel more secure in my work room than in my bedroom, so I have shifted back here. I think they may be working on the landing just outside this room, and I don't want to be "stranded" in the bedroom. Intimidated because I'm wearing a *dhoti* in my own house? I can't change who I am.

Write of crucial issues and be your own friend. Write something Krishna conscious on each page and watch the pages mount up. Each story completes a day. I know I am sincere, and that Srila Prabhupada and Lord Krishna are with me, even though I fall so short of perfection. *That* provides adventure! A story of despair and redemption by Lord Caitanya's grace. A story of mechanical and dry chanting that somehow manages to fill my day with nectar.

Take one day at a time. I don't feel guilty that I look for a pain-free day through these prescribed chemicals, and I know I'll have to catch pain when I have used up my quota. Wow, *living for the quota* suddenly has new meaning. It also means the Esgic quota. I'm living to see how I can remain active "and with active days, I make my writing quota "by rationing my anesthesia. Living for a quota of pain-free days. I am are attached to it, I admit, but I obey the quota and therefore don't abuse my body.

* * *

A general meaning of "living for the quota" is, "How much do I get? What is allotted to me?" The dictionary gives two meanings for *quota*: that which is assigned to a party or individual "his portion of food, supplies, or whatever; and the amount something or someone is expected to produce. I mean it in both ways. I want what's coming to me "both my karma, my portion of bliss, my share of the preaching, and like it or not, my portion of pain. When we think of that quota we think of *tat te 'nukampam*

susamiknamano. By the other sense of quota, I am expected to produce my sixteen rounds, to strictly obey four regulative principles, read at least something in Srila Prabhupada's books daily, and to write twenty pages a day. That's the literal meaning I intend for this volume of EJW. Especially the point about filling those twenty pages. It fulfills me, so I strive for it. To accomplish it, I use a variety of techniques, schedules, repertoire items "whatever it takes to reach the twenty. Lately, I've even been feeling that I can drop all strategies and just write until twenty pages have been filled up. The filled pages themselves will take care of all the requirements of interesting features and varieties of expression. I don't have to plan out anything more than arriving at the quota.

Of course, as I have already said, there are some obstacles on my road to fulfillment, such as the headaches syndrome. Whenever the pain begins to rise, I remember that I am not in control, not the center of my own little universe. At such times, I have to flip back to the other definition of quota and let it be predominant "I have a quota of pleasure and suffering in this lifetime, and I want to accept it.

The *ISopanisad* mentions quotas. Here is information from the first mantra, where Srila Prabhupada defines *tyaktena* as "set apart quota." The mantra says that everything is controlled and owned by the Supreme Lord (ISvara). "One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong." That's clear, and implied in that is don't work for something that encroaches on the rights or property of others. Everything we have and acquire comes from Krishna. We are entitled to it, by Krishna's grace, *but always remember that it comes from Him* and offer it to Him in devotional service.

"The root of sin is deliberate disobedience of the laws of nature through disregarding the proprietorship of the Lord. Disobeying the laws of nature or the order of the Lord brings ruin to a human being. Conversely, one who is sober, who knows the laws of nature, and who is not influenced by unnecessary attachment or aversion is sure to be recognized by the Lord and thus become eligible to go back to Godhead, back to the eternal home." (*ISopanisad*, Mantra 1, purport)

* * *

12:15 p.m.

Where do we go when our mind (spirit) wanders from the present? What thoughts and emotions impact us? I feel spurts of happiness when I think about writing, where it goes and what new directions may open for me. That's my major source of joy. Other than thoughts about writing, my mind is likely to go anywhere. I might relive memories, for example, and such memories don't even have to be connected to anything going on in the present for them to suddenly pop into my head. If a lusty memory pops up, however, I turn away from it immediately.

I tend to avoid the present when I have physical pain. Or, more accurately, I live physically with the pain and *allow* my mind to drift elsewhere. I observe it, and wiggle my feelers over things not within the range of my perception but which I hope or expect to experience. I am referring to new, creative approaches to things. Creative life has

meaning to me. Sometimes I feel fond of the reclusive life, and usually, I hope to embrace it more while dovetailing it in Krishna consciousness.

What about thinking of Srila Prabhupada? Of Krishna? I don't do that so much. I mean, I think of them, but not as if I am reliving episodes from *Prabhupada Nectar*. Prabhupada is important in my life, but I think of him more in a bottom-line way as the person to whom I am grateful, the one whose service I won't abandon, the one to whom I wish to remain obedient. The simple act of will to remain his disciple is strong in me. Gratitude.

* * *

Today I'm making my writing quota and using up my pill quota.

* * *

2:25 p.m.

"The time of death," he said, "is when you have to turn everything over to Krishna and completely depend on Him." Yes, I thought, this is real teaching "not how to live in the world with open *cakras* or how to live fully in the present or worrying about all those wounds we each carry.

Am I so smart or spiritually learned? If so, why do my eyeglasses slip down my nose? Why am I so intent on writing small things while looking for ways to escape pain? That's like being interested more in remission than in healing. All right, I admit it: I'm not advanced. I don't know much. But I'm in the right camp even while I tell others what they should do.

Apple pie with whipped cream "enough for the two electricians too, after it's offered to Srila Prabhupada and Radha-Govinda. They asked, "Is there a pub nearby?" Not out in *these* woods.

A picture that is supposed to be Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, with his beads around his neck "I'm up here with all this paraphernalia. Can't go downstairs. Could chant Hare Krishna in my room. Peace to the world. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. Wish they'd be through and we could have our house back.

* * *

3 p.m.

"My Lord, devotees like your good self are verily holy places personified. Because you carry the Personality of Godhead within your heart, you turn all places into places of pilgrimage." (*Bhag.* 1.13.10)

The Supreme Lord is perceived situated in His pure devotees like Vidura, just as electricity appears through the agency of a light bulb. The Lord is so visible in them because they are always serving Him. They serve "specifically by the process of hearing and chanting. The pure devotees hear from the authorities and chant, sing and write of the glories of the Lord. Mahamuni Vyasadeva heard from Narada, and then he chanted in writing . . . "

Yudhisthira asked Vidura about the well-being of the Dvarakavasis, whom he described as *Krishna-devata*, "those who are always rapt in the service of Lord Sri Krishna." Srila Prabhupada states that Vidura had left home to serve Krishna, whereas the Pandavas and Yadavas were always rapt in the thought of Lord Krishna. "Either remaining at home or leaving home, the real qualification of a pure devotee is to become rapt in the thought of Krishna, i.e., knowing well that Lord Krishna is the Absolute Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag.* 1.13.11, purport)

* * *

Writing while the workers drill away downstairs. They talk some. I don't know if they are aware that anyone is still in the house, since Madhu went out. Aniruddha is in the yard, sawing boards. I just hope the electricians don't start up a radio. If they do, I will go downstairs and say, "I'm studying for my exams, so I have to ask you not to play the radio. Sorry." I don't expect that to happen, but just in case, I have my lines.

I aborted the right-eye pain, but now head fog is forming. It's also forming outside and it's raining in the hills. As soon as the rain began, I saw a dozen cows and oxen run around as if they were running to get out of the rain. But where would they go?

* * *

3:45 p.m.

Aniruddha will come to see me in fifteen minutes just to see if I need anything. I'll tell him about my current strategy for coping with and enduring headaches. I'll also tell him that I'm not trying to evoke his sympathy but just to let him know what's going on here in this house for me. Otherwise, he might not understand why sometimes I can see him and sometimes I cannot. I'll ask Ani how his work is going. I think today he'll be working on the wooden deck so I can circumambulate the house. I suppose that's something no one else would ask for. I need it because the trail around the house is slanted (better for drainage with all this rain) and I can't walk on it.

Now the electricians are just outside my door on the landing. I feel penned in. But this may mean they are nearly finished the job.

* * *

Write to distract yourself. Bhakta Niles ate an orange. Bhaktivedanta Manor is a place. Wicklow is another. Either travel or stay home, work in a busy temple or in a remote house. The real qualification is whether you are rapt in Krishna meditation.

What if you are not Krishna consciousness no matter where you live? Then you had better try to improve.

What if you don't reach perfection by the end of your life? Then come back to the material world and try again.

But Krishna won't forget any service rendered. He will allow you to come back in the disciplic line and to become attracted in your next life to the devotional principles. You will then resume where you left off. It's *acintya*. You will be quite different "maybe a

different gender or nationality. You probably won't come back in a different species. You will push on with your Krishna consciousness.

The front doorbell just rang. Do I have to go down, past the work scene, or is Aniruddha there? I'll wait it out. It's 4 p.m.

Brother, I have a feeling that you'll have to go through some non-peace before you can reach the ultimate peace.

* * *

Drilling away. Sounds like a dentist's office in here. But these guys are drilling into wood. They'll find where to put the wire, and how to send it down the wall so we can turn the hallway light on from upstairs or downstairs. Then we won't fall down the stairs at night. No problem. Everything will be all right. It will cost something, that's all. But Krishna will take care of our maintenance; He will take care of any so-called ethical or religious deficiencies incurred by my giving up my assigned duties and trying to find my platform of personal surrender. O Krishna, please save just me from falling into sense gratification. There are no material obstacles to prevent a devotee from serving Krishna, but there *appear* to be obstacles. May He please remove those false conceptions and weaknesses of heart.

* * *

Vidura was considered a *Sudra* by birth, but he could still become a spiritual preceptor for the royal family because he was trained by Maitreya Muni. Lord Caitanya taught that it doesn't matter what we are by *varna* or *aSrama*. If we know the science of Krishna, we can become guru.

* * *

5:35 p.m.

Quota of writing, quota of pain. Quota of rain is high in Ireland. The salesmen were given quotas. The villagers were given quotas of butter. rations, portions, allotments, goals.

The electricians are young men. The main lights went out in this room, so I went out and asked, "The lights are out. Did you turn . . . "

"We turned them off for a few minutes," they said. Maybe they are having a problem with that one switch on the landing. I can hear Ani hammering downstairs. My head is clear for now. Looked out the window so intently at a rock in the wall that a face appeared in it. Try by your will to enter attentive, silent Hare Krishna mantras "a few. With these workers so nearby, I can't chant regular *japa*.

Drink water. Your quota, sir, has arrived. Sometimes you wait and nothing comes; other times, you feel as if you received more than usual. It averages out. Krishna is in control. When we ask, "Where do we go at death?{ we should know that Krishna will ask us, "Where do you *want* to go?" That may be a difficult question for many of us.

* * *

6:35 p.m.

The electricians left, but they didn't finish the job. They will have to come back another day. I'll sweep up after them. Light in sky. Light in electric. Ability to see in eyes. God behind all. Go into darkness, come out life after life.

Radha and Govinda wearing the color of sunlight. Srila Prabhupada in tan, saffron. Ani has left and I'm finally alone in the house, but it's too late to do anything but rest. Tomorrow, I think I'll have to face a day without a pill to get me through. One quota or another will have to be upheld. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. Fill in the empty spaces.

May 28, 12:07 a.m.

"If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I will accept it." (Bg. 9.26) That's God talking. He wants our love. He doesn't need anything else. He can gather fruit Himself, or take it from any of the innumerable liberated devotees in the spiritual world. He's not lacking food or devotional exchanges. But I and the other conditioned souls are suffering from lack of active loving service to Him. He invites us back. We could say He is lacking us. He feels for us: "Please come back," and, "Here is an easy way."

I *need* an easy way. I need my love for Krishna. Basic faith and devotion are hard to muster once we've fallen. This is the way to eternity, bliss, and knowledge (and out of the hell of material life). It's easy and universal. "Who is such a fool that he does not want to be Krishna conscious by this simple method and thus attain the highest perfectional stage of eternity, bliss and knowledge? Krishna wants only loving service and nothing more."

Lord Krishna won't agree to accept anything unless it's offered with devotion. If we want to participate in making an offering, we should find out from the spiritual master what Krishna wants as our sacrifice.

When you try to read *Bhagavad-gita* (so you can be Krishna conscious in the present moment), where does your mind wander off to? Yesterday's events. The electricians and the fact that they didn't complete the job and will have to come back. Then I heard the van driving up the hill. Madhu is back and will be coming into the house at any moment. He'll just be coming in to use the bathroom. I also hear the tinkling of rain on the skylight. Then I turn back to the words and read them again. I think of my own offerings to Srila Prabhupada and Radha-Govinda. I do it with some devotion, and I try not to offer Krishna things that Srila Prabhupada said He didn't want. I also try to offer things thoughtfully. I try.

"Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer or give away and whatever austerities you perform "do that, O son of Kunti, as an offering to Me." (Bg. 9.27) This verse is supposed to speak of something less than pure devotion. Here the sequence is that first we act in what we are already inclined to do, then we offer the result to Krishna. "*Bhakti* is different," writes Bhurijana Prabhu. "In *bhakti*, we first surrender to the order of guru and Krishna and then act."

I often wondered about this. My writing "am I *already* doing it, for my own satisfaction? Is "Steer it to Krishna" my deep dedication to Krishna or my frantic, last-minute attempt to retrieve a gone-awry action? Even if, alas, I'm a *karma-yogi*, my life is

still redeemed because I offer what I do to Krishna. I surrendered to my guru and I continue to do so. I'm now involved in surrendering my will and desires more and more at his feet. Perhaps I did surrender everything outwardly to him and acted like his puppet for years, but the puppet didn't surrender all his internal desires. He was pretending to be fully surrendered when he wasn't. He pretended he was a child, totally submissive to his spiritual father. This was particularly true in the guru's personal (overpowering) presence. And he was a pious puppet too, which helped him maintain the pretense of surrender. He wanted to be a good son in his father's eyes, as well as in the eyes of other devotees. And of course, he had his own estimations to think about.

Now this puppet is facing something harder. He is trying to learn how to surrender desires that were covered or dormant. Even *karma-yoga* can liberate him, but he would prefer to attain pure *bhakti*.

If this self-diagnosis is correct, I am at a very personal stage of trying to give myself fully to Krishna.

I won't belabor this point right now. Suffice to say I make my offerings with fear and trembling, praying that they are accepted as an act of love. The best method to attain pure devotion is to hear *Krishna-katha* and chant His holy name. Also, we should follow Prabhupada's order and preach as widely as possible. I'm doing all those things. I'm even trying to improve them, and to become more consistent, attentive, and wholly present in my offerings "more aware of Krishna's presence.

* * *

4:34 a.m.

Now compose yourself. I heard Ms. Myss while I was in the bathroom. She speaks of spiritual values, discipline, but bases everything on her opinion, which in turn is based on her eclectic studies and her "vast experience" as a medical intuitive. I heard her cover a wide range of subject matters especially during the question and answer period. I began to hanker to hear instead a speaker representing the Vedic-Vaisnava version. That authority is more impressive to me. Especially when one speaks (as she did) of past lives, of the soul's nature, of relationship with God, of His will, or even of what is best for our physical and mental well-being. I don't feel she knows enough about those things. Who is her guru?

I turned off the question and answer session and turned on a Prabhupada lecture. He was speaking about Bhagavan. Later, I heard us reading *Laghu-bhagavatamrta*, and there also, scientific knowledge about God and the soul flowed, this time from Srila rupa Gosvami.

Radha-Govinda are wearing beautiful outfits that were obtained in Vrndavana. "Therefore, Vrndavana is so important," Srila Prabhupada said, speaking of the Vrndavana in India. Devotees are special people.

Now I am tired. Choosing my words more carefully. I took in certain sound vibrations today, and allowed thoughts to pass through me. Now I ask myself to write something. The most recent impressions have arrived at the end of my pen. But I don't feel like writing them all down right now. Must be that bouncer at the door of my mind. Let Sri Krishna reign in my heart. That is all I really desire.

While you live, center on Krishna. Bring your attention and discipline there. Krishna consciousness is the post-graduate study of all spiritual teachings. It is the wisest discipline. Krishna is the supreme truth, and He is a person. He is also not alone. I know they sometimes say God is alone, but the *Brahma-samhita* assures us that He is surrounded by cows, *gopis*, and *gopas*. His land is paved with *cintamani* stone, and His palaces, rivers, birds, and all other things and entities within His kingdom are all eternally liberated souls totally in love with Him. He is not a stark "Other Light."

In the last verses of the *Bhagavad-gita's* ninth chapter, Lord Krishna pleads with us to become devotees. Let me respond by pleading with him to please pick me up and place me as one of the atom-like devotees at His lotus feet. There I will serve Him actively.

* * *

Let your intelligence tell you what to do. Don't be governed by lower desires or the fickle mind. A devotee's intelligence is governed by the intelligence of the Supreme as it is revealed in scripture, in the spiritual master's teachings, and by the Lord in the heart.

It's almost 5 a.m. I'm accumulating pages already. My head is all right, but I expect trouble around 9 or 10 a.m. Or perhaps later. I am coming to expect the headaches to arrive, since they have been so regular lately.

I can't seem to say anything. Then let me free-write.

The bored epidermis picked the fingernails again and again, flaked off the slatelike dead matter in thin layers from the fingernail tip. Throw the slivers away. After all, one doesn't want to make a meal of them.

Someone said it's not good to dwell on memories, or at least to identify with them. Why not? They are part of life. But it is a fact that the most important thing is to improve ourselves in Krishna consciousness in the present. For amusement and out of curiosity, and because I am intrigued, because I think they may hold a clue, I turn to dreams and sometimes tell one. Similarly, I mention occasional memories. I do it for myself. I am not trying to write an entire sociological history of Great Kills, New York, just look at bits of my life and see what they have to do with who I am now. Hey, remember Moe Isaacson? He ran the stationery and gift store. He sold odds and ends "toys, school supplies, things like that. His store was on Gifford's Lane. He was fat, Jewish, and used to wear a white shirt with his suit pants. He would sometimes stand at the entrance of his store and block the entrance. But not to keep us out; he was always inviting us to come in. He sold Esterbrook fountain pens too "I remember that "and plastic cowboys and Indians and model airplanes. He didn't sell cigarette paper as far as I know. Did you ask me that?

Return to earth and to your spiritual master's service. It was a brief step back into the past and it's already almost over. Except I suddenly saw, in my mind's eye, a red radio Flyer wagon, the one on which I chipped my tooth. That tooth is gone now. The dentist pulled it out and I didn't even save it. If I had saved it, I could have sold it a few years ago the way priests used to sell indulgences "someone might have even thought they would become free of sin if they kept it on their bedside table. Another lost chance.

Spring has disappeared and there has been no real summer. Now chant and walk. Hare Krishna.

* * *

When They Gave Me Three Minutes To Preach
& They said, "I'll give you just
three minutes." I stood up and told them
Krishna is God and you people ought to
Recognize Him in this age where
God is denied. I preached like
that and uttered the mantra for
Relief "mine
and theirs "said
Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna
knowing they'd be thinking, "Oh no,
a crazy Hare." And,

* * *

"Who is he to tell us?" Krishna arranged
that we are looked down upon
in this age, but we messed up our
own reputation ourselves.
I said all that
in three minutes. "

* * *

8:47 a.m.

If I were alone without outside books to tell me things, if it was just me and the *Vedas* and my guru, I wouldn't think I lacked anything, such as Bly's analysis that celibates lack a deep maleness. I would simply accept my failure to be a more submissive disciple, daring and active in the Lord's service. If I couldn't have fully realized Krishna consciousness, I would work to regain as much of it as I could. Krishna consciousness wouldn't have to bounce off something else to make it true. I mean, I wouldn't have to argue against what "they" say to prove that Krishna consciousness provides a viable paradigm of what a human being should be. Krishna consciousness would just be.

But I don't live in such a vacuum, and I doubt anyone does. Our movement does hear of others ideas, and we do tend to "smash" opponents just as any other movement does. We *have* to fight Mayavadis, for example, because Prabhupada said they were offensive to the Lord.

