

ELECTRIONIC BOOK

# By Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami

Originally published by

GN Press Inc. USA

## Every Day, Just Write

Volume 2

Search for the Authentic Self

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Search for the Authentic Self

December 1 - 29, 1996

Also by Satsvarupa dasa Goswami

Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita

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Readings in Vedic Literature: The Tradition Speaks for Itself

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GN Press, Inc.

R.D. 1, Box 832

Port Royal, PA 17082

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Printed in the United States of America

December 1, 1996

12:08 a.m.

Dreamt Madhu and I were living like bum wanderers, determined not to settle down and take ordinary jobs. Madhu kept a neatly drawn cartoon book of our amazing and often humorous adventures. For example, once two policemen came to arrest us when we were camping in the woods. They were confident we must be carrying marijuana, but they couldn't find any. There was nothing wrong with us. I told the policeman that my father was a fireman, so I knew something about a policeman's life, and I praised them

for risking their lives to protect the citizens. Dream and wake, dream and wake, danger and rescue, all recorded in this cartoon book. What's it leading to, adding up to?

\* \* \*

Took rest at 6 p.m. yesterday because of a viselike headache. I thought how nice it would be to wake up at midnight clear of pain. And here I am. My wish came true. Later, I'm supposed to give class in the temple, so I had better look at the Cc. for topics. We've been reading Cc. regularly. We're up to the pastime when Lord Nityananda breaks Lord Caitanya's *danda*. Quick, want to comment on that? But the Lord's pastimes are grave, and only a pure devotee can understand them. Lord Caitanya wanted to observe the rules of *sannyasa*, but Lord Nityananda "anyway, that's already explained in the purport. I do appreciate, however, that we get glimpses of Lord Caitanya as a *person*. He's blackish Krishna covered in the golden complexion of Srimati radharani and tasting *vipralambha*. He is the most munificent person. A verse in *Mahabharata* states that He took *sannyasa* at a young age to save us all.

Every day, just write. It's good for me. In a segment of the same dream I was wearing swim trunks (ill-fitting ones) and working with two *karmis*. I went aside from them and ate my only food of the day "two apples. My face and form immediately filled out and became healthy from eating the apples, but something told me I still needed more nutrients than that.

Is it cheese I need or just a laugh?

Laugh if you're chronically ill.

"Where is the *Krishna-prema*? Did you bring me any?" I asked Maha-mantra on her return from Vrndavana. No, she didn't, but she did bring me some mixed hard raisins, nuts in the shell, and white granules you buy at the store there. I spoke foolishly on the "reality" of Vrndavana as non-ideal. The next time I speak I should correct what I say and be sure people know I am talking about my subjective "reality," not the actual Vrndavana.

Take To It

Another happy day in life,  
take to it brother,

Read some Cc. or

*Bhagavad-gita* "He's the  
sound in ether  
you can breathe or  
not be able to breathe "  
due to some mercy of  
God, Krishna.

\* \* \*

While you breathe and move  
your hand and see "blessed  
gift "praise Him who  
knows all, creates all,

sustains all and destroys.  
Praise your best friend.

\* \* \*

O spiritual master, through you  
I reach Krishna and Krishna  
Reaches me. Kindly give  
me intelligence to serve you.  
You are great and kind  
to come to us and to  
stay with us. You provide  
the boat that carries us  
across.

\* \* \*

Yes, it's good to praise instead of always facing my own faults and failures. Give the reader (and writer) relief.

By reading *Caitanya-caritamrta*,  
I see Lord Nityananda throw the  
broken *danda* in the  
Bharginadi river.  
Now the Lord moves to  
Nilacala "He's six miles away but  
every mile seems like eternity  
in His yearning for Lord Jagannatha,  
whom He sees  
as Krishna carrying the flute.

\* \* \*

Move on that road,  
spirit soul in  
the wake of Lord Caitanya.

\* \* \*

5:40 a.m.

Teresa speaks of the importance of walking in self-knowledge all the days of our life. The commentator writes, "An important point about Teresian self-knowledge is that it is not introspective or centered in the incomplete self; rather it is God- and Christ-centered." One Godbrother wrote me, "Don't think about yourself so much in your books. It's a drag to read it. We want to hear the glories of Krishna, and if you did that you'd be more saintly. Sure, we all have faults and we don't progress, but we don't want to keep hearing that you slopped up your *gayatris* again."

Well, then what else can I say? All glories to the *gayatri* mantra? Yes, I know it comes from Krishna's flute and enters Lord Brahma's eight ears, then comes out his mouth (I think) as the Sanskrit *Slokas* that we recite. The *gayatris* are the *kama-bija* mantras for perfect persons. They have deep meanings. I know that. But I'm not just a religious academic who wants to repeat the facts. I want to discuss my experience and to overcome complacency.

I know my writing has a sharp edge of self-accusation, but I am too easy on myself. I'm a squirrel running a treadmill. Please help.

\* \* \*

Last Sunday it snowed, but we went to the island anyway. It's warmer this Sunday. I have my margin pencil notes written into the Cc. and I'm ready to speak about Lord Caitanya as the ideal *sannyasi*. Lord Caitanya didn't like to hear Himself called God, but Lord Nityananda didn't like Him to be seen as ordinary. Sometimes a devotee's feelings are in conflict with the Lord's.

Do I have anything relevant to say? Maybe I can tell the mothers that taking care of their children is devotional service. What about the fact that everyone should take *sannyasa*? And we should all love this person, Lord Caitanya. We can get close to Him by reading the Cc.

Pulling through rounds "it's hour after hour chanting. Madhu drives hour after hour in heavy traffic and I usually sit in the back hour after hour. Jet pilots fly hour after hour over the ocean on their way to the Middle East or India. I chant hour after hour, trying to face the name head-on.

Krishna, please help us. There's still time.

8 a.m., If I had to go to work: a dream

I was observing workers in a supermarket. It would be hard if I had to work like *that*. I saw meat in a freezer and thought of having to work long hours, riding an elevator carrying things, waiting for the time to pass. One worker opened a can of soda and was drinking it during his break.