The definition of *Sraddha*: having faith that if we can attain Krishna consciousness, we will reach life's perfection. We lack only deep Krishna consciousness. Striving to attain it, even if we fail, is the only truly heroic expression.

If I am willing to read writers and hear lecturers, then let me hear Mahatma Vidura addressing Dhrtarastra. The *Bhagavatam* tells us that King Yudhisthira and everyone else in the royal palace were "raptly attending the lectures."

Vidura tells Dhrtarastra, "Please get out of here immediately." Srila Prabhupada: "Old age is the notice of the arrival of death served by cruel time, and no one can refuse to accept either summon calls or the supreme judgment of eternal time." (*Bhag.* 1.13.19, purport)

Not interesting? You prefer to read about "deep maleness" and woundedness instead? You want to read *only* about Srimati Radhika, despite your lack of qualification? You don't like Vidura's speech to the old, blind king? Why, because it doesn't apply to you?

No one can check death. "Whoever is under the influence of supreme *kala* must surrender his most dear life . . ." (*Bhag.* 1.13.20) Srila Prabhupada: "Even in our daily life, so many things come and go in which we have no hand, but we have to suffer or tolerate them without remedial measure. That is the result of time."

* * *

Just heard a vehicle coming up the road. Aniruddha?

* * *

No no no no
art smart/ religion forsaken
a tiny person/ epic time

people other than Hare Krishnas are also spiritual, thinking, suffering, and learning deeply, making their impression on the world, making money too, using color, pleasing God. Do you think that only you guys please God, you very few people who walk around saying, "Krishna Krishna"?

Devotees bedraggled. They are special people.

Everyone comes and goes so quickly in this world. Worship the *devas* and you'll go to the *devas*. Or the *pitrs* or obelisks or Eastern religious-yuppie-social clubs, caste conscious pollywogs that we are. The 19th century is gone, and the 20th is on its way out. The 21st will also come and go. "I say heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not."

What does a man care if he lives and then dies? "After me, the deluge." Better get those papers in order so you can be cremated in Vrndavana. Ironic portraits, hangman's humor, true until the end.

The rare and fortunate soul attains Krishna. He loves Krishna, and thinks of Him constantly. He also serves Him utterly in this world. That's how we get to where Krishna is. Where Srila Prabhupada is. He gave us a place in his movement. We have a chance to follow him.

* * *

10:20 a.m.

I don't have a series. My pen doesn't know what it's expected to do, but it moves around anyway. Sumptuous.

Why do artists paint so many nudes? I don't get it. I prefer to paint clouds remembering God. That's okay, laugh at the expense of the celibates while I smile at the

cost of you material enjoyers, those who think there is no life beyond this one and no intelligent control of existence.

Pujari has arrived. I hear another car coming up the road. I've already got the mail. Not expecting anything new. Maybe *that's* Aniruddha.

* * *

Although my Godbrother recommended *Iron John*, I don't think I can get into it. Not now. He takes his wisdom from the ancient fairy tale now understood by modern man. Simplistic notion of the Hare Krishna celibate "he'd mock. Maybe I'm incomplete, not a "man," he might say.

* * *

12:20 p.m.

Just out the window and over the wall, a half-grown lamb is lying down in the grass. It is well covered in wool. It's odd for it to be there all alone, not moving, though. Sheep are flock creatures. I had to open the window to throw out the water from Srila Prabhupada's bath. That frightened the lamb and it got up. One of its legs appears to be injured. It limped for a step or two, then sat down in the grass again. Chewing cud, alone. It knows it can do nothing else right now.

* * *

2:38 p.m.

"You yourself have expended the major portion of your life, your body is now overtaken by invalidity, and you are living in the home of another." (*Bhag.* 1.13.21) So spoke Vidura to his brother, Dhrtarastra. The human form of life is meant to facilitate our seeking the protection of the Supreme Lord. Vidura warned Dhrtarastra that his teeth were loose, "your memory is shortened and your intelligence is disturbed." These signs of old age mean death is nearing, "and still he was foolishly carefree about his future."

What should we be doing that shows we are taking approaching death more seriously? What are we waiting for? Many of us are already dwindling. Dwindling is the next to last of the six changes before death. "They forget their permanent identity and become foolishly active for impermanent occupations, forgetting all together their prime duty."

"One should therefore practice devotional service at home, hearing and chanting the holy name, quality, form, pastimes, entourage, etc., in association with pure devotees, and this practice will help one awaken God consciousness in proportion to one's sincerity of purpose." (*Bhag.* 1.13.27, purport)

* * *

3:05 p.m.

Okay, I'm serious, but I'm not dead yet, so let me color and preach. That's the kind of man I am. The day is sunny, and Aniruddha is working on that track around the house. After that's finished, I won't have to go anywhere at all.

O Krishna, please help me. I want to bring my soul back into the present so I can pay attention to the *maha-mantra* as I utter it. That's my goal. Please help me be simple enough to achieve it.

Simple? A simple devotee is someone who cares for nothing more than following his spiritual master's order. And even that order has to sometimes be boiled down to the few essential practices he can do. That's what it means to be simple and dwindling at the same time.

Hare Hare, bored, dazed, dozing, headachy, diminished "but not *so* distracted, not "*stri*," increasing the diversions. I will try for this. Not something I've attained, but planning.

* * *

Madhu is taking melodeon lessons in Kerry. He's doing what he needs to do to fulfill himself.

* * *

An intelligent person chants Hare Krishna.

I heard that already. Write something new. "As I have said several times . . ." That tune. Fingers grip a pen. Ten percent of our brain power is all we use. We went to see him and he was wary, but he kept saying "Krishna, Krishna," and speaking about the Lord. We figured from that that he was doing all right.

* * *

Summer here can have so many cold days in it that you think it's winter. My feet are itching to get out on that track. Maybe I'll go down there and see what he's doing.

Prabhupada wrote, "According to your sincerity of purpose."

Clouds running downhill "the bowls upside down. Wicklow hills slope fast against the sky in long lobes of land "all of it somehow hidden down here more than an hour from Dublin.

Yeah, after this I'll check on the progress of that wooden deck. Having it will give me the room to increase my *japa* quota. I hope to become attached to walking out there. Of course, I can't expect something external to improve an internal practice. Yet if we are going to arrange for any facility in life, it might as well be something to improve our *japa*, don't you think?

Aniruddha says he loves to work with wood. He also says he needs one more day after today to finish this job. His work is also meditation.

* * *

Water, please. I'm no warrior. I don't know *what* I am, except that I'm dwindling. Of course, I am better off than Dhrtarastra "or am I? Vidura came to save him; he was in Krishna's direct *lila* . . . Anyway, I'm not surrounded by relatives. Disciples, yes, but that's not the same. Disciples aren't materialistic. Lord God, I wish to sing like a dutiful

bird, happy in my remaining seasons. Please let me be with You and sing that song of one who calls out for You. No spiritual champion here, though.

* * *

4:25 p.m.

Hear the wind whistling and pushing against the house? The injured lamb is gone. Thought, "Leave your wounds behind. Don't dwell on them. Bring the soul from the head to the heart to God, God, God in His name, in me, my friend, the protector whom Prabhupada tells us to worship."

* * *

5:18 p.m.

We are not monks in a monastery, although there may be similarities. Even if we are temple inmates, we worship Krishna in His Deity form, honor *prasadam*, invite guests, and chant the holy name "acts unique to Gaudiya Vaisnavas. We have already created a Western version of the above.

Going to bed soon. The head is beginning to fog. I'm trying to get through these last three days without right-eye pain. But I won't focus on that as my main objective.

I love this life. I value it. It is Krishna's gift. If pain comes, I'll remember the preciousness of His other gifts and pray for the strength to endure.

May 29, 12:10 a.m.

Dreamt I was riding a bicycle and singing aloud to impress women, but there was no practical follow-up. I remember writers who described how they yearned for something beautiful beyond what can be found in this world, and who therefore never surrendered to the pleasures of worldly (sex) happiness or drudgery. Those are the writers I yearned to follow. Later, I learned that others condemned them as sick and ineffectual.

But there *is* a beauty beyond this world. That beauty rests in God. Of course, religionists are also mocked by worldly fellows. Then what is truth? What is happiness? Let us hear what Vidura tells Dhrtarastra (not exactly on these themes, but connected in a way).

Vidura convinced his brother to leave home and to go to the Himalayas to perform austerity. Gandhari followed him. In the morning, Maharaja Yudhisthira and the others discovered their absence. Maharaja Yudhisthira didn't think of Dhrtarastra's misdeeds but of "his own unavoidable misdeeds. That is the nature of a good man and devotee of the Lord. A devotee never finds fault with others but tries to find his own and thus rectify them as far as possible." (*Bhag.* 1.13.33, purport)

Sanjaya lamented for his master, Dhrtarastra, not knowing that he "had left home in enthusiastic cheerfulness for a better life . . . Unless one is convinced of a better life after renunciation of the present life, one cannot stick to the renounced order of life simply by artificial dress or staying out of home." (*Bhag.* 1.13.35, purport) In ISKCON, we may leave "the dark well" of family life and join the society of other *sannyasis*. Such ISKCON renunciants usually make themselves available to give spiritual counsel, manage projects, or live with disciples. They exchange one social setting for another. I did that too for many years. Now I have renounced much of that and am trying for

something else. My only hope is that what I am doing now is accepted by Prabhupada and Krishna as preaching.

Sanjaya said, "I have been cheated by those great souls." Sanjaya had been Dhrtarastra's secretary for many years, but neither Dhrtarastra nor Gandhari told him where they were going. "That great souls cheat others may be astonishing to know, but it is a fact that great souls cheat others for a great cause." The ultimate criterion is to the Lord's satisfaction. "We also have the same opportunity to cheat family members and leave home to engage in the service of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*." (*Bhag.* 1.13.37, purport)

At that moment, Sri Narada arrived at the palace. He will preach to Yudhisthira, Sanjaya, and the others about how to understand Dhrtarastra's departure. Srila Prabhupada describes Narada as a traveling preacher who is doing his utmost to bring living beings to their normal condition as servants of God. This preacher is the dearest to the Lord and should be greeted with honor.

Yeah, I know what you're thinking. You're asking yourself whether you have abandoned this role, as if you used to be a follower of Narada and now care only for yourself. The purport does mention that the confidential devotees of the Lord "preach the glories of the Lord in different capacities." Me too. If I want to increase my preaching, let me first increase my self-honesty. Then I won't be able to forget to care for others.

* * *

4:32 a.m.

First birds calling. I woke up at 10:30 p.m. and heard a bird then too. It was not entirely dark out. In Ireland, you can go outside as early as you like. But I have morning duties indoors. I am also suspicious of physical exertion, and think it is contributing to the headaches. Or perhaps they really do just appear on their own.

Yesterday I spoke about my headaches with Aniruddha. When he referred to "uptime," I said I was trying to learn not to see headache pain as "downtime." But I haven't really succeeded at that yet. I do see the special feature of such a vision " that it's a way to be close to Krishna, who is always close to me.

I am not expert at dressing Radha-Govinda, but if I look too closely "is Her skirt too low? His cape not draped artistically enough? Her veil right? His turban too high? "then there will be no end to the imperfections I will see. At some point, I have to back away from the inspection and ask Them, "Please accept whatever I have done. Please be satisfied with Your own beauty."

What is the bird singing? Just an ordinary song, yet it's part of Krishna's creation. Srila Prabhupada said that since we are part and parcel of Krishna, we are His partners. (Of course, we are *subordinate* partners.) Krishna says in *Bhagavad-gita*, *sarva-dharman parityajya . . . surrender unto Me*. Since we are Krishna's partners, we should preach what He says and wants ""Surrender to Krishna." And we should surrender ourselves according to our capacity.

Uddhava dasa is intent on preaching in Dublin with the *bhakti-vrksa* model. He and I have been discussing what preaching means. Someone said that whatever any devotee does is some form of preaching, if not by precept, at least by example. I agree. Uddhava speaks of forming cells, with one person responsible for seeing that everyone is engaged

according to their natures. When I heard that, I wondered why one person has to assume to know how to engage others according to their natures. It makes it sound like a busybody post. But there is room for that too, I suppose. After all, the person with *iSvara-bhava* also has to be engaged according to his nature. And some people like others to check up on them. If no one is looking in on them, perhaps they will become complacent.

Hare Krishna. When the wooden footpath around the house is complete, I shall trod it for the purpose of calling out to Krishna, O Lord, please help me chant Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare. If I cry earnestly enough, You will respond. I trust in that.

* * *

Madhu was very enthusiastic upon returning from the melodeon teacher in Kerry. The man encouraged him that he has the most important musical gift "a love for playing. He also told him how he could improve his technique.

Don't judge people. Don't hate yourself. Love your own shadow and then you will be able to be compassionate toward others. I heard a preacher combine Christian tradition with Jungian Depth Psychology. I couldn't follow it intellectually. It was so mental: "I hate myself, and therefore I have a right to be angry with you." The audience laughed, enjoying the sophisticated concepts and his instruction on how to practice forgiveness.

But we are so prone to fall into self-deception.

I turned off the tape. It was too psychological for me. I yearn to hear straight Prabhupada. I ran upstairs and got a lecture. Prabhupada was lecturing on Sankhya philosophy, something about the *mahat-tattva* and the *pradhana*. At least it was straight stuff. I turn the volume way up so I can listen even while I'm bathing.

But I realize that everyone has something to say. We can hear their angle, and even get confused sometimes. I can't always assimilate it all and therefore fail in my attempts to be up on the latest understandings of truth and spirituality "out there."

For example, that preacher from Berkeley was speaking on the book, *A Course In Miracles*. He said the book was widely misused and easily trivialized despite the fact that it was actually quite profound. He knew the person who had dictated it. He said it goes further than the Bible. The preacher sounded convincing, but again, I had had enough. Went back to the straight and pure.

* * *

Krishna actually did return to Vrndavana after killing Dantavakra. He sported with and satisfied the residents of Vraja. This is inside information given in the *Padma Purana* and the *Laghu-bhagavatamrta*.

Lord Krishna has four features which no other incarnation of God has: the best devotees (in Vraja), the sound of His mind-enchancing flute, His personal beauty as a cowherd boy (appreciated best by the *gopis*), and unexcelled pastimes. O Radha-Govinda, please accept my worship.

* * *

5:30 a.m.

Out for a walk. Everything is so beautiful and richly green. A light rain began to fall, and I was surprised. It reminded me that I am not the controller. I didn't want to get caught out in the rain.

One of the most beautiful sights on the walk was the vision of this house snuggled against the bottom of a hill. It's cement-colored with a thatched roof, and as I looked back toward it, it was half hidden in the trees. This is the lushest time of year. Everything that's going to bear leaves is covered in green by now. And so many white blossoms! It makes me feel like celebrating the spring. Yet it's cold enough to wear a turtleneck jersey, a sweater, a sweatshirt, and a coat. That's Ireland for you.

The low stone walls are also part of Ireland, and the sheep partitioned by them. I saw one lamb separated from the flock sitting peacefully inside a little grove of trees. I looked at it as I walked past, and it looked back at me with a stupid but innocent expression. I didn't disturb it. A little peace while in a concentration camp is a great thing.

* * *

Now's The Time
& Now's the time/ I went out there
and saw the rain-mist-hills and cottages
sheep one lamb alone in a grove
behind a low wall.

* * *

Now's the time to recall that I
want to be free a devotee and
that no one can stop
me as I go my way to Him
and hear from my master
the same things the same
mantra. "

* * *

8: 10 a.m.

I've been watching the lambs since they were born. They didn't begin to eat grass until just recently. Now they're fat and woolly, and they graze right alongside their mothers. April has turned to almost-June. And me "I turn my head this way and that, and what am I, a human, eyeglass-wearing llama? What are my concerns? I'm on the look-out for pain.

Speaking of quotas, I've already used up my Esgic quota this week, so I probably won't go to Dublin on Sunday.

". . . here it is specified that the devotee who has always lived his lifetime here under the direction of the Supreme Lord, as stated, has evolved to the point where he can, after

quitting this body, go back to Godhead and engage directly in the association of the Supreme Lord." (Bg. 9.28, purport) Srila Prabhupada defines a *sannyasi* as one who renounces all interests except serving Krishna. "A person who is thus always engaged in the service of the Lord, or is always thinking and planning how to serve the Lord, is to be considered completely liberated at present, and in the future his going home, back to Godhead, is guaranteed."

Can't say I am guaranteed so soon. When will I be liberated? I shouldn't bother Krishna with a request like that. Create your own ticket back to the spiritual world by learning to love Him fully. In the meantime, face the consequences of your acts.

* * *

M. liked the tape on woundology, so I'm thinking about it again. She suggests we respond to our wounds by letting them go. Live in the present and forgive the past.

Just now I thought how the great majority of the world's people rejects Krishna consciousness. Even those interested in spiritual direction don't consider Krishna consciousness a bona fide path. They consider it a movement for fanatics or something, a cult. They've also heard that it's abusive toward women and scandalous in a number of other ways. They've seen its members on the streets or in airports and been disgusted.

Or am I wrong? Do people think like this anymore?

Anyway, I daydreamed that such widespread rejection wounds me. It hurts. *Do I* belong to a weird cult that takes a narrow view of things, rejects Western culture wholesale, yet doesn't revolutionize people? I feel uneasy. But it's far too late to consider not being a member of this group. Could I be a pants-wearing member of the earth's male population? No, not even that.

Relax. Sometimes I do wear sweat pants like any other man and walk the roads at 5 a.m. And widely accepted or not, I feel my connection with Prabhupada and Krishna.

* * *

M. admitted that when he heard how people use wounds as clout, he thought of me. He added that I don't use my headache syndrome to manipulate people. I use it to get away from society and its dealings. I use it to get others to leave me alone, not to hurt them. We both agreed that I have been more assertive recently in stating that I want to be alone *because I want to*. Perhaps as my voice gets stronger, my need to mention pain as a reason for my lifestyle will decrease.

But aside from headaches being rooted in trauma, they are an existential reality for me. I have to honor that reality, and that takes courage too. A person who is actually (biologically) afflicted with a chronic disease wants to stand up for it. I just wrote a letter to a devotee advising him to do just that. It's part of his integrity to tell people he has pain. It's not the lie of a malingerer; nor is it a negotiating tool. Strange case I've become. What's the saying ""Between a rock and a hard place"?

* * *

Lord Krishna gives special attention to His devotees, yet He is otherwise impartial. That's natural. Would you like to be in the special group? I was in the best class in high school, the class of 57 - 1. We were the bright kids. But I slid down, got low marks, and ended up in community college instead of a fancier college, then had to enlist in the Navy as a common sailor. Neither did I have a strong body nor a smile that would win the hearts of women. I didn't make much money either, nor was I a leader among my friends. But I was a writer, and that was a special group in itself. My society was the society of sensitive outcasts, and we strengthened our identity by reading world literature. remember Hesse's *Steppenwolfe*? Before it was too late, I came to ISKCON, the Swami's ISKCON, and became special within it. I was accepted as a sincere son and reliable worker, a bona fide disciple. So I rose in the ranks of this new religion, was appointed GBC, given *sannyasa*, became guru. Now down again.

What are you talking about?

I'm just responding to Lord Krishna's saying that He gives special attention to those who are devoted to Him. He thinks of them confidentially, and responds to the love they offer to Him. Krishna is not a pushover, yet He is extremely soft-hearted. He cannot be tricked or cheated. If we actually love Him, He will honor and return our affection. That's the science. So, ask yourself, "Am I special to Him?"

* * *

10:50 a.m.

Set out paraphernalia for massaging Srila Prabhupada. I'll be listening to a JS lecture if the tape doesn't break again. Massaging Srila Prabhupada. My hands, his back, his tan "as it used to be. As it is now.