Watching the killer

Then the dream imagery shifted. I was still watching rather than participating directly, and I saw a mysterious character, a killer. He had a knife broken at the tip, and two women in gray sweaters in a nearby house were frightened of him. It was strange because he seemed to be standing outside half submerged in the earth. Above him a fire burned hotter and hotter. Suddenly I felt a pain in my right leg just above the knee. It woke me up. It occurred to me as I woke that I have been taking life too easy. Without doubt I will have to face such pain at the time of death.

And so?

And so it's almost time to go over to the island. We were worried that it would be too windy, but the wind has died down and the sky has become a beautiful pearl gray.

\* \* \*

It's embarrassing that my dreams are not ready-made Krishna conscious experience. Neither are they dissertations on the philosophy or even me dancing in ecstasy before the

Deities. They are filled with strange things I cannot understand. Still, I have at least some faith in the premise that some good part within myself, some benevolent director, is trying to give me messages I need to hear in order to make a reform of myself.

Therefore, dear reader, if you see dreams in this volume, please accept this statement of faith as a disclaimer. Don't think of the dreams as frivolous or as simply mundane. I do think they have a purpose, although I haven't figured out what that purpose is. I assume it is to make me a better devotee.

\* \* \*

2:45 p.m.

Pray to Prabhupada. Saying his name again and again is the perfection (satisfaction) of vowels and consonants. Oh,

baby-talk spiritualist

you say "Fie on AG's cosmopolitan greeting."

Unless he chants Hare Krishna once, what use is it? Only Hare Krishna can bring peace,

if the rascals would stop trying to prevent it.

A preacher's thankless task is to spread the name.

Came to Boston Pier 1965 and said to himself, "When I ask them, 'No meat, no illicit sex, etc.,' they will say, 'Go home (to India).'" That some Western boys and girls have come is proof of his power.

O sunlight after rain, I ask my little hand to write.

Naive artists need apply: submit 500 drawings in wax color all with *tilaka* of obsessed patience.

I love you

and you love me

Srila Prabhupada said, and

in Trinidad they say

they love you. "That's a different thing" "whether we are sentimentalists and say we love you but don't act on your behalf.

You say that the first requirement is to be sinless, as in *yesam tv anta-gatam papam jananam punya-karmanam*. Four rules. Or no initiation by him. Follow them "get his grace.

Maya is strong, so don't give her a chance.

\* \* \*

*KleSo' dhikataras tesam, avyaktasakta-cetasam* (Bg. 12.5)

The embodied soul . . . thinking of the times we used to cheat and steal for Krishna. Embarrassing now. We could have been arrested. I won't name names, but "some devotees" used to put metal slugs in the public telephone instead of dimes, and then they devised a method of hitting people up in the airport. They dressed nicely and in the rush of foot traffic they turned suddenly to some person and said, "Excuse me, sir, but I've just lost my wallet and I have a ticket. I'm about to fly out but I just don't have any money. Could you lend me some money?" People would give them ten or twenty

dollars, whatever they needed. Preying upon people's natural kindness to strangers. In one temple they collected money like that to buy the chandeliers.

Better not to confess such stuff, huh? I remember when Prabhupada's letters were published by the BBT in Mexico, completely unedited. I felt they shouldn't have printed some of them. Prabhupada says black market, white market money, it's all like that in this world.

Water dripping down the outside of this window. Do they fog over because my body is becoming dehydrated? My body is a little powerhouse emanating so many different things "odors and auras, mental vibrations. I can even invite mental beings and dragons and bugs and psychic entities from outer space, but I won't call them! I'll just call Krishna, Hare Krishna! Krishna Krishna.

\* \* \*

In the early days of ISKCON we were so filled with happiness in Prabhupada's presence that we didn't need to keep crazy diaries "although that would have been nice too, "scribbled notes for yr own joy" "by devotees in Krishna consciousness, spontaneous, not full of complaints against others, blaming, naming the perpetrator of wrongs, but joy over apple crumble with whipped cream! Yeah, we finally got it again, and veggies and soup. You finish it quickly . . . got to move along in schedule and get rid of dross collected in the form of outside influences.

\* \* \*

4:15 p.m.

I too could do 244 choruses like "Mexico City Blues," only mine would be Krishna conscious blues, *brahmacari* blues by Hayagriva gone. He asked me in his last months to visit him at his bedside in New Vrindaban, but I couldn't get through the wall of those days. But I wrote him a letter saying I loved him.

Now I could write 244 choruses, but the jazz man blowing image which Kerouac uses is something unbefitting a Krishna conscious person. I could give 244 *Srimad-Bhagavatam* lectures, but that would be too long.

I am to give out *gayatri-mantras* to a devotee today. Better to give them to myself too, those blessed mantras in conjugal *rasa* that I don't deserve to chant but that have been given to me anyway. The flute sound enters Lord Brahma's ear and comes out as *klim gayatri*. I don't deserve it, so at least don't sully it.

I want to gain courage by hearing straight from guru, *sasthra*, and *sadhu*. I read one psychologist who said that all organized religion is invalid and that when the charismatic leaders leave, religion becomes a dry and cynical business. That's the history of organized religion. Maybe, but Francis of Assisi and Teresa of Avila stayed within the fold, and Srila Prabhupada too, and so will I.

Krishna, Krishna "chant an extra round. My body continues to eat and consume and assimilate and digest even while Krishna dives into the Yamuna and out again. We have to tread the holy path carefully and soberly if we want to stay in touch with Krishna's pastimes. Peace. God is a person, but not a generic one. Therefore, chant the holy names. Kerouac didn't know the holy name and never had the opportunity to meet Srila

Prabhupada. Ginsberg met him and that's to his credit, but he wasn't pious enough, or was too self-conscious, to give up the things you have to give up in order to chant. He thought Krishna consciousness was dogmatic. He wanted something universal, but not a Krishna conscious version of it. He missed it because he preferred to run free in lust and false ego and the kind of Buddhism that allows you to do what you want and still end up at zero.

\* \* \*

### 5:05 p.m., Night Notes

There is only one small light on down at the boathouse. I could write many choruses too, rhyming and chiming. As he gives out his half-baked Buddhism, could I give out my baked twice KC? Krishna consciousness is the pinnacle. Only devotees can understand it.

Just a small light on at the boathouse. I could sankirtana played with the musical instruments of every country.

Of course, we wish for such a thing, but Soren Kierkegaard said that when Christianity became the state religion, it ceased to exist. He said that there was a day when the Apostles made a huge number of converts and that that signaled doom to pure religion. Lord Caitanya doesn't say things like that. Bhaktivinoda Thakura and Srila Prabhupada don't say those things either. But it does seem to imply the risk of watering down as the movement grows and spreads. How will we keep our simple purity?

December 2, 1996

12:20 a.m.

Distraction while trying to read Cc. I recorded my dreams during the night, re-entered the dream, captured key words, etc. Then I thought, "We learn by hearing from authority, not from dreams." Our time is limited, and so is our mental attention and devotion. We cannot splay out our energy everywhere with equal effectiveness. What purpose does becoming a dabbler serve in our attempt to attain the highest goal?

I want to attain *samadhi*, so I again find myself regretting that I have come here thinking about a dream. I believe there is truth in dreams somewhere, and certainly they are compelling stories, but I have to ask my dream-self to please excuse me from paying him too close attention. He knows I would rather opt for serving my guides, guru, *sastra*, and the sages. Please don't divert my attention. These December weeks I want a quiet, determined homestretch of the year to read and write, pray to Prabhupada and learn. This is on my mind as I read Lord Caitanya's talks to Vyenkata Bhatta. Now the Lord has left Sri Rangam. Pray savor slowly, ruminante and milk each phrase for mercy. I wish the Lord would pick me up and into the narrative. Just see this *Brahmana* devotee of Lord ramacandra, how he's in *samadhi* within the *Ramayana* pastime. Lord Caitanya was attracted to his mood and wanted to help him understand and rejoice in the actual meaning of the *Ramayana* (Sita-devi was never kidnapped, only a false Sita was taken by Ravana.)

Krishna will give us *darSana* if we keep trying for it. Do we want dreams? O Lord in heart who directs things, I can't understand the many obscure and bizarre dreams I experience. If You would like to instruct me in dreams, please do so, but please know that I especially need strength to surrender. I need to be convinced of the reality of the spiritual world of the *Bhagavatam* and *Caitanya-caritamrta*. Let me dream of *that*, or at least of how to approach it. Otherwise, I'll sleep and wake and return to reading and writing and chanting Hare Krishna mantra and continue to live without success.

\* \* \*

Reading a diary I kept in Jagannatha Puri, 1993. It traces my return to Srila Prabhupada's exclusive shelter. Unfortunately, many pages are missing in the copy I'm reading, but I remember that time well. Writing it made me feel more appreciative of Srila Prabhupada and more at home in his ISKCON movement. Even when I feel uneasy in a particular ISKCON temple, it's still my home and where I belong. Please allow me to contribute to ISKCON, to improve it and maintain it in any way I can.

I still have issues to face in returning to that exclusive shelter. One effect is that I had begun to think that Prabhupada teaches only the basics and that we need to hear about *raganuga-bhakti* in large, regular doses. Besides that, if we want to assimilate the teachings about *raganuga-bhakti*, we need the mercy of a *rasika* Vaisnava other than Srila Prabhupada. I no longer agree with those ideas. Neither am I interested in constantly hearing about the amorous, joking, pastimes of Radha and Krishna or the technical science of *raganuga* terminologies. I'm not qualified to hear the pastimes of Krishna and the *gopis* in the *kunjas*. That's my simple position.

But neither am I satisfied always with basics at the expense of thinking of Vraja. I know theoretically that *gopi-bhava* is the highest goal. Am I like a riven cloud between *vaidhi* and *raganuga*, between the early cantos of the *Bhagavatam* and the Tenth Canto?

I've decided that since I am not qualified to hear of the *kunja* pastimes, I can at least pray for *ruci*. I don't want to try rooting out every influence I received from studying the "*ujjvala*" books of Rupa and Raghunatha Gosvamis. It's bona fide *bhakti* philosophy. Still, I'm rightly situated as Srila Prabhupada's *Sisya*.

\* \* \*

9:47 a.m.

If you can't think of Krishna with love, without deviation, then follow the rules and regs of *bhakti-yoga*. You'll develop love of God eventually.

O Krishna, I am a tiny Prabhupada-anuga; as my master writes at midnight, so do I. In this shed fighting to stay alert and awake (although I'm waning). Did fifteen minutes of spoken prayer and about ten minutes of reading verses in *Bhagavad-gita*. Now time for writing but . . . feeling tired. Is it gas fumes? Open windows. Sun behind cloud ""stage lights" by nature's director. God's water rippling, golden weeds at shore edge, "like Caitanya, Gaura."

Did you write in a.m. two crazy verses? Yeah, my own verses. Go now and take a brisk walk. Preserve the body a little longer. *He Krishna! He Kana!* When Srimati

Radharani heard that name, She became agitated in *purva-raga*. Just hearing His name! And when young Krishna heard the name Radha, He became bewildered and embarrassed in the company of the *gopas*. Madhumangala and Paurnamasi noted it.

\* \* \*

Snapshots of local guru in rowboat "smile.

\* \* \*

3:02 p.m.

*Bhagavad-gita* teaches both the direct method of surrender and the step-by-step approach. We should chant Hare Krishna, serve Krishna with body, mind, and words, and propagate Krishna consciousness (or help those who are propagating it). Direct means offering food to Krishna, thinking of Him, bowing down before Him in the temple, regularly hearing His teachings, and applying them in our lives. It also means inquiring from and serving His pure devotees, especially the spiritual masters.