Saw little Varsana (maybe five years old) climb over my wall. She's a spirited girl, impish, and pushes herself past the safety zone. She explores to see what fun she can have. Born into a Vaisnava family. For me, such easy climbing up the wall is impossible. Whatever surprises I seek must be inward, and even those . . . But I know things she doesn't "disappointments, limits. She will have to learn limits, probably the hard way. And of the unlimited Krishna, the unlimited soul!

* * *

11:48 a.m.

Mmm "come and smell the sawdust fresh from the carpenter's saw. Come and be enlivened and lively and lovely too. Be gorgeous, smashed by the fist of the unruly. I believe I can't go too far out before that boy will reel me in.

Riposte.

Calm

down. Calm

down.

Chant Hare Krishna in unison.

People agree. That's *sankirtana*.

Secrets.

Seminars. A lone scout reports what he sees

seesaws he
wants to have the last
word.

* * *

Krishna Consciousness Is A Live Wire
& You better write to me soon
I will and here it is. I love you
kick off *maya* "sure I
do. Let's dance two conservative old
men
did you see
his receding hair line
pot belly
bookshelf of *nirvana*
books?

* * *

I saw he was okay.
Played it smart and lectured to
a safe audience "got strict with them
told them, "Our *sastras*
say this and
if you get any
weird ideas just quit it."

* * *

He fights in ISKCON
for ISKCON.

* * *

That's good. I'm going to tell you I
want to represent *Srimad-Bhagavatam*
but I'm a nice guy sort of "
looked in mirror "but
fading away.
You grow old fast in this world.
I've seen people go white-haired
overnight.

* * *

Krishna, Krishna I
try to read what Krishna
said but the book was giving me trouble
I mean my mind
was. So I remembered what I'd
Read before. It's as good
as reading. You just say

* * *

I'm not this body but
lower than a blade of grass be
more tolerant than a tree

* * *

and men get
worked up and give emotions
out.
I want that for
my own
KC
PK I mean shuffle it around
you'll get cut off
he said
and reshuffled by *maya*

* * *

I don't want to be left behind like
that a big mistake. Krishna
consciousness is a live wire. Down
to the delta down to the prayer mat
back to beads (rosaries) the
Rose is dead but thorns still prick
on a new day. That's how
it is. "

* * *

2:45 p.m.

Narada Muni was received with honor when he arrived after Dhrtarastra's departure. "Sri Narada said, "O pious king, do not lament for anyone, for everyone is under the control of the Supreme Lord. Therefore all living beings and their leaders carry on worship to be well protected. It is He only who brings them together and disperses them." (*Bhag.* 1.13.41) We can change neither our destiny nor our position as Krishna's

servants. "The best thing, therefore, is to achieve salvation, and this prerogative is given only to man because of his developed conditions of mental activities and intelligence."

Eyes shut, head slumped forward. I catch myself asleep, yet thinking of what I just read "how no one escapes the control of the Supreme. Lord Krishna can change the results of the karma we have coming to us. He does this for His pure devotees. "There are hundreds of examples of reactions changed by the Lord in the history of the world." (*Bhag.* 1.13.43, purport)

Narada advised them not to lament, because no matter what their theory about the destination of the self, everything is under the uncheckable divine energy. Since they couldn't change it, why lament?

* * *

You are getting through, reaching at least your minimum quota. The ox and ox man are working together pulling the plow through twenty pages before night or pain closes this workday. Ink stains the page. render acts of service to Lord Hari.

* * *

3:34 p.m.

With this I'm going all the way to win the ball game. To serve Krishna. I am alone at the end of May, upstairs while men work on the house. Words pour out/ he's angry/ no

I give that up.

I forgive *everyone*/ my

art I forgive

everyone. I want to be

a devotee we all have to be moved

by God without

complaint.

* * *

The guy was angry enough. Then it got late and he drank water.

I'm telling you, this is Krishna "Krishna science. He says in these crucial, beautiful verses, "Just surrender to Me.

I'll deliver you. I want you. Be saved. I'll change the reactions "I can pardon you from the laws of nature."

O man calling out to God, *let it out*.

* * *

How to see Krishna there? Say you are in a dark theater making the best of it

you and your friends. You make it, man. People may talk but you don't stop your action chanting

Krishna, Krishna, Krishna is pretty is

Rough and you sigh with good health,
glad for a few varieties.
I hereby bless my Godbrothers I mean
touch their feet. Seek allegiance in the movement even if it moves me like a checker
piece on the board of someone else' plans.
Krishna science startles me startles
London/ I am soul essence/ break through to
God/ His son-devotee who
works for Him
His service to ask people
to preach on His behalf.

* * *

O Swamiji, I see cows like toys on hills
everything so far away because my eyes are
defective but in my heart that order
you gave and / I live for it.

* * *

4:28 p.m.

I want to be a Krishna conscious monk and get input from various disciplines and arts so that I can write something interesting. Yes, so I can hold their attention while I say something substantial. There's no point holding someone's attention if I am wasting their time. They will always see that their time is being wasted. So I'll make a speech as if I were Narada telling the king why his uncle split.

You see, we all have to grow under the direction of time. Narada is often telling people who lament that they should not lament. He speaks high philosophy, and tells them that we are under the control of the ultimate authority; we can't change that fact. Anyway, the soul is not affected. One who laments must be identifying with his body; he thinks someone has died. Narada: "All illusion."

After hearing from Narada, these lamenters usually get over their illusion and attain a high position. He doesn't merely console them, he gets them to understand eternal life. He uses their own grief to transform them. They were ordinary people before they began to lament; afterwards, they are transcendental. That's Narada's role in the *Bhagavatam*, it seems "to bring them to that point.

Be indifferent to material tussles. Of course, Narada doesn't teach a transcendental vision that lacks Krishna consciousness. He teaches people to know their eternal relationship with Krishna and to understand the glory of pure devotional service.

These books are wonderful. So don't come after me, Mr. Conservative ISKCON View. I'm doing right. Don't bug me, he said.

Ordering stuff from Viking Office Supply. They take your money eagerly, then send you your stuff overnight. They lure you to make purchases by sending a constant stream of catalogues, each filled with photographs of attractive secretaries. The old snort who is the company's figurehead boss sits on the cover and points to the goods you should buy

"the best leather, executive chair (\$300), the locking storage boxes, the coffee cups, the Looney Tune promotionals, the colored markers, the best paper at the best price. What more could you want? A devotional catalogue could never list things like that "how much could they charge for *bhava-bhakti*, the *astika-bhavas*, freedom from lust, greed, fear, and more? Can't buy love.

* * *

Didn't get a major headache today. Got through a day of glass-blowing, stepping on ladder rungs without falling off, and I didn't open any old gashes and no one dear to me died.

There's still time for that. You know the story of Lord Buddha asking the woman to collect some rice from the house where no one had died. She couldn't find such a house. That's how he taught her about the inevitability of death.

When were you last tested? Did you see the face of that dying man? Are you a gentleman that you expect others to be gentle with you? Have you read your own scriptures so deeply that you think you have time to read the scriptures of others?

Have you lost faith? You should, you should, you should, he keeps saying. And he keeps saying what's wrong with those who are less than a hundred percent strict and faithful. He never admits that he might be one of them. We want to hear more *truth* than that. We already *know* that the absolute truth is where we should be at. You say one percent *maya* is *all maya*. But we want a lecturer who will open us up more to the realities we all face. Nothing watered down. But is it possible that such a compassionate and daring speaker could come before us?

No, he says, not possible. We're too busy playing the role of the stalwart and the strict. Because rot has entered ISKCON in the form of anything that is not a hundred percent scriptural. Scorch it! Laugh at it! Say there is nothing that we can learn from any of these *mudhas*. And then quote Srila Prabhupada to prove it.

O Krishna, we don't want compromise, just to find the good and to use it in Your service, if it's usable.

Anyway, let me shut up and eat my carob cake. Stay quiet and narrow, and don't tell us anything more about others. Live in your own pepperpot of heartache.

* * *

6:02 p.m.

Mama sheep is still giving milk to fat lambs. They wave their tails like babies, but they're fairly big already. It's no longer a pretty sight, since the mama has been shorn of her wool and her legs are so skinny. And you know their fate.

This night is still bright and sunny. Ani is almost done. Perhaps he will finish the job by tomorrow "my prayer walk. Then I'll pray for peace and the well-being of the Krishna consciousness movement.

This is page twenty-five. It was a good day. I covered the distance bit by bit. Let go of some negativity too. I am prepared to live the way I want and I refuse to be intimidated about it. No more guilt.

May 30, 12:04 a.m.

"Rupa Gosvami says that as long as we are in this material world we have to act; we cannot cease acting. Therefore, if activities are performed, and the fruits are given to Krishna, that is called *yukta-vairagya*." (Bg. 9.28, purport) By offering the fruits to Krishna, we become personally renounced from them, and we gradually make progress toward the liberation of returning to our eternal service at Krishna's lotus feet.

* * *

Let it be said that another possible root of my headaches is not my own negative perceptions or karma but the stuff I receive from others when I accept initiate them in Krishna consciousness. Srila Prabhupada said that: "Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu therefore states that the spiritual master who plays the part of Krishna's representative has to consume all the sinful reactions of his disciple." (*Bhag.* 4.21.31, purport)

And:

Srila Prabhupada: "Therefore to become a guru is not an easy task . . . He has to take all the poisons and absorb them. So sometimes "because he is not Krishna "there is trouble. But for preaching we do it, even if we suffer." Srila Prabhupada mentions that Jesus Christ "took all the sinful reactions of the people and sacrificed his life." (PQPA, pp. 57 - 58)

"Sometimes a spiritual master takes the risk of being overwhelmed by the sinful reactions of the disciples and undergoes a sort of tribulation due to their acceptance. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu therefore advised that one should not accept many disciples." (*Bhag.* 4.21.31, purport)

"If the spiritual master is attacked by some disease, it is due to the sinful activities of others . . . But we do it because we are preaching. Never mind "let us suffer "still we shall accept them . . . The pain is there sometimes so that the disciple may know, 'Due to our sinful activities, our spiritual master is suffering . . . ' Even if there is suffering I know Krishna will protect me but the suffering is not due to my sinful activities." (PQPA, pp. 58 - 60)

Some reflections on this: This is at least a viable alternative to the idea that I cause my own headaches due to holding onto some wound or negativity of my own. If I suffer as a spiritual master, then I ought to accept it. I wanted to preach, didn't I? I wanted to please Krishna and guru? So this is my path. This job is not "karma-free." But I am a member of a great tradition. I'm not another Christ or Prabhupada, but I follow in the footsteps of those who accept suffering so that others may be delivered. Don't resent it. Tell them to behave, but know that not all of them will. I'll have to suffer. (Think about showing new initiates Prabhupada's quotes before initiation or from time to time.)

But ultimately, I don't know why I am suffering or how Krishna is specifically dealing with me for my purification. I do have faith, however, that He is handling me personally, and that whatever He does is for my good.

Is it wrong, then, to try to avert the pain by taking painkillers? No, I don't think so. Having to take the painkillers is part of the pain. If I don't take them, which I could

choose to do, I would have to sit stunned with pain, unable to do any active service. My *sadhana* would have to be less vigorous. It would be difficult to preach. Still, I pray not to resent the pain but to be willing to accept it as part of my service. I am under Krishna's protection. "In all activities just depend upon Me and work always under My protection. In such devotional service, be fully conscious of Me. If you become conscious of Me, you will pass over all the obstacles of conditional life, by My grace . . ."

* * *

It's Saturday. Last day to make up the week's quota. Arbitrary seven-day markers and divisions. I flow and can't resist time. If I try to resist, I cause myself strife. Time moves me. Chant as I go, pray to Lord Krishna to accept me in this act of calling His holy name.

* * *

4:31 a.m.

Radha-Govinda in light green outfits with gold trim and meadow-green *cadars*. They look neat. Gold flute and walking stick. I listened to our reading while we were in Vrndavana a few years ago. I heard the metal door of Baladeva's house fall shut, and a dog howling outside. Takes me back there in my mind. Many in ISKCON seek the blessing of Vrndavana and go there. If I join them, I can expect the dynamics and struggles that occur whenever many individuals gather. Plus it's a foreign land, at least externally, and I always feel the strain of our material wealth versus their obvious material poverty when I am there. The Brijbasis are holy, yet they are . . . What can I say? The ISKCONites come from many lands. They are holy too, yet they are . . . I still won't say it.

I go to Vraja to seek the inspiration to perform pure devotional service, yet I am harassed by my material conceptions of life. For these and other reasons, I stay in the West. No stress. Yet I know of Vrndavana, and of Radha and Krishna, and I worship Them in Their Deity forms while hearing of Their sacred pastimes.

June coming up. Sometime next month, they say, the GBC of Ireland will visit.

I first notice the dawn light when I can see the leafy green of the trees outside. Dawn starts around 4:30 a.m. here, although I may be missing the real first signs that come before that. I only look up from the Deity worship at 4:30. Before that, I'm chanting.

* * *

Reading the EJW volume that I wrote at the beginning of February, where I had one of those impulses that I should throw off everything but reading and hearing from Srila Prabhupada's books. I wanted to become a *babaji* who preaches. I thought my writing could be simple. But I don't think that renunciation lasted too long. It continues, however, in the sense that I refuse to take things that are not directly in our *sampradaya* and give them a place in my life. I more quickly recognize diversions too. I seem to need to allow myself the freedom to look and then back away. Perhaps

Krishna is testing me to see whether I will continuously move my will toward Him. Do I want to be a devotee of Krishna? Do I want to be a disciple of Srila Prabhupada? *Am* I his disciple? I don't want to be told that I am by someone else, or forced to pretend about any of this out of fear. I want it to be my choice.

After putting aside two Christian books, I went down to the bathroom and turned on the tape of the man lecturing from the Christian-Jungian point of view. It's heavy psychology "I can only take about two minutes of it. I am listening to it, because a Godbrother sent it, and I honor that Godbrother. I go back to Prabhupada lecturing in Bombay, December 1974, on Lord Kapila's technical explanation of Sankhya philosophy. Prabhupada says, "No matter how qualified they are as scientists or psychologists, if they do not know that they are not the body, they are no better than cats and dogs."

I keep doing this throughout the day "reaching for something outside our *sampradaya*, then putting it aside and returning to Prabhupada. Sometimes I become stimulated intellectually in ways that refresh my appreciation of Prabhupada, or I find something from which I can springboard in the psychologist's lecture. From there, I can enter a Krishna conscious discussion. Something tells me who I am and I see it better, like looking in a mirror. A strand of cobweb hangs from the ceiling and floats like smoke in the current of air created by the heater. Radha-Krishna: the stable point for the eyes.

During *japa* (when Radha-Govinda were still in bed, under Their covers) did I bring my attention back into myself? Did I hear and pray? Can't say that I did. I counted the rounds, timed them, did not allow myself to fall asleep, but I did think about what I would say at my business meeting with Madhu after breakfast. I stopped chanting a few times to jot things down. Like this: "M. "Give me haircut today," or, "Get a barrel to burn papers in. Don't make a mess in the yard." I pray for His mercy to pull me closer.

Now Madhu is up and will come into the house. We will greet one another, then get ready to go out for a two-round walk.

* * *

Quick Walk, May 30
& Dense thickest jungle
walked leafy
this was me so
I went
walking

* * *

cows and sheep in separate
meadows
didn't like to see their
faces and destiny in hands
of cruel manipulator
and me, can't do anything about it.

* * *

Now back in house
ink on page
think "I did " and
Lord contains me
a while. "

* * *

Who Am I?
& Am I an Irishman? No!
A transvestite? No
A club card holder of
British Airways Business Class? No
nor a Russian *nyet*, a new disciple

* * *

of Muni Maharaja. A friend of
Satsvarupa
(now you're getting close).

* * *

A one ten-thousandth the upper portion
of a hair a soul
who can blast through solid
stone

* * *

not any of the twenty-four elements
or a herring sad and blessed
by some Jewish-American deli owner
or a student turned
professor even
a wanna-be best-
selling author.

* * *

No, none of the above
just blissful soul
who doesn't know
his own self

but working
always working
to find out."

* * *

I had a dream that I had great power. I was in a place where they were teaching people to fight. I realized that my power had nothing to do with fighting. It was something else. Then I saw some surrealist artists. I recognized my power in art, but more than that, in love of God. I couldn't seem to do something to directly help the world, but something in art. I felt just how much strength such art takes. I felt it flowing from God.

Is this my message? Why don't I just fight some giant so everyone can see what power is about? But that's not it, at least not for me. I trust God that I have artistic power. I saw that I had to avoid sex "the artist's power is not sexual "and that I had to avoid duplicity. I also saw that I shouldn't take any credit for whatever I do.

Earlier in the dream, I was able to cross a dangerous spot in the water by riding the waves.

* * *

8:25 a.m.

Could that dream be Krishna telling me of my role in this world? Maybe I'm supposed to be a graffiti artist. Graffiti artists work underground and don't stage their performances or take personal credit. They are usually social reformers, but not in the usual sense of the word. Not seen as heroes or even preachers. Yet their message gets out there into the world. Perhaps in time they become appreciated by likeminded spirits. That's especially true if they refuse to compromise.

I liked the part in the dream that showed me that my "power" was not about enjoying matter, and that celibacy was a strength. Art is meant to be used for Krishna's glorification and to be guided by actual God-given power.

In my heart, this is what I want to do for Krishna and Prabhupada. Even more, it's my mission or talent. When I direct it properly and purely, it will be powerful.

* * *

"The weak are the subsistence of the strong, and the general rule holds that one living being is food for another." *Jivo jivasya jivanam.* (*Bhag.* 1.13.47) But "there is the law of good sense also, for the human being is meant to obey the laws of the scripture."

"One should think of oneself as lower than a blade of grass, more tolerant than a tree and ready to offer all respects to others." Other disciplines sometimes express a little bit of Krishna consciousness. Krishna consciousness, as in scriptures, in *Siksastakam*, etc., presents the entire truth directly. A nominal devotee or ISKCON propagandist might misrepresent it.

The blind leaders must therefore understand the Supreme Being, and then try to implement the kingdom of God. *Rama-rajā* "is impossible without the awaking of God consciousness in the mass minds of the people of the world."

* * *

"Therefore, O king, you should look to the Supreme Lord only, who is one without a second, and who manifests Himself by different energies and is both within and without." (*Bhag.* 1.13.48) We are pure spirit souls. The liberated souls who live with Krishna in the internal energy never forget Him. Conditioned souls, however, contaminated (or covered) by the illusory potency, forget their real natures. Krishna wants us to revive our original nature of bliss and eternity. He wants us to be like Him "free of misery. So there is "a regular current from the Lord Himself, from within and without, by which to rectify the fallen condition of the living being." Within is Paramatma; without, guru and *sastra*. Don't be disturbed by happiness and distress in this world. Become a spiritual master, look to the Supreme Lord, and assist Lord Krishna in His mission.

* * *

10:20 a.m.

Bright sky, but blowy. Free-writing hunches and haunches. Don't forget where we want to go. This head is a cracker-barrel. He lives in his head, but cracked it in a fall. Crazy-glued it together. It'll last a while. Steering, he learned to drive from the Swami. You put your foot on the accelerator and keep on going. Stop at each Hare Krishna temple across the country.

Mister, chant Hare Krishna. It doesn't matter who stops by to work in the yard.

A devotee's name appears after years of not seeing him. The king and queen of England. I don't live there. I Live until I die. Then I'll turn in my body for a new one. Attached people find it difficult to let go. They know only one life. And they know fear. That's all.

And so they should "because it *is* fearful if you're not a devotee. Just imagine what that feels like: it took fifty-eight years or more to become comfortable enough to retire and you have to turn around and do it all again in a new body. Who knows what kind?

My number will be coming up sooner than I think. I'm sure that's how Lohitaksa felt, or Upendra, Sudama, Hayagriva . . . Hey, maybe some interesting mail can cheer you up. But I already looked through the Viking catalogue. They don't advertise items to prepare for death, just workaday things like tubs of paper clips. Oh, and heater's for the employees' bathroom.