Okay, but our lives are filled with dreams and schemes and poems and loans and thievery and sneaking in little bits of sense gratification. Does that mean we should try more honestly the step-by-step approach? Or are we going backwards? I feel like I am crawling forward, zigzagging in my imperfection, always seeking the goal. I'll have to make up for my mistakes and I have until death to attain perfection.

Prabhupada's memorable phrase, "Krishna consciousness is the sublime method for reviving our original consciousness," reverberates in my head. He thought Krishna consciousness was for everyone, whether he be a scholar or a child. "Everyone can take part in this chanting. Even a child can take part. Even a dog can take part "and chant and dance in ecstasy."

\* \* \*

Today a headache. Not much time to write.

\* \* \*

December 3, 1996

12:37 a.m.

Do you remember how this writing goes? You put your left foot in, you take your left foot out, you put your left foot in and you shake it all about . . .

Oh yes. I do remember, and I remember Krishna, the great master of the Yadu dynasty. I read, skimming philosophy, fortunate and unfortunate at the same time. I'm right and blessed to be in the right place, turning the pages of Cc. It will stick. Something will stick. My peers will appreciate that I am frequently in touch with *sastra*, but aside from that, *sastra* will live in my heart and mind. But still I am both fortunate and unfortunate. I am fortunate to touch the holy scripture and unfortunate

because I don't read carefully. I pass over whole verses and even occasional purports without noticing what they are about.

I did read that Tukarama was initiated by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He worshiped Vitthala, a form of Visnu, at Pandarapura, where Lord Caitanya's brother Visvarupa (Sankaranya) achieved perfection and left the world. Lord Caitanya met Ranga Gosvami there. Ranga Gosvami remembered that he went with his guru, Madhavendra Puri, to Navadvipa, where they were warmly received at the home of Jagannatha MiSra. He remembered how Saci Mata was affectionate to the *sannyasis* and He even remembered an unprecedently excellent curry she served made with banana flowers.

\* \* \*

O friend, you appear to have been listening to the Tenth Canto. (You appear distracted, unattached to the world as if you have been listening to the music of Krishna's flute.)

If we just keep telling, we'll eventually find the heart of it. Give us the flow of tears, blood, sweat, and ink. Like an artesian well there's always more, and when it rains due to the downpour of the guru's mercy, the flow will become a torrent.

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

Watched BBC video of Uddhava, the Ira man who became a Hare Krishna devotee. He looked as handsome as an actor. His wife was growing older, but she's a real person. They showed an intimate moment with her as she applied *tilaka* and looking radiant said, "I'm sure if I aborted a child in my womb I would become a fetus in my next life to be aborted by someone else." Praghosa said a Unionist would become a republican next life.

"Hmph. That's his opinion," a devotee viewer here at Inis rath said.

Uddhava and his wife stood on the hill above Belfast. He looked down and said from a distance that it all seems rather insignificant, but while he was living there, he was wrapped up in the activities like everyone else. He hoped there would be peace. Newsreel shots of the troubles "police fighting Irish Catholics.

Shot of peaceful Wicklow, a deer, a spider, Prabhupada dasa teaching children how to draw a leaf. Like this:

\* \* \*

3:37 a.m.

We can use our energy in many ways. Contemplating our choices we think we can do all that we want and that whatever we do will be joyous, energetic, and productive. This is largely an illusion. Energy runs low, we feel pain, and those things stop us. But before they do, we try to run the crest of each brief wave thinking we will do so many things at once. We don't like to make what we consider lesser choices. If we can only do a few things, which few things will they be? Better to choose the chanting first and the see if

there is energy left over for other things. The holy name is the only way to understand God in this age, and understanding God is the main point.

\* \* \*

9 a.m.

Happy and strong-voiced, I sing in the shed. Six "count them" six swans bob on the rough strait water. Steady downpour of rain. I'm snug in here reading and praying to my Guru Maharaja. I explained myself to him "felt good."

Strong voice awhile. Our limited senses. Pen scratches. *Dharma* art "an attitude of non-aggressive, unpretentious, honest self-observation painted in brilliant colors and bold lines with a meditative mind. What do I see? I see how truth ebbs and flows.

\* \* \*

Think of the swan's way. There are no clouds because the sky is all one dark blanket. I have already chanted my sixteen rounds, but I could chant more. I lost an hour this morning because of headache pain. Had to retreat to bed around 4:15, but I'm okay now singing here in the rain.

\* \* \*

Syamananda tells me that Draupadi's bellowing is not out of rage or to scare us away from her sister cow. He says she just wants attention. When she was a baby, she got a lot of human attention and now she demands it. He said when she bellows like that, he goes right up to her and pats her and she becomes silent and calm. I don't know. She looks pretty unfriendly to me. And I heard about the protecting-the-herd theory from a reliable source.

\* \* \*

2:50 p.m.

M. phoned and talked with Syamananda. He said the doctor told him he has a second hernia on the other side and maybe next year he ought have another operation. Madhu said there's no way he wants to go through *that* again. I'm concerned for him and want him to be careful not to lift anything heavy. Also, I flashed on a dream I had today where my father complained of hernia pain. Why all these hernias?

I prayed to Prabhupada today. He's in his books and tapes, but to hear and apply his advice is not always easy. Prayer seems to help. It puts me more in touch with him aside from the usual assurance I feel of his presence.

It's up to a disciple to serve and please the spiritual master. Our surrender is a deliberate act of free will, and we have to make that surrender day after day, hour after hour. It's an art and we can always improve it. The overall surrender and desire to obey the guru, to love him, will lead to using our intelligence in various situations. We have to ask ourselves, "Is this for me or is it for Srila Prabhupada? Am I fulfilling his mission by this act?" We can always refine our understanding.