* * *

12:05 p.m.

I'm hoping a right-eye headache won't come so I won't have to go above my medication quota. Because I already decided that if headache comes today, I won't take it sitting down. Regulate *that* quota if I can.

Hare Krishna. Asked Bhakta Leo to come out here from Dublin to apply an expensive protective paint on the roof where it is leaking. It can only be done on a day when it's not raining. He missed most of today, and tomorrow they predict will be cloudy. He decided to come and give it a try during these last hours of this last day of this week.

What have *I* got to say that's Krishna conscious? Just what the great teachers say. Knowledge begins with humility. To me these days, that includes not preaching things that outrage or hurt others. Don't blast them to reform. Don't be righteous. I will save my sharp edges for myself. Be humble and don't cast the first stone.

Oh, but we have to preach against *maya*.

I know.

Are you reluctant to be righteous because you yourself want a license to be in *maya*, and you think that because of that, you had better not step on other people's toes?

No. To each their own. Perhaps it's because I realize I can't change anyone. I'll save my convincing energy for suggesting that we all do the basics "chant and hear. I trust that those things will themselves bring about all kinds of social reform in this movement.

For example, I used to give classes "remember when I was in Los Angeles?" "on "No Divorce." Did it reduce the divorce rate? No.

Later, I preached about developing a prayer life. Did it increase consciousness about prayer in ISKCON? No.

I advocate improving one's *japa* and reading the scriptures, and I admit that I myself am unredeemed. Still, those basics are so elemental and incontrovertible that we can all emphasize them.

Other things I'll discuss in private, perhaps, such as how to dovetail one's interests and energies in Krishna's service. But I'm not going to go around advocating that in a public way.

What about if you are pressed by someone's question asked in public?

I'll answer it, but not as personally as I would here.

I can't go into the art room to work; it's too cold in there. Only when our low-budget electrical heating system is finally operating will that room be friendly enough for me to visit regularly.

* * *

2:25 p.m.

Narada told Yudhisthira that Dhrtarastra had gone to the southern side of the Himalayas, where there were *aSramas* of sages. He also told him that Dhrtarastra was now performing *astanga-yoga*, bathing thrice daily, and fasting on water.

M. just came in and told me that Aniruddha will be finished the walkway in about half an hour. Leo, he said, is outside painting. M. thought I ought to come and thank them both. I will.

But the word "*aSrama*" just caught my eye. In the Himalayas . . . Of course, they were Himalayan *yogis*, not Vraja-bhaktas living in *bhakti-kutirs* and chanting Hare Krishna. (And even that is suspect. One should preach.)

Or one's "*aSrama*" should be smaller than the one I have, unless he's got a group of inmates living with him.

Anyway, I won't feel guilty. I'll use what I have, this surreal underground, for Krishna's service, as my dream indicated I should.

Yoga helps one face the absolute person, the Paramatma. One sits and concentrates on spiritual matters, thereby freeing himself of *viSaya*. "Material existence means to be absorbed in . . . illusion. House, country, family, society, children, property and business are some of the material coverings of the spirit . . . and *yoga* . . . helps one to become free . . ." (*Bhag.* 1.13.53, purport)

I'm certainly not performing much austerity. My life is easy. But keep it in mind "yoga is about concentrating on *Krishna-seva* and learning to live in the internal energy as a *bhakta*. *Bhakti-yoga* directly applies the senses to the loving service of the Lord, "ultimately ending in *samadhi* or absorption in pleasing Lord Hari by all means."

* * *

Giving up the material and identifying or cooperating with the Supreme is not merely an intellectual or "religious" experience. It's total realization. You really give up your material attachments and identity. When you attain liberation, you never again enter the material covering. It's dreadful to be encased in matter, and once we have accepted this position, it's very difficult to get out.

Narada advised Maharaja Yudhisthira not to disturb Dhrtarastra by trying to bring him back. Then Narada "ascended into outer space." "Yudhisthira kept his instructions in his heart and so was able to get rid of all lamentation." (*Bhag.* 1.13.60)

* * *

3:22 p.m.

The devotee in the dream was trying to change the world, but no one knew how he did it. Subterfuge but harmless, nonviolent, yet revolutionary "by painting beauty, truth, feeling, Krishna consciousness in a way that enters the bloodstream instead of the intellect. Did we appear incognito during the theater performance, our little band of artist-men? I don't even understand it well myself, but that dream made me feel my calling.

Choose outfits of the Lord I like best. He looks so nice, and Radha too.

I believe we were powerful, knowing Krishna was on our side, but it was a power that can't and won't be used to destroy or hurt people but to destroy nonsense. Chanting Hare Krishna is like that. There is no other relief in this world than the relief one can achieve by chanting the holy name. No more mumbled marbles!

But where is *bhava*? The Lord watches me. Am I missing some key ingredient? Is it that my approach is too selfish? Because I don't seem to get the result. Or does He withhold it for some other reason? Is it "all right" that He withholds it? Love of God is rare, so why should I expect to notice any good coming from the chanting? Nothing cheap. Does the atmosphere of Kali-yuga block me?

Sure is a feeble thing I feel, all congested and never quite reaching attention or devotion. Lord, I don't even grieve over that fact. I don't supplement my effort by great acts of sacrifice. Not me; not any more. I just can't do it anymore.

O Lord, I think it may amount to a vocation "this thing that I have, the alone path and the encouraging of active preachers at the same time. I think I am a *bhajanandi* who preaches by writing and doing other things.

May the world become Krishna conscious. May I overcome cynicism and despair for ISKCON and its communities and leaders. May my work contribute to this movement. I'm willing to be apart where it seems You place me, and where I want to be.

Hare Krishna. Keep the flag flying.

* * *

Depend on Krishna. It's sunny weather out there. I saw a man with arms. He lives and ages and blooms and blares and the flowers grow weedy wild on the paths and in the meadows. The neighbor in the red jeep drives up to his slaughtering fields and glances over our wall at the wood-planked walk. He'll be seeing me chanting out there sometimes. Nothing to be ashamed of, even if they think I'm crazy. Tolerate their opinions. He ought to know what we think of *his* activities with the lambs and cows.

Let them see a man at prayer. If he *could* pray, that would be another thing. The pheasants will be more respectful and afraid if they catch sight of me revolving around this house. You could see my walking from across the valley if you had binocs "a man walking until his ankle hurt and then retiring inside. Leave him alone. It generates no bad reaction, this movement that seems odd and useless to the world. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare.

The next chapter in the open book deals with the Lord's departure. Believe in *sastra*. I want to go back to Godhead. Bead-chanting can take me there, along with living in the *Bhagavatam's* pages and hearing Krishna speak of Himself in *Bhagavad-gita*. Crying for help.

Truck with cows. Driving them to cow heaven? Imagine clouds of *devas* and souls descending in rain. The punisher returns to be himself born a lamb. What happened to the books we published and sold, and to the reader who said they helped? What happened to the souls ascending?

* * *

5:05 p.m.

Slight twinge beginning. I almost made it to the end of this day. I'm still prepared to go over my quota of pills to get relief. Because in seven hours, next week will start anyway. Then I'll be starting again at pill number one instead of taking pill number four.

Was that strict lecturer saying we can't be friends with ourselves or others? Is he a *sannyasi* through and through? Didn't sound like he saw his own words as opinion. He was sticking up for Krishna and Srila Prabhupada against the wishy-washy, wanton corruption that has been creeping into his master's movement.

I prefer to let the cats howl.

Meaning?

Admit something.

You mean autobiographical disclosures?

No, I mean . . .

I'm onto something. Dostoyevsky describes the high ecstasy of the moment before he [the character in his book] fell into an epileptic fit.

Don't mention all this stuff. Will one thing only; have purity of heart. Want only to please Krishna.

Yes, that's what I want. But on behalf of the people of this here nation, I have decided to dedicate my life to a broader prospectus. I'm in like a plow and penetrate like a strong steel pin that goes all the way. Imageries fail.

"I liked it," he said with disappointment, "when you kept going back to the *Bhagavatam* verse. What did you call it, 'A Poor Man's House'? 'A Pore Man's Pores'?"

Yes, I said, I am glad to hear that you liked it, and I'm glad to have written like that. But I couldn't sustain it. Too many headaches.

"Oh." He didn't pursue the point. I didn't tell him that for one and a half years I've been on a roll in my writing in this relaxed version of *A Poor Man reads The Bhagavatam*.

Is this the moment before the pill? Are we experiencing ecstasy? I hear you're staying home tomorrow, although it's a day you usually preach.

Yes, because last week it stressed me out.

Do *sannyasis* have pajamas? Elephants? Do they keep them?

They don't have women. They preach and recite the *sannyasa-mantra*. They're supposed to keep their heads shaved. Old-timers, ancient rhymers. Yes, this is the moment before the pill, when the pain rises and the wind howls.

May 31, 12:08 a.m.

"I envy no one, nor am I partial to anyone. I am equal to all. But whoever renders service unto Me in devotion is a friend, is in Me, and I am also a friend to him." (Bg. 9.29) It's natural that Krishna takes special interest in His devotees. Lord, please take special interest in me. I am always trying to engage myself in your service, although I cannot do it well.

Srila Prabhupada: "The very phrase 'Krishna consciousness' suggests that those who are in such consciousness are living transcendentalists, situated in Him." The more we surrender to Krishna, the more He takes care of us. "The Supreme Lord becomes the devotee of His devotees."

Do I dare say, "Please, Lord, show me in a personal way that there is reciprocation between us. Prove the personalist philosophy to me"? Perhaps He would answer, "But you don't show enough interest to warrant My revealing Myself to you." Also, I may say that Krishna is reciprocating with me, but that I don't always appreciate the ways in which He reveals Himself. I don't yet understand that the nature of the relationship is that He is the Lord and I'm the servant of His servant a hundred times removed. I don't understand that very intense surrender is required (which I seem reluctant to give), and that an impure person cannot exchange intimately with the all-pure.

Consider *The Nectar of Devotion* discussion on the rarity of devotional service: "Krishna does not agree very easily to award a person engagement in His devotional service." We achieve Krishna, actually, through the spiritual master's mercy. Srila Rupa Gosvami quotes Narada's statement praising the Pandavas' fortune in their intimate relationship with Krishna wherein He acts as their guru and personal director, and even carries messages for them. "The purport of this verse is that the Lord easily offers liberation, but He rarely agrees to offer a soul devotional service, because by devotional service the Lord Himself becomes purchased by the devotee." (NOD, p. 15)

We must not find fault with Krishna. It's us who create the distance in our relationship with Him. We can only beg ourselves to please become more devotional in our approach to Krishna. Only then will Krishna reveal Himself to us. We should not demand to see Krishna but act in such a way that Krishna can see us. Srila Prabhupada and the *acaryas* give sufficient nectar. Accept it and practice what they teach. Be inspired and satisfied. "You may make me brokenhearted by not being present before me, but you are always my worshipable Lord, unconditionally."

Srila Prabhupada recommends separation from Krishna as suitable for us in the material world: "Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu taught us to accept *viraha* worship. In the present state of affairs we cannot make any direct touch with the Personality of Godhead. But if we practice the *viraha* mode of worship we can transcendently realize the presence of the Lord more lovingly than in His presence . . . This is possible only when we develop genuine love for Him. In that state the devotee is always with the Lord by feelings of separation, which become more acute and intolerable in suitable circumstances. The mild wind reminded the *gopis* of the association of the Lord, and they felt separation from Him acutely." (*Light of the Bhagavata*, #42)

In *The Nectar of Devotion*, under the subheading, "Attracting Krishna," Srila Prabhupada recommends that devotees take shelter of Srimati Radharani, who attracts Krishna the most. Devotional service is directly under Her control. Under the sixty-four qualities of Krishna we find "Well-Wisher Of His Devotees," "Grateful," and "Compassionate." "Actually, because Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, it is very difficult to approach Him. But the devotees, taking advantage of His compassionate nature, which is represented by Radharani, always pray to Radharani for Krishna's compassion." (NOD, p.176) Krishna is the well-wisher of His devotees. "It is said of Krishna's devotees that if they offer even a little water or *tulasi* leaf in devotion to Lord Visnu, Lord Visnu is so kind that He would sell Himself to them." (NOD, p.178)

So don't complain. And yet I complain. Complaining is a sign of life.

* * *

I seem more averse to right-eye pain than usual right now. I seem determined to avoid it rather than to accept what comes. After years of suffering, am I suddenly becoming more sensitive to it? More afraid of it? I have always seen it as some kind of necessary *tapasya*. It's been two weeks since I did an all-day or overnight headache. Now a new week is beginning. That's why I'm not afraid to catch it with medication. This is a new week, and although I took a fourth pill at the end of last week, I won't go over my quota of three this week.

Hare Krishna. Dear Lord who resides everywhere, You also live in my intelligence. I tried to lovingly argue with You to prove why You should reveal Yourself to me more, but then gave evidence that You are not at fault. You are accessible and personal, and You touch the lives of Your genuine devotees very intimately. They are always with You. I'll try to develop my practice of hearing from You and chanting Your names. But my "argument" remains: without Your special mercy, even if I perform the nine practices of devotional service, I will not contact You or even please You. *Nayam atma bala-hinena labhya* "only with the spiritual strength given by Balarama (who is represented by the spiritual master) can I attain You.

* * *

4:33 a.m.

The perfection of the eyes is to look upon the forms of radha-Krishna, Srila Prabhupada, the Panca-tattva, Jagannatha, Lord Nrsimhadeva, the *parampara* gurus "all of whom are present on my altar. Cast your glance there and you will gain what you cannot gain by looking anywhere else. And hear radha-Krishna's pastimes to gain far more than when hearing that psychological-Christian talk. All glories to the Lord of the Universe and the secrets of devotional service, which are revealed only to qualified and confidential Vraja-bhaktas. May I use my energies to attain that beautiful Krishna. And let me forgive those who have trespassed against me. Spread the Krishna conscious word. Perform regulative duties daily. Await the Lord's mercy no matter how long it takes or in what form it appears.

Another cold morning. The room's bright lights shine on the walls. Please give us the benediction to use words rightly in His service.

Except I've run out of good things to say. Then let me tell you what I was hearing while I worshiped the Deities. I was listening to a tape that had parrots and Vrndavana sparrows in the background. We were reading Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura's *Premasamputa*. The opening scene describes how Krishna disguised Himself as a beautiful demigoddess and then entered Radha's courtyard, shy and morose. Radha came forward and attempted to be kind to the lamenting girl. I heard just that much, but it set the scene for Krishna to hear Radha's description of Her own love for Him. Only an intimate devotee of the Lord could write a book like this.

I have an irrepressible desire to write, yet I couldn't write like Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura. I unburden my grief at not being more Krishna conscious. Radharani tells that girl that it would do her good to tell her sorrows to likeminded friends. Let the devotees also soothe one another.

* * *

See the treetops tossing back and forth in the buffeting wind? They won't break; they're used to the winds' gales. I notice they don't move as much in the winter, probably because the trees have no leaves. The leaves seem to act like sails that catch the wind and pull the branches to and fro.

The sky is turning purple-blue this dawn. I don't know what kind of day is ahead. Will I still be afraid of the pain? Let it take its course? Oh, but then I might not meet my other

quotas. Because when I am in pain, I can't put words down on paper. It seems to make the pain worse when I try. And my eyes go crooked, my brain silent, and I want to be left alone to be quiet with whatever bit of peace I can find aside from the all-encompassing pain.

Anyway, I'll plan for a good day, even though I am fallen and incompetent. Let me rejoice in the society of God's devotees and in the love we receive from Him.

When I was a boy, I would sometimes feel great hope, but I didn't know what to do with it or what caused it. Maybe I expected some extra reward because of that inexplicable feeling "a bigger chocolate Easter bunny or something. Or I would run down the block, shouting, "Home free all!" while I played games with my friends. Maybe I just felt closer to my parents. I can't remember, so I won't try to recall. I just want to say that now I know the actual cause of such great hope (*aSa-bandhah*): it is the love of Lord Krishna. I hope, even though I am fallen, that Krishna will rescue me from this material world. Please, Lord, give me the ticket back to Godhead.

"Oh, but you have to earn it," Krishna says. And so the discussion goes on, as we have had it before. Blow, wind, blow. This day is still beginning. Yes, there's still hope. I still have my sixteen dynamite charges, my twenty pages, and if I set them off at proper intervals during the day, today could be the day I find my way through. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna.

* * *

Morning Walk Fragment
& Now we want to be okay you
know I am ready for the little pain
I get
cash in/ on goodness
we are able to hear of God
while others can't.

* * *

I don't know which way I
walk out hearing the birds and
sing Lord if You want . . .
chanting is good in any case.

* * *

Can't find the theme, but I
must be the original
man I do like windy summer
mornings thinking of being a little boy
and my father kind until
I outgrew him became
Rebel intellectual.

Met Prabhupada. "

* * *

KC Blues (again)
& Don't expect novelty
sameness is everywhere and
yet it's new because your life
force is eating air at every moment

* * *

even another body is an old
variety but is new when
you go to Vaikuntha it'll
be different I'm
telling you what the
holy *Vedas* say

* * *

in this world we eat air
and grains until we
Reach the end of the trip.

* * *

Blues song Krishna
conscious we want
true mind the guts the
divine spark but
don't feel it yet
guess we will one day

* * *

until then we play this
way saying we will be true
to *gurudeva's* lessons

* * *

while birds chirp and sheep lay against
a wall, two lambs nuzzle
a shaggy mother and
greet dawn while making walking

prayers despite pain
other stuff and
haribol service. "

* * *

9:24 a.m.

"Arjuna went to Dvaraka to see Lord Krishna and other friends and also to learn from the Lord of His next activities." (*Bhag.* 1.14.1) Srila Prabhupada refers to Arjuna as going to "hear . . . of His next program of work." It sounds so humanlike and friendly, and Arjuna so dedicated. We picture him meeting face to face with Lord Krishna and asking, "What will You do next? What should I do?" Whatever the Lord was doing, Arjuna wanted to intimately serve His cause. But this time, Arjuna didn't return to Hastinapura for several months. Maharaja Yudhishthira began to observe inauspicious omens (*ghora-rupani*). This chapter is not one of the more pleasant ones with their beautiful and uplifting imagery. A close friend of Krishna benefits immensely by His direct association, but when the Lord departs, the dependent devotee is also immensely bereft. Therefore, some people calculate that it's better not to become so close to God; a little distance saves a lot of grief. Prabhupada assures us that those who are not friends of God suffer much greater grief than His devotees. Krishna's devotees never experience complete hopelessness, and even their grief is a form of transcendental ecstasy that stokes the fire of love of God in the heart.

Krishna's presence on earth is like the sun; the omens revealed that darkness was now spreading through the universe. Because the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is nondifferent from Krishna, it can provide a powerful light by which even the darkest ignorance can be removed.

I wish my old-edition *Bhagavatams* would arrive. They have been sent by sea mail. They have better quality paper than the Australian edition. The paper in the Australian *Bhagavatams* is less opaque.

Rain tinkling, Spider webs. Anomalies of the age "the *Bhagavatam* reports (predicts) them. Kali-yuga entered when Lord Krishna departed. Our only relief is Lord Caitanya's *sankirtana* movement. Can the Krishna consciousness movement in the form of this troubled ISKCON provide guidance and tangible relief? Can it govern? Will people accept it? Is it bringing relief even in ways that are not perceivable? Is our *sankirtana-yajna* averting some of the greater disasters? Even without answering these questions, we must continue to render service to Krishna and try to offset the darkness, if only in our own lives. Srila Prabhupada says that of the four kinds of human defects, cheating is the most prominent in this age. We have seen it even in our movement. He says cheating comes from the desire to lord it over rather than to be subservient to the Supreme Being. "The world of hypocrisy can be checked only by counter-action through devotional service to the Lord and nothing else." (*Bhag.* 1.14.4, purport)

But what about hypocrisy in the ranks of those who perform devotional service? If it exists, rectify it. That work must come first, or how can the devotees counteract the hypocrisy of others? I start with myself.

* * *

Somehow, despite the head fog, I'm getting the ink on paper. Let me stop for a drink of water. There. Now keep going. I may reach my quota yet. I live only to write enough each day.

I liked thinking about hypocrisy and personal reform. We should consider it global work. We can spread Krishna consciousness by "spreading it" in ourselves. Thus we really will give body, mind, and words to Krishna.

We're confused in this movement sometimes. We know it will take much cooperation, money, and devotee-power to preach on any large scale, but people want to know that ISKCON is not a colossal farce. Critics and ill-wishers would *like* us to be a farce, so if we can maintain integrity and contribute something solid to ISKCON, without denying ISKCON, then we are throwing our weight into the balance and helping to push the cart forward. That's how I see it.

Let me add that I don't feel I have completely attained this integrity. I'm struggling with self-honesty. Let's *all* admit that we're not perfect, that we are sometimes hypocritical, mistaken, sometimes even insane, but that we are trying to improve. We don't chant with devotion, but we wish we did and we never stop trying. Let's encourage one another. We should each feel ourselves needed, no matter what our particular nature is, and find ourselves a place in the preaching mission.

* * *

10:30 a.m.

Leo can't work today because it's raining. That leak-proof coating he's applying on the chimney and walls can't go on in the rain. Aniruddha is gone for at least a week to do construction work at Inis rath.

Boat in the water (in my mind). reading an EJW written in the North. I was always seeing that rowboat cross the narrow strait, and the island from my shed. It's a nice place to be. Now my vital, serious, keynote topic has been spent. Get into minutia or whatever you can. We call it free-writing, improvisation. It comes from my chest and then my head. rapping.

Just as I admitted I'm out of steam (temporarily), M. walked in with an iris in a vase and a note from Hare Krishna dasi. She states that this is a species iris ""That means it can be found growing wild in some part of the world. In other words, it's an iris as Krishna originally designed it, and hasn't been 'bred' or otherwise tampered with by man." It's called *iris germanica*. She says irises need more sunlight than is usually available in Ireland, yet she has, over the years, grown at least a few that bloomed.

"The flower itself is so delicate and beautiful. One look at the tracery of colors on the petals and it is impossible to deny that Krishna is the supreme artist. Who else could have imagined such a beautiful pattern? I looked at the clump of irises in the evening twilight a few nights ago, and the blue was so intense in the half-light that the flowers seemed to be glowing. The insects love irises. When the purple irises Prahlada and Anandamaya gave me were flowering, I once saw a bee on one petal, a butterfly on

another, and a hover fly on the third, and I wished I had a camera with me to capture the image."

I think her gardening is another form of nonhypocritical Krishna consciousness. It's not a powerful force to change the minds of many people, or get them to contribute money. At least not right away. But who knows? The gardening is one thing she can do in her delicate life that gives her peace and meaning and enables her to see Krishna everywhere. She's prone to doubt its value, just as I have my own bouts with doubt, but I encourage her as I encourage myself. What good will the few irises do blooming in her not-so-sunny garden for a few weeks? Don't even ask. *Make* it do good; offer everything to Krishna.

* * *

2:37 p.m.

Things happen by God's sanction and not otherwise. Maharaja Yudhisthira felt bad omens occurring in his body and in nature and society. He guessed that Krishna had departed from the earth. Just then, Arjuna returned, pale and dejected. and Maharaja Yudhisthira inquired from him about the welfare of the leading members of the Yadu dynasty. We hear names such as Lord Balarama, Uddhava, Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Sambha, and other great devotees of the Supreme Lord.

* * *

Now I must go along. Would you like to come with me?

Yes, if I can go with you to Krishnaloka. That would be fine.

Yes, but we will have to undergo trials first.

Don't bother then. Let me be alone. Let me compose.

Try again.

Can we make it to Krishnaloka? If so, I can think of the goal during the trials.

Yes, we can, but it will require love. And before that, we will have to make the best of discipline. You know, doing what we have to.

So we agreed. reading in available light, I said, "Krishna is the Supreme. He can love millions of family members in Dvaraka. He's the God of all souls. If He manifests as father or grandfather for a relatively few of them, why should we disbelieve it?" Hare Krishna.

Hare Krishna.

* * *

When I used to say anything that came to mind, I used to be true to an inner impulse. Sometimes, however, I would just let my hand go, allowing it to speak its piece. Then my Godbrother reminded me that any kind of talent, if devoid of Krishna consciousness, will lead to trouble. It will simply create a string of zeros. We should never become proud, thinking we are better than our Guru Maharaja. He said Srila Prabhupada may not have been the most proficient speaker of the English language "others may have been

better literary artists or had more mellifluous voices "but Srila Prabhupada had the most faith in his spiritual master.

"I believe in him completely," Srila Prabhupada said. When I heard that, I felt relief. I saw how the so-called deficiencies in Srila Prabhupada are not consequential. The *wonderful* thing is his faith in his Guru Maharaja. He was sold out to his spiritual master's service. His total dedication made him successful at founding the Krishna consciousness movement worldwide.

* * *

As the sun goes in and out, I am not bereft of the Lord's touch. I enjoyed not going to Dublin today, just as I plan to enjoy going next weekend. Keep up my quotas now. Work for work's sake.

O Krishna, at midnight I argued with You, then accepted why You chose not to reveal Yourself more to me. I accept my own folly. But here I am again, turning to You, asking, "Wouldn't it be nice if I were a better devotee?" I have chosen a particular path, not the safe or well-trodden one, but still on the *bhakti-marga*. I'm going in the right direction, but at my own pace, and traveling only with a few, avoiding crowds and leaders and honors and hassles.

I hear pots banging in the kitchen. The wind . . . a scraping of branches against the house. Listen to your breath, in and out. Shadow of hand on page. Those two arms in the light brown sweater. And if you'll turn to the right, you'll see the Deities on the altar. It's a quiet afternoon. At this time, they are gathering downtown to hear a discourse. Next Sunday I will speak about preaching without hypocrisy. Anticipated questions: What if a person can't follow the four rules but wants to be a devotee. Is that automatically judged as hypocritical? No, not if such a person lives with the truth of their own condition and doesn't take a cheap initiation or make up a new philosophy. In the larger sense, however, to be true to this movement, we really should follow the four rules. That's what it's about, isn't it? Make the effort to come up to the standard. Whoever rightly resolves will soon get the Lord's blessings. I don't know much else. Wish I could say something personal that would touch the audience. They listen attentively, so it behooves me.

* * *

Now tell us what Lord Krishna did and what happened to Arjuna after Lord Krishna's departure, and how you relate this to your own situation. One has to get strength from service in separation. read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

* * *

Time here sunlit
page a walk with *nama*
a talk with no one the
self alone waits for
inspiration.
And will they come?

In mind's eye, a chubby-faced person appears. Don't hate anyone. rather, look to see if there is room for exchange.

* * *

4:39 p.m.

I could write anything that comes. I just read some of the translator's introduction to Cassian's *Conferences*. He speaks about nocturnal emission, devils, theological controversies among early Christians regarding free will and divine grace, what they eat and don't eat, etc. I read about monks and see the difference. They stayed alone. They . . . and now I have come here and ought to leave that behind.

Then what will I say?

Kind of blue, greeny-blue, then all blue "they play nicely together and inspire me. I ought to write a report on what I believe to be true. I ought to read more scripture before I speak. At least if I want to say something straight.

Although Krishna is the father of Jesus, few Christians would accept that. They generally conceptualize God either as an old man-father image, or as formless. The Christian mystics encourage their followers not to hold a human form of God in the mind during prayer. It almost sounds like impersonalism, except for their fondness for Jesus as the son of God who is also somehow God.

Krishna is God and is always God. When He played in the material world, He was no less God. "Fools deride Me when I appear in this human form. They do not know My transcendental nature as the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

We wend our way through theological controversy after controversy. Sometimes it's tedious. Not nectar. We are compelled to argue on behalf of our own *sampradaya*, but we'd rather hear about Krishna and His pastimes, or just discuss how to practice loving Him in ways that are relevant to us.

I just got a letter from a *bhakta* who says he doesn't foresee himself following the four rules any time in the future, and that he has therefore decided to take the long, gradual path. An interesting position to be in. Should I praise him for his honesty? Yes, on the one hand. But I also want to encourage him to get into the four rules and to follow them strictly as soon as possible. Yes, don't be a hypocrite. Of course, he isn't being a hypocrite in the sense that he's admitting he needs a longer road. Think over how to reply to a fellow like that.

Leaves hanging on tight to their tree branches despite the howling wind. I tried out the wooden boards on the *parikrama* trail today. I like that little walk; I like the sound of my feet on the boards. But it lifts my head and shoulders above the wall. Should anyone come walking by, I'm no longer hidden. Oh, well. Hardly anyone ever walks by around here. But I chanted two rounds on that walkway. The backyard, where the garden is supposed to be, is on too much of a slope for me to walk and chant *japa* comfortably.

* * *

But Am I?

& I heard you talked with
a friend what did you say?

I said Don't lecture something you
don't do yourself.
Well you needn't!
That's sense grat.

* * *

Correct that guy who said, "I'm on
the gradual path of working for
Krishna below the rules."
Praise him and say yet you
ought to strive and be sorry.

* * *

About how you preach to the
disciples and congregation and don't get into
the nest of snakes of
saying to them "you are demons
if you don't follow the rules
and *if* you follow four rules
you'll go pronto back to Godhead

* * *

Tell him tell us more
it's getting late. What did you
say? I said in the highest stage you are
one in sound. In sound?
I mean you forget Sounds True
you forget all stuff except

* * *

to be a happy honker ink
spreader. Tell your secret to the
stars
then pray all night in your sleep and
up at midnight to praise God by
hearing what He says in
Bhaktivedanta purports.
I'm coming closer to You, Lord.

* * *

Man I was okay just wanted to

see "Krishna" shine on the page.
Just wanted to be a person who
was pure
a devotee thinks he's low
but he doesn't make it worse.

* * *

He said act right and that's even
more important than your lecture. They will
hear your lecture, and know you are good.
But
am
I? "

June 1, 12:05 a.m.

Dreamt on and on that I had arrived in London and was looking for a place to stay. Devotees neither knew me nor were expecting me. Had many adventures. A man offered me a beer, and advised me not to try to find the temple at night. He said twenty million drivers were on the road at night and it wasn't safe to travel. Finally I managed to call a devotee, who then took me to a small suburban temple. The next day, he said, we could go to the Manor. They gave me a makeshift cloth to use as a *dhoti*. "Who are you?" one asked, as I sat before a small group of mostly women. "Satsvarupa Maharaja," I said. At least the dream was devotee-temple oriented.

The iris is wilting, although it remains a deep purple. Let's turn to *Bhagavad-gita*.

"Even if one commits the most abominable action, if he is engaged in devotional service he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated in his determination." (Bg. 9.30)

"Oh," you say, "I know this verse and purport." Last night I discussed with M. about devotees not being hypocritical. I defined devotees according to *The Nectar of Instruction*, starting with that devotees are those who chant Hare Krishna, even if they don't follow the rules. Such persons should be honored mentally, but they should not preach that what they are doing is enough. Neither should they be complacent about their standing. Srila Prabhupada did say that Krishna consciousness was a gradual process, but that doesn't mean we should voluntarily take our time.

What is the function of my lecture? What do I feel convinced enough to tell them? Don't want to rouse or prod them too much in terms of particulars, such as, "Do you follow all the rules? Do you householders sometimes fall into having illicit sex? Do you *brahmacharis* masturbate or pass semen in dreams? These are all falldowns, you know." I doubt such a lecture would change things. Encourage them to hear and chant and trust that that will change them. But still, to discuss the gem of non-hypocrisy is valuable.

Any *jiva* has two activities, conditional (living out the responsibilities of their material lives) and devotional. Sometimes these two activities run parallel, but sometimes they

oppose one another. A devotee sometimes acts in ways "which may be taken as most abominable socially or politically. But such a temporary falldown does not disqualify him." Lord Krishna purifies and excuses him. This refers to "an occasional falldown."

Don't judge devotees, and don't put them down or dwell on their faults if they get caught on the conditional platform and temporarily fall from their devotional concentration. Better to see the great good of their wanting to be devotees of Krishna. A devotee is first and foremost a person who wants to serve Krishna with devotion.

"Therefore a person who is situated in Krishna consciousness and is engaged with determination in the process of chanting Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare, Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare should be considered to be in the transcendental position, even if by chance or accident he is found to have fallen." (Bg. 9.30, purport)

"One should mentally honor the devotee who chants the holy name of Lord Krishna, one should offer humble obeisances to the devotee who has undergone spiritual initiation (*diksa*) and is engaged in worshiping the Deity, and one should associate with and faithfully serve that pure devotee who is advanced in undeviated devotional service and whose heart is completely devoid of the propensity to criticize others." (NOI, text 5)

Interesting that the qualification listed for the highest devotee is that he is devoid of *ninda*. There are different ways to reciprocate lovingly with the three kinds of devotees. At the very least, offer respects in your mind, but freely offer obeisances to initiated, functioning devotees.

Usual question: Do I have to associate with the whole society (thousands) of initiated ISKCON devotees?

Answer: Not necessarily.

"One becomes qualified as a devotee on the elementary platform, the intermediate platform and the highest platform of devotional service according to the development of his *Sraddha*(faith)." (NOI 5, purport)

* * *

4:39 a.m.

Prabhupada is wearing his big, brown, blanketlike covering, with a light saffron scarf over that, and a brown knit cap (made by Lalita-manjari of Australia and Vrndavana).

Rain is dashing against my window. Maybe it's too wet-lashing to take a walk, even around the house. My beadbag will get soaked. Maybe it will be okay if I take an umbrella. Radha-Govinda in white and pink. Syamananda is supposed to come and take Their photos tomorrow. I will ask Them to allow me to change Them three times, so we can get pictures of Them in three outfits.

Once a little boy got lost. Once a big man thought he was the strongest. Once a whole regiment was wiped out. Each soul, when the body dies, has its own destiny. Krishna arranges that destiny to be fulfilled through His agents. Don't waste time holding grudges. Forgive your enemies before you die, and hope that they may also forgive you. This is part of Krishna consciousness.

Krishna science startles London. Beatles chant Hare Krishna. Those days are over. We have only the present now.

O Radha-Govinda, while worshiping You this morning, I heard rama-ray and me reading from a book in Vrndavana. We wanted to understand the topmost mellow of Krishna consciousness because we were attracted to it. But we also wanted to stay in Srila Prabhupada's care and not deviate, not become *prakṛta-sahajiyas*. Can we hear some of the nectar of the *gopi-manjari*'s service, as Raghunatha dasa Gosvami describes it in his *Vilapa-kusumanjali*? It takes delicate art and a pure heart. Srila Prabhupada said regarding Maharaja Bharata's falldown due to attachment to the fawn, "A little inattention can cause havoc." Havoc means returning next life to the material world.

Krishna, Krishna. Let me draw the Divine Couple, or Varaha again, or the tortoise incarnation, or Rama. I feel my artwork is too childish, but what can I do? I can draw anything, then add the words, "Krishna, Krishna," and I will be redeemed.

It seems darker than usual at this time of morning. I can't even hear the birds. So much rain. Wind is common in this part of Ireland. I'm happy to be here with Krishna's name as my only shelter.

* * *

Holy words. Do I feel them deeply? Let me not ask just now.

I hear an animal crying out in the blowing wind. I took all of Srila Prabhupada lectures and conversations, compiled in books, out of the trunk and placed them on shelves. I would like to read some of them aloud.

Hey, did you know that an Internet bookstore has one of my books listed in their catalogue? It's *Your Ever Well-Wisher*. I didn't even know which book that was. Probably the one-volume abridged *Lilamṛta*. In England, I guess.

When devotees write to me, I want to respond, "Do your best. I think you are. Keep trying." And then I want to insert a prayer to the Lord.

* * *

Parikrama In rain
& Out in the rain in rain gear
walkin' round on boards
close to house I can tell
I was garbling mantras
but it felt good anyway.

* * *

Now dry inside from rain
my *bhakti* too I
mean I don't touch it
oh, wet me Lord.

* * *

O Krishna, it was nice to

walk with You "Your rain
and sky, this world but
the sheep took it better than me. "

* * *

Now Indoors
& Now indoors and seek
Krishna conscious pace in
whatever I do.
No *ninda*, right?
And be kind and say "Krishna"
and be on time a few can be anything
doesn't need any fence
but all is measured out
in power the Lord gives
us "He's the boss
the Lover
the all-in-all.

* * *

Krishna is the one who gives
Rain and sun/ you can't figure Him out
so don't try
take info from *sastras*
and guru
and just execute it.
I love trying
what they say
true so I will love my master
at least my spiritual master I can love
for his taking me out of this death-
bound trek
so now when I go outside
it's to play a *japa* round around
the house
back home we know the
Lord is true
Krishna's love. "

* * *

8:28 a.m.

"The original Personality of Godhead, the enjoyer, and Balarama, the primeval Lord Ananta, are staying in the ocean of the Yadu dynasty, for the welfare, protection and

general progress of the entire universe. And the members of the Yadu dynasty, being protected by the arms of the Lord, are enjoying life like the residents of the spiritual sky." (*Bhag.* 1.14.35 - 36)

Regarding the liberated servants of the Lord in Vaikuntha, Srila Prabhupada writes, "They are happy in those planets without any kind of misery, and they live perpetually in full youthfulness, enjoying life in full bliss and knowledge without fear of birth, death, old age or disease and without the influence of *kala*, eternal time." (*Bhag.* 1.14.35 - 36)

The great heroes of the Yadu dynasty forcibly took the Sudharma assembly house from the demigods and placed it in Dvaraka. They were assured of the Supreme Lord's protection. "A forgetful, conditioned soul is fearful. But a liberated soul is never fearful, just as a small child completely dependent on the mercy of his father is never fearful of anyone. Fearfulness is a sort of illusion for the living being when he is in slumber and forgetting his eternal relation with the Lord. Since the living being is never to die by his constitution [Bg. 2.20], then what is the cause of fearfulness?" (*Bhag.* 1.14.38, purport)

* * *

10:22 a.m.

Read in Cassian an interesting distinction between fear of God brought on by fear of punishment, and the fear that comes from love. That is, you fear that His love toward you might be diminished in some way. Cassian says this is the holy definition of "God-fearing." I feared Srila Prabhupada like that.

* * *

Soon *puja* time. June 1st. At this time last year, I was living at Daruka's house, reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* many times during the day, and writing EJW and poems. M. was rediscovering his musical vocation.

Pill on hand, just in case. Paramedics ready to rush to the scene. Got a tourniquet in a sterilized pack. Instructions inside. Would anyone have the concentration to read them while a victim's life-blood pumps out? But if you open it and read them now, will the tourniquet still be sterile?

I hope the worst won't happen. But something always happens. Hare Krishna music man. *Mrdanga*. Janmastami. Summer marathon. Change the society. Hoist up a flag. What's he have to say about *nama-hatta*? Chant on beads. Everything the same, always cycling, spiraling. We will always have another chance to forgive and forget, another chance, until your final turn "*ante narayana smrti*."

* * *

11:21 a.m.

Listening to a Godbrother's lectures, I sense the difference between us. It's like the different ways surgeons might use their scalpels. Each has their own style. My Godbrother emphasizes what I would call the conservative position. He quotes perfect scripture and condemns deviants. His own position isn't taken so personally as he

speaks. I mean the emphasis is always on the absolutes of scripture. You might even think the speaker himself has no imperfection.