\* \* \*

Manu sent me a note before he left to sell paintings for the week. He began reading *Pada-yatra* and said he was impressed by it. It seems to be an evolution in my process, he says, in that I'm in control more *while* doing the free writing. He said I was able to take larger breaths to sing the melodies. I take it that free-writing needs to be developed. It may appear to be folly, but if I persist in it, I'll get wise, get control, be more lucky to find those metaphors (serendipity) that can last for a whole book like the *Pada-yatra* "writing is walking every day, or writing my memories.

*Every Day, Just Write* is different because I take only the assignment each day to write what comes. Since I allow myself freedom from the need to present a formal metaphor by which to present my writing, then at least I have to keep writing. That's the basic premise.

Life at Geaglum is smooth sailing. I'm in a bubble of peaceful days and nights, living on devotee-owned land. There are no alien sounds and no alien faces. It's a holy *dharma*. In January I'll have to leave and meet the outside world. That doesn't mean I have to pop the bubble now and seek to tune in to the world of controversy and danger in and out of ISKCON. Stay absorbed.

\* \* \*

The water in the strait is the roughest I've seen it in a long time. It looks like a rushing river. I don't think the water is actually flowing, but the top is being blown into white caps. It would be difficult to cross now in the rowboat and I'm not going to attempt it. rain heavy all day. I see the collie wandering around, soaked. The cows too.

\* \* \*

December 4, 1996

12:45 a.m.

I say the predictable. When reading, I also feel, "Oh, here it is, the same thing I read not long ago" "where king Prataparudra inquired from Sarvabhauma about Lord Caitanya. Same old thing? I stop, sigh, pause, and then go forward with some effort, and awareness, that there is nectar here. I have to work at finding it. I certainly haven't milked Prabhupada's books dry.

"In this age of Kali there are no genuine religious principles other than those established by Vaisnava devotees and the Vaisnava scriptures. This is the sum and substance of everything.

"The pastimes of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu are just like an unfathomable ocean. It is not possible for me to enter into it. Simply standing on the shore, I am but touching the water.

"The more one hears the pastimes of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu with faith, analytically studying them, the more one attains the ecstatic riches of love of Godhead."(Cc. *Madhya* 9.362 - 64)

I complain, I read in cycles, I rejoice, I repeat, I do the loop-de-loop and pass through familiar country. It's my poverty but also my richness.

It's like where I'm living nowadays. I'm not traveling, so every day I see the same shed, the same path, wet leaves, lake, and island. I don't grow tired of the view "especially at dawn" or the seasons (spring and early summer are especially nice). I know I can't live here forever, so whatever I see and repeat has to become an act of devotion. Whatever I read, familiar as it seems also has to become an act of devotion because I won't be here forever. The reading experience can be transformed from restlessness to love of Krishna by such an attempt.

\* \* \*

3:30 a.m.

Srila Prabhupada: "This is all dream. This body is false so whatever we are acting, that is dream. In dream at night we also work. This is gross dream and that is subtle dream. But real life is spiritual life." (Lecture by Srila Prabhupada, August 4, 1974)

\* \* \*

A dream

In a dream I was in a classroom with a friendly teacher. He asked me to read aloud from the dictionary. I think the word was "I." I went to read it and then saw the word "who," but couldn't read what followed. Either the print was too small or the situation too stressful. A small group of girls began to laugh at me, but Madhu was there and told me not to be concerned because their attitude was simply pedantic.

When I awoke I thought, "It's true, people don't appreciate us. Still, we shouldn't become stressed or intimidated by that, or try to adjust ourselves to do everything their way." That became obvious to me when reflecting on this dream. As Prabhupada says, the dream and the activities of our conscious lives are all false. We simply have to remember Krishna and learn how to please Him. Everything else is immaterial.

\* \* \*

6 a.m.

Krishna is *part* of my life. I usually don't admit that. I say He's my whole life, twenty-four hours a day "*anyabhilasita-Sunyam*. The fact is, however, that I have other interests. I take a break, a holiday from Krishna consciousness. It sounds awful, but maybe it does me good "I need it. My vacation doesn't include stopping my sixteen rounds or breaking the regulative principles. It's more like sleeping, eating, dreaming . . . In the dreams, the fact that my devotee identity is often vague and the actions mostly not spiritual "doesn't that say something about my stage of devotion? I could try to deny it, but it's true.

They say the body doesn't lie. My body is not always interested in Krishna conscious pursuits. That's because "I'm not this body" "that truth" is still theoretical to me. I feel hurt when my body is hurt. I'm not detached.

\* \* \*

Wise guy, you should be  
booted in the ass. Don't you know you  
can even get booted out of Krishna consciousness and  
into Army boot camp next life?  
*Then you'll be sorry!*

\* \* \*

8:50 a.m.

The sunrise: butter gold melting blaze. Jewel hot spiky rays. Shimmery melted.  
Searchlight by day. Fire in sky. Coming through the trees, essential life-giving light.  
Light of Brahman. The aura of denizens of sun planet. Surya's chariot.

Let yourself write. The topic is God. He is *all* things. Don't let non-God conscious people speak to your heart even if they seem to have valuable information. Turn to your old best friends, starting with guru and the Supersoul, then onto the Vaisnavas of ancient times up to right now.

Bump against shed "a bird? Pearl dewdrops barely frozen, globules clinging to the weeds. As the sun rises, they will melt.

\* \* \*

Madhu will be back in a week. It hasn't been much different without him, and when he comes back he'll be forbidden to lift any weight. No more sliding under the van for a half-hour's work.

Then how will we do our European tours? We'll be two old men, not much different from the tourists you sometimes see. Somehow they dare to travel abroad, and with a little money, they manage to get someone to carry the luggage or repair the car. We could hobble around like that as long as Madhu can drive. I think I'll lend him my book on chronic illness so he can see how to cope with reduced power. Or more power, but of an inner, less passionate kind. I liked having a sidekick who could carry and strain, but I'd rather have Madhu back than a younger, physically strong replacement. rather have his brains "even if we can't travel in the old way.

December 5, 1996

1 a.m.