I favor what I may call the reality approach, or the existential, human element. I say the one who speaks perfect scripture is also human and imperfect, as is his audience. Therefore, the speaker should be kind to them, address their reality and human needs, and teach how what they are can be dovetailed rather than denied. He says deny, I say dovetail. Or perhaps my Godbrother wouldn't agree with this analysis.

For myself I say (1) he's speaking correctly in *parampara*; (2) there isn't much difference between our main points; (3) he doesn't seem to fully own up to the fact that he's speaking from a subjective viewpoint; (4) ignoring his own subjectivity, yet impressing upon us objective absolutes "I find it jarring, even a little cruel sometimes. I guess I may err on the side of sentimentalism or in identifying people's relative "reality."

I'm just tired and weary of absolute preachers who so strongly put down Western "contaminations," which in mind seem so much like simple human needs. I don't like black and whites. I prefer to see the shades of gray in between. He has his quotes and I have mine. All of them come from Srila Prabhupada. He also focuses on aspects of Srila Prabhupada's personality that support his view, and I do the same. In that sense we are the same, although our approach is different.

To give an example, he said that we should not be concerned about increasing people's self-esteem. The absolute position is that we are lower than blades of grass. We should always think ourselves lowly. I would argue that there is such a thing as low self-esteem. A person coming to Krishna consciousness might not be able to function properly because of suffering from too low an estimation of himself. You can tell him he should be lower than a blade of grass, but you might also have to help him with the problem of always thinking himself incapable, hateful toward himself, etc. Low self-esteem is not the same as actual humility, which is based on the estimation that we are lowly in relation to God, and that we are ultimately His beloved servants. To entirely rule out the idea that a person could have psychological dysfunctions caused by low self-esteem seems unfair. Why not take help and use it in Krishna's service?

I spoke on this in a lecture about Sanatana Gosvami's wanting to commit suicide because he was ashamed that his wet sores oozed onto Lord Caitanya's body. In that lecture, I explained that there is a difference between real humility and false humility (not that I called Sanatana Gosvami's humility false). But even in the case of Sanatana Gosvami, Lord Caitanya had to kind of cheer him up. He also reminded him of the positive aspect of dependence upon the Lord, and assured him that he needn't be ashamed of his sores.

To me, that was an example of Lord Caitanya clearing up a distinction between something that was actually unhealthy and the healthy, confident humility based on an understanding of Krishna's love. Those in the conservative school seem to lump together anything that doesn't come straight from scripture as contamination, and anything couched in Western psychological or philosophical terms as *maya*.

Perhaps the most important thing to get out of this discussion is to gain conviction for the kind of speaker I would like to be. I don't want to put my Godbrother down for being what he is. He and I are friends, despite our differences. But let me learn from his presentation, and decide how I would do it differently. I don't want to make my

audiences squirm unnecessarily, or feel bad as I slam down the final card of the unequivocal, absolute truth. Let me take into consideration their fallen natures and try to make Krishna consciousness appealing to them. It is what I'd want for myself.

* * *

2:35 p.m.

Maharaja Yudhisthira is inquiring of Arjuna why he looks so despondent? Did someone address him with unfriendly words or threaten him? Did he fail to give in charity or to keep his promise? "These discrepancies are sometimes causes of despondency and thus failing, a person becomes subjected to criticism, which might also be the cause of Arjuna's plight." (*Bhag.* 1.14.40, purport)

"Did you fail to give shelter to dependents? Or is it that you are feeling empty for all time because you might have lost your intimate friend, Lord Krishna? O brother Arjuna, I can think of no other reasons for your becoming so dejected." (*Bhag.* 1.14.44)

It is moving to see Arjuna so grief-stricken because Lord Krishna has left his vision. This is the price a pure devotee pays for his blissful association with Krishna. The peace-seeking sage might try to avoid such deep emotions, remaining instead in the steadiness of *Santa-bhava*, but the Lord's pure devotees dive deep and ride high on waves of love for Him. Now we will hear Arjuna lament the loss of his personal power in Krishna's absence, and the loss of Krishna Himself.

* * *

Being a guru, a spiritual father "no joke. They depend on you. You have to die anyway, but to die upholding your honor and theirs. The same is true for any other of my Godbrothers who do this duty with dependents. What I mean to say is . . . I feel it. I don't want to hurt people. Don't want to hurt disciples by letting them down. If they hurt me by their misbehavior, I will obviously have to weather it. It could even be a factor in my pleasing Prabhupada and Krishna "something in my favor that I can withstand pain. I'm always seeking confirmation that I am preaching, that I am pleasing "well, this could be part of my credit. If you blow it, it will be to my great discredit. High stakes "like living in Vrndavana. The guru actually has to become a servant.

* * *

3:40 p.m.

We are writing for Krishna all systems go
it's Sunday no it's Monday
the catastrophe
the thing is Johnny is not afraid
but we ought to be afraid
of cars and dogs and
Big Boys
Men! Screaming mama!

* * *

That's kids' stuff. But to be afraid God
may not love me that I
misbehave to be afraid
I may be punished and
laughed at exposed
forced to go through a long ordeal
although it might be good for me

* * *

I write about fear.
the man in charge but
Lord guide me and I know
I have nothing to fear
when I get to
my spiritual body.

* * *

Don't mock
Be afraid of *ninda*
and write
until your hand breaks

* * *

fear he self/ fear he hell
fear he
shell-shocked burnt out
thrown in jail and tortured

* * *

just a dream I said
punks and
cops and robbers
equally afraid of them both

* * *

and crude people
sexy dames
walking in the night barefoot
no clothes, glass chips, a

Rough ghetto and me
laughed at
in a nightmare.

* * *

But if I don't
show fear pretend I mean
not afraid at all
they'll respect me as
a saintly *religioso*
with shaven head.

* * *

Be free of fear by clinging to Krishna
as son to Father, He's deep inside me
I know
I'll be safe in His
protection
Oh though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death
I'll fear no evil
He is with me.

* * *

Death may come up the stairs and I'd look
up at the door knob it
turns he
enters
just a minute, please
one moment.

* * *

The sheep huddled against the wall throughout the long morning in the lashing rain. It has finally stopped for awhile. The sheep are lying down as if they are exhausted. "I don't want to come back as a sheep!" M. said, half-laughing. Is he serious? Of *course* we don't want to come back like that, and I hope we don't, but if we even say it, shouldn't we put on a long face or maybe just accompany our comment with an exasperated laugh in the face of the remote possibility? Life's conundrums "we expect we won't be sheep, even feel sorry for the sheep, but we aren't much willing to sacrifice for them or take their place. We like to look out at them and feel friendly. We feel a little stab of familiarity with their black mouths and constant bleating. Their bellies are swollen with

good grass. But they live Auschwitz while we watch. No, we don't want to come back as sheep.

Voted most likely to reappear as a sheep: that man who drives up their pastures in his red jeep.

I feel no anger toward him. I simply turn away. A scholar with his text.

* * *

5:54 p.m.

Krishna taught Uddhava in the "Uddhava-gita," but our Srila Prabhupada didn't write the purports on that section of the *Bhagavatam*. He did give us the more basic dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, and the exalted dialogue between Lord Caitanya and Ramananda Raya. We love such talks between the Lord and His devotees. I especially like it in the *Bhagavad-gita* when Krishna speaks directly about *bhakti* and then declares that He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If we can only read the *Bhagavad-gita* daily with faith, we will develop love of God to perfection. Without the understanding given in *Bhagavad-gita*, we cannot be the Lord's true devotee.

Dear Lord Krishna, this morning I read the *api cet sudaracaro* verse. At first I thought it was "old hat"; I knew all about it. I didn't want to spend my precious time hearing about how we should honor the fallen who are nevertheless devotees. Too much morality. I wanted nectar. But I stayed with it and read what You had to say and realized how important it was. I also did some cross-referencing in *The Nectar of Instruction*. Then I thought about how I don't want to intimidate people when I speak. I don't want to investigate the householders' bedroom lives, or inquire into how many times *brahmacari* fall. I will tell them . . .

Anyway, it was good. But yes, I do want to hear that clear ring of pure *bhakti*. I like it when You say, "Come to Me. I will free you from the miseries of life. Develop your dormant love for Me by worship and by associating with My pure devotees."

And then Srila Prabhupada comes through with more pure Krishna conscious explanation. *Bhagavad-gita* is Krishna's words being milked by Srila Prabhupada and given to we errant, needy calves. We are meant not only to drink that milk but to distribute it to others. Hare Krishna.

* * *

From one paragraph to another I can look around. I like the boards on the *parikrama* trail. They feel like the deck of a ship, only this time I'm the captain as well as the boy. ("The boy stood on the burning deck, O Captain, O Captain . . ." I'm chanting Hare Krishna and going down with this ship.) Those boards "the path leading to Godhead, if only I could trod them with attention. Pause in your paces and look out at the valley, the sky, and know this is not your home "nowhere is your home. Krishna, Krishna, please deliver me to the essential Govardhana, where Radha-Govinda meet.

Poor, poor me.

Just a few short days ago, the leaves on the tree outside my window were closed tight as fists. I check them every day to see when they would open. I missed the event "they were all open and waving in the breeze this morning.

After the rain, the air is cool. Hare Krishna Hare Krishna. Cruel people, mad people, ignorant people "let us turn to Krishna and guru and get relief. I who have been given free time should use it to mine gems. They are so near the surface! They have already been gathered by Prabhupada and the *acaryas*; I simply have to scoop them up and appreciate them. Prabhupada, you have filled your books with such gems for our meditation, and you have given us the gemlike holy name to recite. What is the difficulty? I wish I knew.

Arjuna said in effect, "I accept all that You have said to me and I'll carry out Your orders. My illusion is gone and I am prepared to fight, which is what You want me to do. You are the Supreme pure, the Supreme abode, and no one is greater than You. I declare Your glories, but so do great sages like Narada and Vyasa."

Let those phrases pass through me. Krishna says, "You are My very dear friend, so I will speak to you this confidential knowledge." Krishna likes Arjuna's friendship, and enjoys his company eternally. All glories to Sri Krishna. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

June 2, 12:03 a.m.

How much longer will I be able to live like this? (If you mean, how much longer without change, forget it. Change happens constantly.) Is this the best way for me to be preparing my flight at death? To cross to the next life "is this writing the best thing to carry me? Will it fly? And if I conclude simply that I'm living how I want to live in the present, will outside forces continue to allow me the privilege of making my own choice? Am I turning to Krishna with dependence? We get no full assurances no matter what we do.

Dreamt of a soldier's inadequate take-off in a field. His body, the U.S. government told him, was a jet-propelled "plane," but he couldn't get off the ground. He fizzled out. He attempted his take-off in enemy territory, but they saw his flame as he taxied. A symbol of the body ill-prepared to go back to Godhead, falsely assuring himself and his onlookers that he could fly as well as a stronger plane? No concocted body-mind solo flight will make it.

* * *

"He quickly becomes righteous and attains lasting peace. O son of Kunti, declare it boldly that My devotee never perishes." (Bg. 9.31)

"Generally, a devotee who is engaged in the nine kinds of devotional activities is engaged in the process of cleansing all material contamination from the heart. He puts the Supreme Personality of Godhead within his heart, and all sinful contaminations are naturally washed away." (Bg. 9.31, purport) Of course, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is already *in* our hearts, so what can it mean that a devotee places the Lord in his heart? It means he turns to Krishna with attention and devotion; he makes a willful act to worship God. We each have that responsibility. *Samadhaya mano hrdis* "bringing the mind fixed on *nama* into the heart. Please help me do this, O Govinda.

"Continuous thinking of the Supreme Lord makes him pure by nature . . . Therefore, the chanting of Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama

Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare should be continued without stoppage. This will protect the devotee from all accidental falldown."

* * *

There is always something to bother the mind, to be considered a threat. Such impediments will never go away. There is danger at every step. Turning to Krishna is the only remedy, and we each must do this for ourselves. It's how we make the mind a friend.

". . . but, after all, this world is not a happy place for anyone." Lord Krishna says, "Therefore, having come to this temporary, miserable world, engage in loving service to Me." (Bg. 9.33)

You want a lecture topic? Take this one "that we should turn to Krishna in times of trouble, since they are always with us. Turn to Krishna. He is our friend. He will lift us out of the material world daily, moment by moment, and at the end of life. We won't be left to fly bogus, homemade airplanes that consist of no more than body and mind. We will have the first-class airplane of *Krishna-nama*. The Lord told Arjuna, "Take to My devotional service and come quickly back to Godhead, back to home." He is also saying that to us.

Devotional psychology interests me "how a devotee turns to Krishna, why the neophyte fails to do it so, how we tend to think of ourselves as self-sufficient or fear that Krishna will not protect us.

A lecturer's excitement: I'll get the *samaSrita* verse printed up to distribute to everyone in the audience. It is quoted in Prabhupada's purport to Bg. 2.51. We can chant it together as I used to with the *gurukula* children. Yes sir, by chanting that verse we can encourage others to ourselves to turn to Krishna and experience His shelter. The "blind trust{ point is itself good: I know that Krishna will protect me because He promises He will, and so does Srila Prabhupada promise on His behalf. If we can experience His protection "as well as experience how dangerous life in this world is "then we won't forget Krishna. Srila Prabhupada told us not to expect smooth sailing. He said Krishna didn't tell Arjuna that there would be no trouble, and neither did Arjuna ask for a magic ash to do his work for him. He had to fight for Krishna. Hare Krishna. "Therefore, Arjuna, you should always think of Me in the form of Krishna and at the same time carry out your prescribed duty 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)

* * *

4:31 a.m.

Radha and Govinda are dressed in burnished brown with gold trim. I am glad to be alive. I am not nothing, nor do I want nothingness. I want to be the eternal servant of Krishna. May He engage me as He sees fit. Hare Krishna.

Hearing the confidential pastimes of Radha and Krishna, which we do not deserve to hear, we try our best to honor them and not confuse them with perverted material versions.

I have learned the hard way how things we do in private may be exposed in public. So, don't do anything shameful. But our lives are often not shameful, just private. When they are exposed like that before people who are neither sympathetic nor understanding, those things that are dear to us look so naked and judged. Others have also had that experience. When devotees interviewed Hare Krishna dasi about her devotional life, she didn't tell them about her passion for gardening. That was too private. People won't understand. She would have had to explain it and explain it, and still they may have remained unmoved. From that, we might lose our own enthusiasm for what is dear to us, our private offering to Krishna. We give up our subjective approach and start seeing our lives as if they can be lived only by objective standards. I am not, of course, talking about vices performed in private but delicate, personal Krishna conscious expressions. Higginson thought that Emily Dickinson's poems were too personal to be considered in the light of objective literature. Who remembers Higginson? Dickinson is the immortal, indispensable American poet.

But people also want the cut of truth. They want to hear about those private aspirations and expressions. Again, I am not referring to scandalous behavior performed in secret. We all dig the earth in our own ways. Often we turn up gems that we polish in our own hearts. Hare Krishna. Let those private expressions shine.

This hour of day is nice because it's the time I give almost all my attention to Radha-Govinda. Maybe I should find more moments like these that just past. The evening provides another such opportunity. And then the two times I offer Them *prasadam*. Although those times are brief, they give me a chance to really see Them.

Today they are wearing black *cadars* and black earrings. Krishna has a gold leaning stick a flute. May Prabhupada permit me to worship Them. May my worship be service to him. I don't want it to take me thousands of births before I become worthy, but I am prepared to continue to work through any amount of darkness to achieve my goal.

* * *

Radha-Govinda, this foolish person is still awake. He will go out and walk a little later. He is sitting, facing You and Srila Prabhupada. You are across the room, and my eyesight is not so good at this distance. But I do see You. The *gopi-manjaris* want to assist Radha in Her pastimes with Krishna. They're so trustworthy that they are allowed to be present in every circumstance. They are sweet assistants who do not desire any personal gratification other than what they feel from rendering service. When Krishna embraces Radha, the *manjaris* receive all the impressions of that embrace on their own bodies. Thus they are compared to the leaves of a creeper, which embrace a tree when the creeper embraces it. Hare Krishna.

Dawn has arrived, but it looks sulky and dark. Stay in bed, turn this way and that, fall asleep finally. Are you warm enough? Do you love yourself? Is that wrong? Do you want a pain-free day? You can allow yourself a pill if you need to. Stay awake. We cannot stay in this house forever, or even in this world. We are constantly being reminded of this fact, but even so, we tend to forget it. That's especially true, it seems when your life is simple and retired.

"Emotional needs means lusty desires," that lecturer said. I say no, we can also use emotions in Krishna consciousness. They can be churned and the material sentiments separated. We can leave a record of how we actually are, how our desires are Krishna conscious, how our God-given arms move in a world of color and form, and how Krishna appears to us. The sonnet, the rose "the poet said he was thinking of Krishna. Arjuna sighed and cried because Lord Krishna had departed.

* * *

5:20 a.m.

On the morning walk, I saw a squashed slug on the road. After I passed the creek and small bridge, I walked until I finished another round, then turned around. I got a good view of our house on the hill. I've grown attached to this country. There is no view quite like this in America. At least you won't see the low, handmade stone walls that separate the pastures. Neither will you see gorse in bloom. But it's all a material designation, the scriptures say. And yet . . . the sheep ignore me when they see me from a distance, but the cattle get excited and rush forward. They must think I'm here to feed them. When I get closer and they fail to recognize me, they become afraid and back away. Their behavior creates quite a commotion, and since they're such big animals, it's alarming to see them afraid like that.

* * *

Their Vacant Faces
& Out of the walk "
vacant heads faces of cows "
can't even call them cows/ the beefers
afraid of me threatening ugly man
but they could thunder right over me.

* * *

Right over me. Thin fence separates us.
Gray diaphanous sky "what's it made of?
House on hill I love to live
in. "Mean to me," he asserts.

* * *

Then we hurry up a little
we are one in Krishna up that hill
"reading your book I forgot
it was by a Hare Krishna author."
Good "disarm them and then
give them Krishna

* * *

I want to be that way he said
and then everything was taken away.
Krishna consciousness? No not that "
the scriptures say it stays always
and I believe it.

* * *

But you *act* as if you live in
this world. I don't get it. Are
you a preacher?
Yes.
And the cows, why are they so
scared and vacant, why are their
ears tagged with a yellow thing?
Why are men so cruel? "

* * *

People Don't Know
& Now you know what happened
we re-entered the gate
and "he's writing fast "the fingers . . .
he takes a paper towel
Rips it in two and places them
before Radha-Govinda and Srila Prabhupada
places the lecture tape and the
machine, gets himself ready
for an offering which
is done soon enough.

* * *

And then?
Each moment of the day is blissful
if you attend it.

* * *

O Krishna this song too is nice
people don't know
how we wing home and are
happy in a quiet way
with bird tunes. "

* * *

8:35 a.m.

Wake up. How do you feel? I feel it's a dark room, part the curtain, see dark sky. How does *that* feel? I like it, yet it may make some spirits dreary.

I like real-life writing. Beats fiction for me. K. says yes, they say no. K. gains an upper hand, they put him down. He advances, they put him off. Surprise. Just a game. Not real. That was all he knew; he didn't know God.

I have a slight twinge in my eye. Won't let that stop me from reading *Bhagavatam*. Take a pill if you must.

* * *

Arjuna laments that with the Lord's departure, Arjuna lost his godlike powers. Srila Prabhupada writes that Arjuna's powers were not needed for Arjuna's going back to Godhead. We shouldn't be proud about any power we possess. "The sane man should rather feel obliged to the Lord for such benefactions and must utilize such power for the service of the Lord. Such power can be withdrawn at any time by the Lord, so the best use of such power and opulence is to engage them in the service of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 1.15.5, purport)

We cannot exist without Krishna. How foolish when we think it's up to us to decide whether or not Krishna exists, whether we will surrender to Him or love Him. "Factually, for a living being there is no one dearer than the Lord." The body is dear because of the self; the self has no value without Paramatma; Paramatma has no *locus standi* without the Supreme Lord Krishna.