I want to be a pure devotee like Svarupa Damodara Gosvami, who took *sannyasa* in madness and stayed alone to practice *bhajana* and didn't want to be disturbed by the formalities of *sannyasa*. He surrendered to Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu at Nilacala.

Words pop up in my brain and I let them out onto the page, words like *viruddha* and *rasabhasa*. Pure devotees don't accept *rasabhasa* or any other imperfections in understanding. Svarupa Damodara Gosvami wouldn't even allow such imperfect scholars to meet with Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Oh. I should change.

Is it too late for me? Please, Lord, Vaisnavas, accept me with my volumes of diaries. I too am mad and want to avoid the formalities of *sannyasa*.

In this Cc. chapter, the devotees come to see Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu on His return from South India like rivers flowing toward the ocean. I wish to be among them. I know that as time goes on, I will begin to diminish in my abilities to concentrate. I won't be able to write as many pages. If my wrist begins to hurt too much, I'll just have to learn to speak more my prayers.

I want to turn to Krishna. Please, Lord, You are more real and infinitely greater than I am. You should be the center of this *jiva's* life. Why should I insist that my ego comes before Your desires? I am so foolish.

If rendering service to Krishna is the goal of life, I should follow this formula and make everything I do service. right now I'm writing this in a hurry to make up for lost time this morning. I'm hoping to have a good day "pain free.

\* \* \*

Egyptian hieroglyphics don't contain Krishna conscious messages. Srila Prabhupada said that the Sphinx is sitting in a particular yoga *asana* and that even frogs can do that "keeping the body alive for thousands of years. Ignorance of the soul and the real nature of immortality. Do we want real knowledge? Then become devoid of pride. Chant Hare Krishna and become free.

\* \* \*

3:35 a.m.

What is Krishna consciousness? How do we know we are "it," whatever "it" is? When we are free from material desires? Yes, that's it. We can know when we hear Krishna's name and we actually relish it. That's the real test of improvement. Another test is when we want to serve Krishna's mission in this world. That means preaching. Never mind that this movement is thought to be a strange "Indian" cult by Westerners. Preach anyway and remove their misgivings with upright behavior. We're not crazy despite people's misunderstandings. It takes courage to be Krishna conscious in this world and especially to preach. There are so many people who will never understand it. Therefore it also takes tolerance.

There was a time when we *liked* the fact that we were different. And people were attracted to us for that reason. Not people from the mainstream, but other people wanting to be more real or even just different. Where has that spirit gone? I wish it were being replaced by the ecstasy of deep compassion for the conditioned souls. Lacking that, I am a little stunted in my ability to do more. I just can't seem to do things based only on duty "at least not everything. I'm just not inspired enough, even if others quote Prabhupada to me. Too much has "gone down" for the high spirit to remain in me. At least I have a spirit to write and to chant and to travel to the temples where they receive me as a devotee worth hearing from.

\* \* \*

Dhanurdhara Swami invites me to lunch

Dhanurdhara Swami inside an apartment and me standing outside on the balcony. He gestures to me, but I don't understand at first. I thought I was waiting to take *prasadam* out on the balcony, but the *prasadam* has already been placed on plates inside on a low table. In a smiling, humble way, Dhanurdhara Swami gestures to me to come in. I catch his meaning and enter the room. (After this dream I thought I should write him a letter.)

\* \* \*

8:58 a.m.

The Lord's abode is self-effulgent. We should be captivated to hear of it and desire to extricate ourselves from the material cycle and go back to Godhead. Each soul is a living spark of eternal spirit, eternally individual (fragmental). We are expansions of Krishna. Wake up to it and return to Him.

My prayer talk. Keep going, slow pen, but slow down. Meditate on Krishna's abode. The sun and the general universal idea of God "that's okay, but to be more specific in our meditation is better. See Krishna "His name, form, and *lila*. Want to go to that *cintamani-dhama* and beg Krishna, the beautiful cowherd boy, to take us. We are *jiva-loka* "*jiva-bhutah sanatanah*.

We live between worlds. We are here and we want to be there and sometimes we *are* there. The person moves because the soul is in the heart with Krishna. It stays long enough in one body and then moves onto another as long as it is not ready to resume its spiritual body.

Praghosa explained that to the many BBC TV viewers in the interview I saw on tape. He spoke with his hands, trying to illustrate his point. "reincarnation," he says, "it's simply this: the soul is eternal, the body is temporary. When the body dies, the soul has to get a new body. That's all."

Lake water

Quay joy

the key for shed shines chrome in my mitt.

I desire to write 340 songs at a stretch.

Willims and mittens

the owl and pussy cat rode in a boat across the strait and sang by the light of the moon.

A *kirtana* of beats

a feast for Krishna, teach y'all how to cook for the Lord. Sneak a *bhajana* (*govinda jaya jaya "radha-ramana hari*) up to number one pop hit but without mentioning it's Hare Krishna "but they're finding out.

O angels of remorse

Corsican, Sicilian

Dina, we're sorry we didn't get to talk with you and hear how you survived the crippling car accident, your side paralyzed by it. I heard you said you didn't much want to live and that you didn't attempt the painful physical therapy. Forgive us for not talking with you about it. We'll have another chance.

And

I'm sorry, Mom. I'm not waiting for you to die. Don't haunt me and don't curse me. Know that Krishna protects me. When you die, I pray He'll remember you as my mom "that's makes you a Hare Krishna mom (like a Navy mom), even though you disown it. Say Jesus, say your prayers, and I wish you a safe and better passage.