* * *

9:35 a.m.

Took my pill over half an hour ago, *Pax dolce* "waiting for the twinge to disappear. On my back in bed. I see the gray sky through the skylight, and hear the *wishwish* sound of the trees. The house otherwise quiet.

Again thought I could try to springboard from *The Castle* Only when apart from it does it hold fascination. So many things are like that. Better to give them up once and for all.

Some devotees showed my disciples photos of the bodies of devotees who had died at the hospice in Vrndavana. One man had a devastated body "he died from AIDS "and had black splotches on the whites of his eyes. But his face looked ecstatic, "Like pictures of Jesus." Those photos haunted the devotees for days after.

I am seated facing Radha and Govinda. They wear a handsome outfit consisting of black *cadars*, brown outfits, with plenty of gold trim. The colors are muted, like this cool, gray day.

The headache pain ought to calm down. After all, I purchased relief. While lying down, I thought that even if the pain doesn't go down, I shouldn't feel cheated. Rather, I should accept it as Krishna's will.

I also thought that I want to trace my day in a way that forms its own pattern. If readers appreciate it, great, but I should write simply for the sake of making an offering. I give the same advice to Hare Krishna dasi about her gardening. Is it reckless to keep assuring her that gardening is service to Krishna? It calms her. That's important for those who are trying to live a life of prayer. Achieving calm is the purpose of so many mediation techniques. When we are calm, we are more able to come into the presence of God. When we can center ourselves in the present, we can find God there. We can't reach Him through mechanical, distracted prayer. We have to trust that we will turn to Him in moments of peace, because we want to be with Him.

I think I'm able to sankirtanam during their own prime hours on a daily basis. I am speaking to *you*, dear devotee. Some say they can't find a prime time within their allotted twenty-four hours, but I want to gently remind them anyway that each of us can find that window of opportunity for hearing and chanting. If we read *sastra*, we will recall it at other times in our day, or at least a shadow of what we read. We all have limited concentration, and that is our main impediment, but each of us should try to break through anyway.

* * *

10:25 a.m.

"Only by His merciful strength" was Arjuna able to defeat all the princes and win Draupadi's hand. He's a warrior, so he remembers such triumphs. Only by His mercy was I able to escape gross falldown in the heady zonal guru years; only by His grace have I escaped so many things. But as with Arjuna, so it could be with me "I may have to suffer a reverse. Krishna was always close to him, and so it will be with me.

Only by His grace do I find alone-ness sweet and safe. Only by His grace was the pain of my headaches mitigated (and you thought it was due to the Vitamin B complex I started taking).

* * *

Arjuna is a real person, the very dear friend of Krishna. All the Pandavas were Krishna's friends, but Arjuna was particularly intimate. Someday I may read the *Mahabharata* in a good mood.

Time to prepare for Srila Prabhupada's *puja*.

* * *

11:58 a.m.

Oh, prunes and bitter melons and weekly mail, you're riding high, sir. In my writing, I'll change the names to protect those who would be offended, but my own name I needn't change. I can even draw my own portrait, I'm so good-natured and uncomplaining.

M. was supposed to go to Dublin today but has canceled. His melodeon has a broken spring and he doesn't know how to fix it. He describes the problem and laughs, "My little world." A melodeon screw. I suggest he get a second instrument. He thinks instead of an

accordion, if he could get one in the right key. Accordion players in Ireland are very accomplished.

Lunch won't be long now. The horses are in their last stretch. Srila Prabhupada used to say, in 1966, that it was 1 p.m. in Brahma's day. At midnight, there will be a partial annihilation of the universe. Is it still 1 p.m. now that it's 1998? That means we all die more or less at the same time "grandfathers and great-grandchildren. It seems that the generations are ages apart. For example, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura and I are far apart in time, and certainly cultures apart. Would he recognize me? He doesn't know me, but I mean, even if I were introduced as a disciple of his disciple, A. C Bhaktivedanta Swami, formally Abhay Charan of Calcutta? Would I be able to listen to and understand his speech? Would his associates treat me as a foreigner the way other Indian Gaudiya Mathers have treated me (and I treated them)? We were at home with Srila Prabhupada because we lived in our own ISKCON world with him, the spiritual father of everyone. All his rambunctious captains "he could cut us down.

* * *

12:05 p.m.

Hare Krishna. The current from our spiritual master enters the future. He is our cable to Krishna at death. Hold on tight. Admit you are fallen and have failed him, failed in devotion and faith, but still you hold on and he will deliver you. He stays by you. Your *bhakti* is not forgotten.

* * *

3:00 p.m.

Lord Krishna wanted to kill the demon Maya-danava, but the demon took shelter of Arjuna. Lord Krishna then relented and allowed Danava to build a beautiful assembly house for the Pandavas. "Devotees are therefore more merciful than the Lord, and in devotional service the mercy of a devotee is more valuable than the mercy of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 1.15.8, purport)

Arjuna said that Bhima, by Krishna's grace, killed Jarasandha, the powerful demon king. Lord Krishna caused all the wives of the miscreants to become widows because their husbands had dared to loosen Draupadi's hair. Many incidents related in the *Mahabharata* are thus mentioned and commented on by Srila Prabhupada as Arjuna recounts the numerous times Krishna protected him and the Pandavas. Finally, Arjuna was victorious during the battle of Kuruksetra, even though he was opposed by superior generals. All this was due only to Krishna's influence. And of course, Arjuna related how Lord Krishna had agreed to become his chariot driver. Arjuna then confesses that out of separation from Krishna, he has lost heart. Thus he was defeated by infidel cowherd men while guarding Krishna's wives.

* * *

3:54 p.m.

Another rainy day. Tell us more about Arjuna and Krishna "why did you stop?"

I got tired. I'll be back to it.

Yes, sir, this house will receive a government grant to thatch the roof. Yes, the man who lives upstairs is my uncle. He just looks and sounds like a Yank, but actually, his name is Sam rivers, from County Cullen.

Oh, the art of dissembling. Krishna used it Himself to protect Arjuna.

Krishna, Krishna. We're on the lookout for a new man to launder our checks. (I'm only kidding.) You have to believe us dedicated artists, but we may sometimes pull your leg. Because it's quite a world out there.

Devotees are measured by their *Sraddha*. God conscious people are on top, but they think themselves fallen.

Talking like it hurts. "Oh, the pain in joy given to God is worth heaven," says Therese. She knew. My way is even littler than hers. Because I have had to draw it out for many years. They know the way home, though "the people I follow.

"Who are your companions?" Higginson asked Emily. She replied, "A dog and hills, sir." Hills were her friends, and maybe a robin, a few butterflies, her poems. She declared she wasn't religious. I'd reply that Krishna is my companion, and Srila Prabhupada, the *maha-mantra*, the *Bhagavatam*.

As for reading, I have the best Vaisnava books. He's always opening the door just when I need to be on top of a situation.

What's this "on top" mean? You are *nowhere* with that.

The government man may be coming to inspect the house, so I should just stay where I am and not wander around for the time being.

Did my prayer reach heaven? Are my reactions nullified? I hope I'm not sinning on the strength of chanting by drinking water.

Do you say "Sri Visnu" first?

Not usually. But I say quite a few Hare Krishna mantras at other times.

* * *

So free-write was an old hand. We used to get it out. We could scratch. We knew how. Now I'll tell you something else. The radiators work; the bread has a hard crust; I live each day, a righteous pearl. I stick up for my end.

The better the pen, the less you have to grip it to make it write smoothly. The only problem is, sometimes I write so fast with a good pen that I can barely read it. Krishna, Krishna. He allowed Arjuna to joke with Him; they were fast friends.

One time He saw a young woman on the bank of the Yamuna. He name was Kalindi. Arjuna approached her on Krishna's behalf, then told Krishna of her desire. Krishna also allowed Arjuna to marry Subhadra, and they became brothers-in-law. Arjuna was always Krishna conscious and wanting to please his friend. And he wanted Krishna by his side during the battle of Kuruksetra.

Krishna, please give me the easy way.

Please take me

with You. Please allow me

to enter the *Sastras* as

Reality "mine.

There is no permanent happiness (or misery)
in this world.

We die, get reborn, but
if we think of You with full devotion
at the end of life
we can go straight to You.

If we are not so much devoted, however, we will probably be reborn as humans and placed back on the *bhakti-marga* to make further progress. We will not go to Krishna until we want it so desperately that nothing else will satisfy.

* * *

5:28 p.m.

A government man actually did come and inspect the house. Something about the government giving grants to anyone who will thatch their roofs. I heard him talking with Madhu and walking around downstairs. Then they came upstairs. They went into the bedroom first. I decided it was better to sit at the desk, so I hurried over from the easy chair. I decided I would not stand when he entered so he wouldn't notice my *dhoti*. I wore my knit cap. He knocked and opened the door, but never came in. I saw he had a mustache and was younger than me. He was wearing a white shirt, a tie, and a tweed golf cap. He said something like, "Give a look," then added, "Very nice, oh, very nice."

I said, "It was rough. It's been converted."

As I spoke I realized I didn't sound Irish. I don't know who I was supposed to be living in this house, since I'm not the owner or the one to whom the grant is being given. I'm leaving that to the others. Maybe I'm a worker who lives upstairs and sits at a desk. The man glanced at the ceilings, then cast a glance at Prabhupada and Radha-Govinda. He saw Them, but I don't know *what* he saw. Then he backed out. I think I was right to not stand but to stay at my desk. Funny experience.

After he left, I went into the bedroom to imagine what it looked like to him, and I looked at the landing between the two rooms. It occurred to me that a lot of fine work has been done on these rooms, and they contain simple but presentable furniture and appliances. It doesn't look like a hippie pad or deserted warehouse. It is a lived in but clean, attractive place. Much of the credit for this goes to Aniruddha's for his woodwork with its grain finish. Now Madhu has gone off to make some phone calls and to bring a ladder. I'm alone for a while. It's raining, I'm finishing up my day's quota.

Every tree that is going to blossom is blossoming now, it seems. Jeep skidding off the road in Mayapur. The awful seconds, waiting to see how bad it will be, how sharp the pain "or is this death itself? You wait to see what will happen while you scream, "Krishna!" Bhavananda took it well. Krishna saved him. JagadiSa and I climbed out. We were not heroes but saved our skins, then came back to look helplessly at Bhavananda with his leg trapped under the jeep but sunk in the mud. Miraculously, a truckload of police drove up, jumped out, and pushed the jeep off his leg. Bhavananda went to a doctor. He said he passed stool and urine while under the jeep. I told him I envied how well he conducted himself. He cleaned himself at the doctor's and went back to Mayapur. Or did we continue on to Calcutta? I don't remember. Anyway, when we got

back to Srila Prabhupada in Mayapur, Prabhupada said Krishna had saved Bhavananda. Bhavananda limped for a few days, and that was that.

Madhu ought to be back soon. We have no telephone here, so when he wants to make calls, he has to go out. There is a mist covering the low hilltop. It looks like gray cotton, except you know it's really a water cloud. Waving, rippling "leaves and branches all part of one swaying tree. Irish weather never becomes terrific because it rains and rains. The sheep open their mouths to protest, but no one listens. It's their karma and not our own, or so we say. As if we have nothing to do with them, they are not our brothers, we are not soulmates, we don't have the same God and certainly not the same rights. Humans have different rights. I, for example, am a citizen of the United States of America.

I'm near the end of my day and look forward to reading Bg. 9.34, which is the very middle of the *Gita* and is the most important verse. I'll try to pray with it. The conditioned self goes to meet the Supreme.

June 3, 12:08 a.m.

Man-mana bhava mad-bhakto: "Engage your mind in thinking of Me, become My devotee, offer obeisances to Me and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me." (Bg. 9.34)

You are asking a lot, Lord. I can't do it, not be completely absorbed in You the way Arjuna was, or the residents of Vrndavana, or Uddhava or Narada or Prahlada "or Srila Prabhupada. But I honor all those devotees as my teachers, especially Srila Prabhupada. I beg you to recognize me as a disciple of Srila Prabhupada. I'd like to rise to that stage where I *recognize* You as the Lord of my life. That is why I am reading this verse and leaving behind my dreams.

I need to recognize more that I am in the "contaminated material world," in need of deliverance. Only You can free me. But that's not the chief reason for thinking of You. I want to be attracted to You. Srila Prabhupada said he wants his disciples to become lovers of Krishna, and to know Him, love Him, and serve Him in this world and the next "as the Christians say, "To love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole mind, and thy whole being."

Srila Prabhupada: "One should be thinking of Krishna in devotional love. That is *bhakti*. One should cultivate the knowledge of Krishna continuously . . . One should therefore engage his mind in the eternal form, the primal form of Krishna, with conviction in his heart that Krishna is the Supreme, He should engage Himself in worship."

I often scorn the word "should" when teachers use it, but Prabhupada has a right to use it. That's because he himself does what he tells us we should do. I *should* worship Krishna and offer obeisances to Him, my Radha-Govinda. Worshiping these *murtis* is training for worshipping Krishna in Goloka. One should, one should, and I *do*, but with a fractured, covered being, a partial being, a filtered love that allows only a pinhole trickle of emotion. I don't know what's wrong with me.

I am preoccupied with bodily pains and trying to minimize them. I'm trying to keep clear in this body to serve Govinda, Lord Caitanya. I believe and study the books.

"One should lower his head before the Deity and engage his mind, his body, his activities "everything." The pure devotee is the right one to tell us to do this. His words are even better and more accessible and convincing than Krishna's. By hearing from guru, we come to realize that Krishna is present in His words. Lord Caitanya is Krishna Himself; He chose to come in the form of a pure devotee to show us pure love of Krishna. He freely distributed the rarest love of Krishna.

"This will help one transfer to Krishnaloka . . . One must engage in the nine different processes of devotional service, beginning with hearing and chanting about Krishna." At least I'm on the right track. I accept these practices as the highest achievements. I'd like to help the Lord in His cause by telling others about this. Give them books. Practice pure devotional service even in the training stage.

"His accidental nondevotional activities will diminish and he will soon be situated without any doubt in complete perfection . . . Therefore, the intelligent person should take directly to the process of Krishna consciousness and happily live in this material world. He will eventually receive the supreme reward of Krishna."

I like this: be happy in this world and prepare to go to the next. Dear Lord Krishna, my sunset years are pleasant, by Your grace. Please let me intensify my *bhakti*. I can't run around much any more. Neither am I so pleased with myself. I'm not burning with a pure inner flame of love for You. But I am grateful to be under the blessings and following the basic instructions of Your pure devotee, Srila Prabhupada.

Bhurijana Prabhu quotes Baladeva Vidyabhusana on this verse of *Bhagavad-gita*. He says Krishna tells Arjuna not to be a so-called devotee like the king who is actually thinking of his own wife. "You, however, in contrast to this king, should be absorbed in thinking of Me and should be My devotee. Your mind should always be fixed, like an uninterrupted flow of honey, on Me . . . you should think of Me as your own master and the very goal of your life." Lord Krishna knows that the "shoulds" are ideal. Thus in the twelfth chapter, Krishna tells us that if you *can't* think of Him spontaneously and constantly, follow the rules and regulations. They will bring us the spontaneous stage.

Srila Prabhupada recommends chanting the *maha-mantra* as the means to think of Krishna. Alas, we are so mechanical. Still, thank God we are chanting at all. And preaching.

* * *

4:31 a.m.

I have laid out three sets of clothes for Radha-Govinda, because Syamananda dasa is supposed to come today to take Their picture. I have already dressed Them in a photogenic outfit. I gave Govinda His silver buffalo horn, then worried that it might not be the right mood when He's alone with radha. Anyway, the buffalo horn is part of His eternal paraphernalia. Certainly He has His flute. radha does not carry anything, however, but she does wear a pretty blue *candrika* and necklace.

I sent Madhava dasa a tape of my reading and commenting on Beckett's play, *Krapp's Last Tape*. He remarked that no one but Krapp himself, that unfortunate solitary man, would be able to understand the tapes he made, speaking of his life and his lost love. Madhava said that my own writing is similar, and that it is composed mostly for myself.

Perhaps I'm the only one who really understands it. readers try to get *some* idea, but they are ever outsiders. I suppose he's right. Yet I'm trying to communicate. After all, a monk may pray alone to his God, but whoever overhears that prayer may also both understand the monk and understand something about his own aspiration. If the prayer is genuine and not contrived for an audience. That's the premise of this writing.

Hare Krishna. Madhu canceled his trip to Dublin yesterday but will go later this morning. I'll be pursuing writing my quota "two more days for this volume. The sky has brightened. It's dawn again. O Krishna. Do I really want to receive Tulasi-devi here? I wouldn't want to be responsible for her wilting. Will I be able to care for her? I don't think I have sufficient devotion. But I could develop it. Worshiping *tulasi* is part of a simple, devoted life. Hare Krishna. Would Krishna and radha enjoy seeing Tulasi-devi present in this room? Will her presence help me chant? I have a photo of Srila Prabhupada sitting on the floor next to a luxuriant *tulasi* plant. He's chanting his *japa* before her. He also recommends that we chant with *tulasi*. I think I'll try it.

* * *

Upon hearing *Krapp's Last Tape*, Madhava remarked, "I hope I never see *your* last tape." But he probably will, because there will be a last. Then we can go back to hearing them all again. So Krishna consciousness cycles. We read the *Bhagavatam* again and again like that too.

Don't regret, Madhava, that you didn't study any intellectual books before you came to Krishna consciousness. You didn't really miss anything. It could have even delayed your coming, or affect you still in your attempt to focus solely on Krishna. I read many books, and I now have to burn what they contained in the fire of devotional service. I am not proud of my ability to drop literary references. reading nondevotional literature was just a bad habit I acquired as I grew up. I am working on acquiring the habit of diving deep into Krishna conscious literature and making that my intellectual life. But whatever I have, whatever affliction or merit, Madhava, use it in the Lord's service.

I'm pushing this out. Soon it will be a little after 5 a.m. and I will go outside for a walk around the house. It is so rare, the lush spring countryside, and it's unlikely I'd meet anyone out there. This part of the world seems to be mine to appreciate. But I will appreciate it by remembering who created it, and I will chant His name. Because Krishna has invested all His potencies in His holy name. He wanted to make our return to Him as easy as possible. This is both theory and reality: *nama cintamani KrishnaS*. This theology is deceptively simple. We can chant, but can we love to chant? It's a mystery, the names, and we try to unravel it again and again. It eludes us. Or rather, our mercurial mind slithers off. The mind has its ways. Still, the mantras come out and do their damage to the illusion of material life. They contribute to our transformation. Turn to Krishna, who is in the name, and ask Him to appear.

* * *

I'm Happy
& Beep-a-reep I'm happy know why
'cause I'm a loyal son

not much but
not kicked out.

* * *

Rain coming down on my
hide in a place
no cops come
to machine-gun me

* * *

imagine hoards suddenly, Huns
could come as they do
in the history books. They killed
hermits, who called on Lord rama
to save them.

* * *

I'll call on Krishna right
away but while I'm waiting
I'll walk and walk the boards until
my ankle hurts then give it up.

* * *

Silly serious I am able
to rout the blues
with a simple song
of praise. "

* * *

Back At Beginning
& You better believe it love is
Rare I don't care got my pills
my baby hot water bottle
schedule of all druthers
and to you give this smile and handshake
my way.

* * *

Laugh because I know it
can be interrupted then as in

the nightmare I had
about working for Food Farm for
Betty Gage at
seventy-five cents an hour
and just do it too! But
could I avoid the hot-dogs
this time around and when I'd hear
of Krishna consciousness would it set off a bell
in me? "Yeah, that's
my guru Prabhupada calling." Please
let me pick it up.