Walking back from the shed I go into my private section of the woods for laps back and forth. Two days in a row a visiting German devotee has come by in his car. Hey, I thought this was my private forest. Then coming out of the woods, Draupadi leads the cows and bellows. She's behind a barbed-wire fence, so I think this is my chance to find out if she's really friendly. I go closer. She's roaring away, sticking out her gray tongue and foaming at the mouth. She looks mad enough, but I remember that Syamananda said she just wants attention. I talk to her saying, "Don't be afraid of me and I won't be afraid of you." Then she looks up at me bashfully out of that big, black head with bulging eyes. I come closer and reach over the fence and pat her on the snout, under the mouth, on top of the head. She quiets down and I go on talking, telling her different things. Then she starts up with a mild bellow again and I raise my voice and tell her not to roar, that she's all right. I see a stump of horn on her head "all that's left" and it makes me think of all the hardships she has been through. I start chanting to her: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare. When I leave she's quiet. Of course, the other cows and the ox are always quiet. It's just her "she wants attention."

\* \* \*

2:32 p.m.

This is my time for conversing with Srila Prabhupada into the tape recorder, but instead I'm writing. It doesn't seem right to record my private thoughts like that. The making of prayers and the making of literature are often at odds.

O Krishna, I am a spirit soul. I struggle in the world when I remain apart from You. I transmigrate according to the modes with which I associate; the subtle body chooses its next body throughout life and carries me there at death. Yes, again I will have suitable ears, suitable eyes "all senses perfectly arranged to fulfill my desires and to suffer out my karma. That's the science and for most of us, that's as much advance knowledge as we should need to change and improve ourselves.

O Krishna, I pray and pause and feel and think and ask for Your help. What else can I do?

6:40 p.m., Night Notes

Each evening Syamananda has been reading a selection from one of my books and I have been commenting on it. Tonight he asked, "How do we know the difference between Krishna testing us and an ordinary adverse condition?"

I said that everything is a test from Krishna. Krishna tests us to see how much we can use any situation in His service. I have my headaches and my solitude, and I have to prove that I can use my time well. As I spoke to Syamananda, I felt guilty about whatever frivolities I pursue. Should I be doing more reading?

December 6, 1996

Ekadasi and my old birthday, December 6, 1939. Germany invades Poland.

Indigestion from the little dab of cream cheese with fruit or maybe just the fruit. Quit it. You'll feel lighter and better. Old men don't have to eat so much, do they? Head dizzy.

The king wanted to see the Lord. Prabhupada comments on *aradhananam sarvesam visnor-aradhanam param*. Usually this means that worship of Visnu's devotees is better even than worship of Visnu, but Prabhupada takes it further in his purport: worship of devotees in *madhurya-rasa* is best. Lord Caitanya came to teach this. *Anarpita-carim cirat karunayavatirnah kalau* ""Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu appeared in this age of Kali to exhibit the super-excellence of *madhurya-rasa*, a gift never previously bestowed by any *acarya* or incarnation." (*Vidagdha-madhava* 1.2) Srila Prabhupada writes, "It is He only who distributed love of Krishna while exhibiting the super-excellence of loving Krishna in the conjugal *rasa*." (Cc. *Madhya* 11.31, purport)

\* \* \*

8:18 a.m.

We would like to further our Krishna consciousness, and it seems hard to work only out of duty. It just doesn't seem right to remain on that platform. Then we wonder, "Should I do what I love and find a way to offer it to Krishna?" What if we feel like doing something that isn't totally Krishna conscious? If we indulge in it, even in the name of service, we soon lose our taste. As the *sastra* says, that happiness which is nectar in the beginning soon turns to poison. We taste the poison and feel the guilt for having been misled again.

Modern psychologists don't believe guilt is a healthy function of the psyche. They say it causes stress and stress isn't good for us. What we really need to do is to find spontaneous pleasure in *sastra*, so much so that we don't care for anything else. Even eating and sleeping become unattractive. We become "lost" in the pleasure of transcendental ecstasy, of chanting and hearing.

Unfortunately, we haven't yet achieved that. We read a little and then stop. We chant and then interrupt our rounds for other things. And we live in fear that we are not pleasing guru and Krishna.

Fear comes from rebelliousness. Why do we have to follow authority (God and guru)? Where is our full heart's commitment? Where is the joy?

Drawing a picture of it: a strange face and form. A body moving, a face growing older, strained but smiling so people don't feel disturbed to look at him. And I brand him with Vaisnava *tilaka*.

\* \* \*

This is my confession. Nevertheless, I submit to duty, acting for *Sreyas* and in knowledge that in the long run, things have to get better.

In my attempt to improve my spiritual life, and when my mind drifts to creative pursuits, I think of these two obligations: (1) To be Krishna conscious; (2) to find pleasure in my Krishna consciousness, creatively. The two are sometimes in conflict or they don't pull the weight together, but I have to do both.

\* \* \*

Gas heater not working. Out of gas? I'm writing, but it's frosty outside and will soon chill up in here. I'll run away. Farewell.

\* \* \*

2:30 p.m.

The drink, the lake, the reservoir, the blue chill. Calm Lough Erne, passage for pleasure boats in spring and summer. None out now. Ice sheets on puddles. Smashed only a few with my cane. Saw three deer on my way down here. Their big ears like antennae "they can't see so well" and their noses twitching to drink in the odor that will get them to leap away as I walk forward, holding what they must think is a gun-like stick. Three of them leaped into the next field, but at the far end they came against a high fence. I left them to figure it out.

The *Gita* waits for me. I have a sense of my limited time. The purport says that the fallible soul appears to pass through six changes. I've already passed through birth and growth, and I'm in the process of maintenance and giving off by-products (writing books), and I'm beginning to dwindle, preparing to vanish. Will I vanish in the day or the night? "Let my air enter the totality of air," the devotee in the *Isopanisad* prays. Let my soul go to You. Please let there be no hindrance.

Those are favorite prayers. When I was giving my six-day seminar on *Vandanam*, a couple of my Godbrothers walked in. I half froze but then kept speaking. I said that my favorite prayers included one made by Madhavendra Puri. I found, however, that I couldn't speak my heart in front of those Godbrothers. What I wanted to say was that I must be myself even though others may criticize me. I will worship Govinda in my way without respect for rituals or even liturgy. I couldn't say it so publicly, of course.