* * *

Or better yet go straight to Goloka
and serve Srila Prabhupada back at the beginning
whatever he wants me to do
I am willing and he says you're my
eternal son, here take a
sandeSa and go work with
this devotee. I'm happy
to do it.
Would you? "

* * *

8:15 a.m.

"I have the same Gandiva bow, the same arrows." So speaks Arjuna. His powers have all suddenly become null and void. Srila Prabhupada generalizes that this happens to all living beings: Krishna gives and then takes away. And He can do it "in a moment's time."

Interrupted here by Syamananda dasa taking pictures. I'll speak with him and Madhu.

"As long as the parents allow the child to play, it is all right. As soon as the parents withdraw, the child has to stop." (*Bhag.* 1.15.21, purport) I seek His blessings for what I've decided to do. I engineered this life in Wicklow along with Madhu and the devotees here. They know what I'm trying to do. My disciples in other places have also encouraged me. The fact that I've been allowed to fulfill my desire doesn't mean it's the very best thing for my Krishna consciousness and that Lord Krishna wholeheartedly endorses my choices. His will remains somewhat of a mystery. But I know from His teachings that He wants me to give my love freely and to act out my desires in His service. I'm doing all right by those standards.

"Now I am attracted to those instructions imparted to me by the Personality of Godhead (Govinda) because they are impregnated with instructions for relieving the burning heart in all circumstances of time and space." (*Bhag.* 1.15.27) Srila Prabhupada states that Arjuna is referring to the *Bhagavad-gita*. These instructions are for all people at all times and in all lands. *Bhagavad-gita* gives "not only solace from all kinds of

mental agonies, but also the way out of great entanglements which may embarrass one in some critical hour." The *Bhagavad-gita* (and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, etc.) is the sound incarnation of the Lord.

* * *

10:03 a.m.

Silence. Live with yourself. What do you want to do? Fill up this page, work toward 11 a.m., then hear *Krishna* book while you massage Srila Prabhupada. I kept reversing the tape to hear the prayers of Yamala and Arjuna when they came out to the twin *arjuna* trees, but I couldn't pay attention. Too many other thoughts on my mind.

I'm distant from other human beings right now. Delicate feelings toward myself and my body. Delicate feelings toward other people too though. I'm vulnerable to impressions others make on me. I could easily cry, but I rarely do. Something stops me. I'm dried up. The tears well up, but they never get far. I know how to turn them off "I withdraw. Because *indulging* in tears seems grossly sentimental and *dishonest*. I want to cry only when I can't help myself.

Don't want to induce fainting either.

So I'm a tough guy in my own way. Grew up like that "not allowing tears. Although I remember being a little boy and crying. Whenever I got hurt, I would run to my mother and cry. Then I decided (I was told) to be a "big boy" and not run home just because I scratched myself or hurt my body, even though it might bring tears to my eyes. That was the first stage of toughness training.

* * *

10:32 a.m.

Help us to stop your participation in the human race? You and they cry want joy and pleasure emotion.

He wants to dance

he says

wants it offerable to God.

How can I say

no

or yes

but sway back and forth

and hope for private love

of God "to get mileage out of

what we do.

Secrets? I have few.

Do you want to be Krishna conscious?

YES!

But why? So Manu will think you are a good guru? So those who trust you won't have their faith shattered?

I don't want to have to face a disciple whose eyes say, "You let me down. You're just an ordinary lusty rascal." No, I would be ready to die first.
But forgiveness always. Forgive me.

* * *

Lord Nrsimha in *Santa* pose
although He can be angry too.
Let it be a lesson.

* * *

Ani is up north building
a house
I'm south hiding a
mouse
a blues-splashy ink.

* * *

3:32 p.m.

We can't go back to the Supreme Lord's *sanatana* abode until we are free of material identification. "The *Bhagavad-gita* is therefore meant for terminating all different types of miseries and Arjuna took shelter of this great knowledge, which had been imparted to him during the Kuruksetra battle." (*Bhag.* 1.15.27, purport)

"Suta Gosvami said: "Thus being deeply absorbed in thinking of the instructions of the Lord, which were imparted in the great intimacy of friendship, and in thinking of his lotus feet, Arjuna's mind became pacified and free from all material contamination." (*Bhag.* 1.15.28)

When we meditate on Krishna, our meditation is as good as yogic trance. He's like the sun that drives away darkness, ". . . and the Lord's appearance within the mind of the devotee can at once drive away the miserable material effects. Lord Caitanya has therefore recommended constant chanting of the name of the Lord for protection from all contamination of the material world." (*Bhag.* 1.15.28, purport)

Feelings of separation from Krishna are also sources of transcendental bliss. As Arjuna remembered Krishna's instructions, he was cleared of all contamination. And that's what can happen to you, my friend.

* * *

5:44 p.m.

I went downstairs and painted for the first time in days. Yes, I messed around. The first painting came out the best by normal standards. It was of a graceful guy "could have been a skater "in *sankirtana* bliss. There was another man in the painting cheering him on. I drew a green aura around his yellow head while Srila Prabhupada sang "*hari hari biphale*" in his *mysterioso* voice.

I was alone, but I occasionally glanced out the window just to be sure. I got a little lost feeling ""Am I a devotee?" "then left it behind. I'm always trying to control my own consciousness so that I never get lost outside the identity that I am a right-behaving devotee. I'm afraid to fall out of that concept. I guess that's good. It's number two on the *Saranagati* list: to avoid that which is not Krishna consciousness. But should it be a thing that we are always so much in control of? Do I lack confidence in the depth of my identity? When a person is drowning, they usually drop all pretenses and cry out for help. He may never have known what was under the surface if he hadn't experienced an emergency. I identify the abandon of being in *maya* with getting drunk or taking some drug. But there's a difference between abandoning Krishna consciousness even for a time, and relaxing into who you are. If after all these years I am still not a devotee at heart, I might as well face that. How will I get beyond it if I don't face it first?

These are some of the things of which I get inklings when I let go a little and paint. And sure, I come along right behind them and add sacred words or heartfelt cries, "Krishna!" "Help!" I also add *tilaka* to all my characters to make it clear that a Krishna conscious person painted them.

People may not always understand what I'm doing. I'm trying to paint what comes but saturate it with Krishna consciousness. I want the paintings to bleed Krishna conscious feeling. A bird looks up at a man who looks down with kindness "that's enough. Or a stalwart masculine form "that's enough. A mistake turns into something else. It's a world of people who face ambivalence alongside the Krishna conscious message.

* * *

I had a nice session with Syamananda this morning. I invited him to come once a week to take pictures of my paintings and get them onto slides.

Painted a man and labeled him "President." He has an egghead. He's like some executive in ISKCON, or like me, with eyeglasses. The man beside him is beaming kindness toward a fat little bird. People's kindness toward animals is a nice thing to see. And the "President" "we josh at him a bit. We are that high-foreheaded egghead who stays in his study all day looking at pieces of paper behind the pieces of glass that are his spectacles, wearing down his years that way. Get out and be joyful. Look at the fat bird that you will not kill. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. Please chant and be happy. That's what the Swami told us to do.

* * *

6:37 p.m.

Good night, plump water bottle, smile, clock, and I'll hear you soon enough, alarm. I hung a *gamcha* over the window to block out the sunlight. I seek rest, ease. I had a clear day today, but was it in my eternal favor? That's all that matters. *Ayur harati vai pumsam* . . . sunup and sundown, the life span diminishes, except for those who praise Uttama-Sloka with full heart. We say we want to be ourselves, but we are devotees. Find that self that responds to devotional love of God. Be embarrassed before others if you must, but don't give up who you are.

Hey, aren't you that guy you who wants his turf? Still?

No, I'm ready to leave here. I just want to be alone in my own playground, wherever that will be. Santoka wanted only a desk, light, chair, and one person. I can send myself out from there.

Ultimately, I am not here anyway; I'm at the Swami's feet. May Krishna protect and strengthen my *guru-nistha*. In the meantime, I will have to approach Him even with my faults.

June 4, 12:01 a.m.

I woke at 10:30 p.m. and thought over different things in my life. Then I noticed I wasn't centrally thinking of Krishna. Yesterday I read His key statement in *Bhagavad-gita* (9.34), "Think of Me, become My devotee . . ." I may use that as my topic for next Sunday's lecture "that the world and each of our lives are full of trouble, and we must cope in different ways, but the best way to survive is to take Krishna's shelter. And why don't we do that more? Then the current of my life events swept through me, and again I had to turn to Bg. 9.34. Where is my passion to take shelter of Krishna?"

* * *

When Krishna calls this world temporary and miserable, do I want to deny it? Even if I want to say the world is wonderful, it's the kingdom of God "even then I should recognize that it's wonderful only because Krishna gives it life. It's not me who makes it wonderful, and it's not accidentally wonderful. Someone wonderful *made* it this way.

Whatever is wonderful about it, however, no one can deny that it is also temporary and miserable. That's what Krishna says, and I believe it. His abode is a much better place. That's why He wants us to go there. It's in our own interests. Fools refuse. I'm not one of them.

Bow down to Krishna in the temple. "That will help one transfer to the Krishnaloka." Don't just bow your head, use your hands, brain, money, and everything else in His service. "Therefore, the intelligent person should take directly to the process of Krishna consciousness and happily live in this material world. He will eventually receive the supreme award of Krishna." (Bg. 9.34, purport)

* * *

Madhava dasa remarked that as Beckett's Krapp made tapes that only he could understand and appreciate "his life in a tape journal "so no one but me can fully understand my writing. I may not like being compared to the lonely Krapp, but let's assume what Madhava says is true "that I write first for myself and that others may never understand it completely. However, as Krishna and Prahlada Maharaja explain, self-interest is actually a form of love of God. That is, we love the body because of the soul, and we love the soul (when we are enlightened to full self-interest) because of his relation to the Supreme Soul, Krishna. I love myself because I love Krishna; I'm His tiny servant.

Oh, God.

Yeah, well . . .

Tell me more. I'm writing this stuff to help myself in Krishna consciousness, and so people can look over my shoulder and read it too "to help *them*. I appreciate it when people read what I write; it helps me feel absolved from the faults in my presentation. If others read me and it helps them, then I'm partly absolved. *But even if they don't read me* "that's the strength of Krapp's dedication. Even if they don't read me, *I'm writing for myself*.

* * *

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Listen again, O mighty armed Arjuna. Because you are My dear friend, for your benefit I shall speak to you further, giving knowledge that is better than what I have already explained." (Bg. 10.1)

How could anything be better than what He just said? He'll explain more fully His specific opulences. In this verse, Krishna again calls Arjuna His dear friend, and again we may take it that we too can become His intimates and receive the same special attention. We too can become nondevotees Transformed into devotees. So let us read Bg. Chapter 10 and feel an increase in our gratitude toward Krishna "how fortunate we are to have such a great and powerful Lord.

* * *

Swami Little, you have a good start on your June 4th quota of twenty pages. "I hope I never see your last tape," your last day of EJW. This, however, is the last day of Vol. 25. I can *always* start a new volume, right?

* * *

4:31 a.m.

Dawn. Radha and Krishna in red *cadars*, pink dresses with peacock-feather trim, and gold *jari*. Krishna has a gold leaning stick and flute. All glories to radha and Krishna in the groves of Vrndavana. Thank you, Srila Prabhupada, for allowing me to worship Them on this altar in my room.

Loyalty toward Prabhupada is wonderful. Surely he will take us all the way to Vraja-Krishna's service. We will accomplish it in the quickest way possible, and on the safest road, by his mercy. This is the road he intended for us to traverse. We don't need other gurus.

Do his lectures sometimes seem too familiar, too philosophical? Work through those feelings. Hearing them requires a deeper yet simpler appreciation. Just accept what he gives. Be certain his teachings are *cintamani*. If we actually yearn to attain the *madhurya* pastimes, then Prabhupada's teachings will yield them. He will give us permission to serve Radha-Govinda and thus bring our heart satisfaction as we become purified. With Prabhupada's permission and guidance, we can become enthusiastic to hear rupa Gosvami's two jewel-like dramas. Those plays were read in Lord Caitanya's presence. and the Lord praised them as a shower of nectar.

In *Lalita-Madhava* we learn that Dvaraka Krishna is attending a play about radha-Krishna's pastimes in Gokula. When Jatila appears and reprimands Madhava, Krishna in

the audience says, "These harsh speeches of the old ladies of Gokula give me more pleasure than the hymns of the sages." Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare.

Dawn and the awakening of the birds. Most humans are still asleep. Get your notes and read to yourself. Do you have a note about a new series, a new flight of the imagination? Is there a way to let it out? Maybe you need to dare yourself more. You are afraid, it seems, to *really* improvise a story.

I don't know that it's fear that prevents me. Maybe I don't like long fiction.

How about a short one?

Once a van crashed and the passengers left this world. They traveled to the sun planet. There they took new bodies and names and entered into Krishna's pastimes. Believe it's possible? Ninety years ago, at the end of the twentieth century, time carried me in a different stream. I bowed before a different feature of Lord Krishna. Time was still one of His opulences, however. Once there were so many incarnations I couldn't count them all, just as we can't a river's waves. All the incarnations emanate from Krishna. His original form is the best. I seek to be with Him, but . . .

* * *

A little fog inside my head. It won't stop me now. I can rest later. Now tell of how Krishna fares, how we watch the play. The plot's movements become complicated. I can't follow it all. I just know that Narada appeared and said that the girls of Gokula were now appearing as Krishna's queens in Dvaraka.

Prabhupada watched me as I dressed his Lords, and he indicated that I was his disciple. He also assured me that he would grant me and his other disciples all our desires.

But we have to learn. Am I not cooperating nicely with my Godbrothers? Yes, cooperate. In my case, cooperation takes the form of staying away from the action. I'm sorry about that sometimes.

Krishna wants my inner thoughts posted for all to see. They will not think so well of me "I'm obviously no *maha-bhagavata* "but yes, that's what I am offering.

Now chant the holy name and paint your face with Govardhana minerals. Ask him to write home to his spiritual father.

* * *

5:15 a.m.

What do I want to say about the countryside? I guess I'd like to remember what it's like at full spring. So many varieties of white-blooming trees. I don't know the names of half of them. I recognize the blackthorns. Some are lacy with tons of tiny white blossoms on each branch. Some of those blossoms have already fallen to the ground. Still, it's peak blooming season "so delicate, so temporary.

The white outshines the gorse, although the gorse is hardy and will last almost the rest of the year. The two sides of the road are filled with wild grass and weeds of many species. Some resemble ferns, others cattails, wild oats. If I were a botanist, I could have a field day checking them all out. They just grow tall, next to the tall-stemmed

buttercups and light and dark greens and rows and beds of so many plants sown by Nature herself.

The tarmac road down the center of it all is my own private walkway. Why worry? Just chant Hare Krishna, turn to Krishna in this temporary and miserable world, and oh, see that foxglove? And there's another!

* * *

Bird In The Bush
& Tired guy beat him "Go!
You got to walk and work
we mean b'ness
new man in town no lawn
mower
he's a bird is all we can say
he's so fast
I hear the bird in a
bush, stop to look but can't
see

* * *

Hare Krishna
spinster
word spin
spinning wheel . . .

* * *

writing this while the mail,
just arrived, sits steaming in the
package, breakfast
on the way
I could live forever getting
old and
chipper
brittle

* * *

then find out what it's like
to die.

* * *

Krishna science sockets and sonics

of *harinama* youth group
so better play at it while you
can with a tolerable head
and day. This way.
This way given by Lord Caitanya. "

* * *

KC Blues
& Oh, you've got to go with it "
you hear of another falldown
and what, wait for your own?

* * *

You read and accept
Resolutions no
solution schisms and
invasions all
superficial
and turn back
to your own work

* * *

It all weighs heavy but
singing blues means playing
pain
this time ain't the golden
triumph over the whole world
we all expected of
Lord Caitanya's glorious
Rise
but
we won't give up.

* * *

We'll keep on trying
win first prize
sometimes in a Hawaii parade
or when a mayor shows up to cut
a ribbon
or better yet
when a serious person
takes to the process

and we feel satisfied to know
that Prabhupada
would smile
on us
insisting we
continue.

* * *

Don't let that old *maya*
beleaguer me
give me the KC blues
any day
and not *maya* 's joy. "

* * *

8:40 a.m.

Forgive, I'm told. And don't be too hard on yourself. Day-old piece of apple pie for breakfast seems to have given me indigestion. Headache! Take Esgic.

* * *

10:10 a.m.

Pain hasn't gone down. Walk with it; it covers my existence. Color red behind the eye, pincers, and my attention gets fixed there. *Ouch!* It's continual, and I can't concentrate on anything else. Could it become a meditation in Krishna consciousness? Yes. Not that Lord Krishna is "Mr. Pain," or the Pain Giver, but I should find Him in this pain before the more painful sting of death. Be aware and prepare. We are helpless. When we have good health, we tend to be more reckless with our spirit to enjoy. We tend to do extra-curricular things, be frivolous. When there is pain, however, we get serious. Except I can't concentrate even on devotional practices when that pain settles in behind the right eye.

I'm still hoping this headache will go down. If not, then yes, I have no choice but to try to remain as Krishna conscious as possible. When I'm in pain, Krishna consciousness means maintaining an undercurrent of waiting for it to lift while building eagerness to get back to my service. What is pain anyway?

* * *

2:45 p.m.

Pain down. Now what can I salvage of this day? Drop all *personas* "there's no time for them. *Sri Krishna caitanya prabhu nityananda*.

I'm inclined to call Madhu up here to discuss strategy. Should I send out my letter to GNP? They are discussing whether or not to print two or three volumes of EJW in one bound book. Everything could be crucial or not, depending on how you look at it.

* * *

Won't make the quota today. Can't push myself any further.

* * *

4:15 p.m.

Who am I anyway? The person who answers my mail, who sighs with relief when headaches ease and some people leave town. I am the one who would like to chant *japa* but who can't get over the hump. The name lumps up in his throat. He'll get over it, we say.

Who am I? A fellow with a bad case of post-WW II trauma, who grew up absurd in NYC's boroughs, who survived and survived into the 1960s, somehow or other. I thank Mom and Dad for that. I managed to stay alive until I met the Swami. Hardly material for an all-American radio show. Anyway, I dropped out of materialistic society around 1966.

Jean Shepherd used to talk about being in tune with the times, as if that's a crucial thing. He said we had to know the TV commercials ""That's where it's at." I suppose I was in tune with the times in the 1960s "knew LSD, the New Jazz, what it was like to live on the Lower East Side, and yeah, I thought I was on the edge of the New Consciousness. Then I joined the Hare Krishna movement, which at the time was also a hip sort of thing. That wore off. Now I'm no longer in synch with the times, whatever they are.

* * *

5:30 p.m.

Astaratha Prabhu sent me a beautiful book of his poems, *From My Open Window*. They are good! Reminds me a little of Rilke and Chinese poetry, although I doubt he followed their style consciously. The source of good poetry is the universal fount from which all poets all drink. I especially liked the images he perceives from his window in his house in Umbria, Italy. He weaves in Krishna conscious reflections in a non-preachy way. He's alone in life, facing old age and the many issues of a person seeking God consciousness. Very nice. I hope he does more. I think it was worth his stay in Umbria simply to write these poems. Write and tell him.

Now my ears are straining to hear the approaching van. My head pain hasn't gone away. I can't concentrate. Waiting for 7 p.m., and doing a little of this, a little of that to help pass the time.

I like the honest voice in Astaratha Prabhu's poems.

* * *

6:40 p.m.

Okay, say good night and good-bye to this volume. Every moment, new things I hear: rupa-sanatana dasa, initiated by me, passed away a couple of days ago. May he go to Krishna, or at least closer. He was a physically strong man who served Krishna well,

especially in the years of the 55th St. temple in Manhattan. Hare Krishna. Tell about Krishna "what you know.