\* \* \*

Tomorrow night Baltimore time Madhu will fly overnight and arrive Sunday in England-Belfast. I miss him. We'll have to see what he's like with his new limitations. Get the news from him, and the mail.

Dreaming something . . . Now trying to see how it checks with reality. Will a swan try to touch me as in that twilight zone dream I had earlier? Or was the swan a symbol? For what? The *sastra* will open by Krishna's grace. The *Bhagavad-gita* verse, *sarvasya caham hrdi sannivisto*, informs us that Krishna helps us both in ordinary life and by giving us transcendental knowledge. Without Krishna we can't remember what to do when we start a new life after transmigrating from one body to another. According to our karma we're supposed to remember some things but forget others. Krishna gives us the amount of remembrance and forgetfulness we deserve. Then if we're serious about God conscious, He gives us Vedic knowledge. O dear Lord, I don't think I was serious. I was serious in my way, but not about religion. Somehow you saved me and directed me to Srila Prabhupada. You said in effect, "Go here. Go into that storefront. Hear from him and be respectful. He's your guru." I followed like a blind man, gave up my pretense, my persona of Lower East Side hippie before it was too late. Hare Krishna.

December 7, 1996

12:40 a.m.

Reading . . . I read some Cc. this morning. Pray with it. First prayer is, "Please let me read nicely, with submission." You need to pray because as Lord Brahma said:

*athapi te deva padambuja-dvaya-  
prasada-leSanugrhitā eva hi*

"My Lord, if one is favored by even a slight trace of the mercy of Your lotus feet, he can understand the greatness of Your Personality. But those who speculate to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead are unable to know You, even though they continue to study the *Vedas* for many years." (Bhag. 10.14.29, quoted in Cc. *Madhya* 6.84 and *Madhya* 11.104)

I pray for that by pausing as I read, quietly bowing my head and asking for it. I have the power to enter because I have brains to comprehend it, but more importantly, I already have Prabhupada's mercy when he ordered me, "Whenever you get time, read my books." To pray and push out doubts takes practice. Finally, it requires direct mercy.

It's the same with writing. I have to write from a life filled with a devotional mood. Then it's worth something. Writing should express *bhava*, even the emotion of emptiness. I wrote like this at Castlegregory. I went to the ocean and felt tiny and ordinary. That writing I called "Forgetting the Audience" and I think it was the first time I had written like that.

Writing isn't crazy or simply passion. I want to get something out. I'm not in the grip of the inner critic but I am learning to let go. Some nonsense may also come out, but I trust the process even though it doesn't always lead to instant success. At least I feel relieved. Life is short and soon we'll die. We have to do what Krishna has allowed us to do before it's too late, and we have to do it free from the pressure others place upon us wittingly or unwittingly. We have to face ourselves and develop a quiet kind of urgency that permeates everything we do. I didn't resolve to discover God in the time I spent at Castlegregory. Rather, the last words written are a cry, "Where is *bhava*?" I can almost hear the echo in waves crashing against the rocky shore as I read it again now.

\* \* \*

Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, I'm writing poems ""Songs of a Hare Krishna Man." Keep them coming. Kerouac wrote Ginsberg, "You guys call yourselves poets, write little short lines. I'm a poet but I write lines, paragraphs and pages, many pages long." Poets blow off steam and contact emotions.

A gift-wrapped package of potatoes and apples arrived here. What more do I want? I'm contemplating my birthday. Let there be a six-foot high birthday cake like the one Clinton had, and Whoopi Goldberg narrating jokes at the *karmis'* expense, poking fun at those who don't love me.

Re-elect me, please, as guru of the year.

One reason I don't let loose in free-writing is that it may seem irresponsible. I want to make a better record. I don't know. Cree-ripes.

This time keep the hammers felling their blows. "Keep the presses rolling "our family business" "slogan of "The Friends of GNP." Yeah, I permit their slick, somewhat organized, professional approach. Fill up the pen with a hundred thousand dollars so we can print freely. Cough up dough. We need your money. It will be sent to him on his birthday wherever he is in the world. The pennies trinkle into the central fund headquarters.

Do a TV marathon and read from your works. Jerry Lewis' March of Dimes, "We just received a hundred dollars from a little old lady in Duluth, God bless her."

\* \* \*

Trickles. My left fist is clinched and the clock reads 1. Next program for me is to chant in ecstasy or at least awake in the comfortable chair by the electric heater facing the altar illuminated by candle light, the pictures in their winter blankets. We'll be out of here on January 1st after a quiet New Year's Eve.

\* \* \*

### Rare chance to serve Prabhupada

I dreamt I was with Prabhupada, although the presence of the person in the dream wasn't much like him. I went to a place where only a few people were gathered, then walked away thinking that Prabhupada didn't want to be bothered. Then I said to myself, "This is a rare chance. You should go back and be with him." I went back and hung around, hoping to get some service to do for Prabhupada. The dream had different incidents like this of "Prabhupada" reciprocating with us, either being pleased or his not being served nicely by our activities.

Awake I think of groupie and superficial activities that sometimes surround the guru "socializing and even politicking among his disciples. How to cut through all that? Sometimes we just want to get away from it all. In the dream, however, I was told to tolerate and to at least chalk up some bona fide service so that the guru would recognize me. Now that I'm awake, I think that service can also be rendered in separation from the main crowd who travel with the guru from place to place. Still, it is very important that we are recognized by the spiritual master and that he gives us direction so that we don't serve in whimsical ways.

Fortunately I received a lot of direction during my life from Prabhupada, and much of it has been recorded in letters as well as in my heart and memory. I can also read what Prabhupada wrote in his books. We shouldn't think those instructions are only general. For example, today I read how Prabhupada wants the devotees to go to Mayapur and chant congregationally. We each have to think in our lives how we can fulfill at least some part of his order and dedicate our lives to his mission. We can't do everything he asked of us, but we can take some portion of it and make it our all in all. Vishvanath Cakravarti advised this: make the order of the spiritual master your life and soul.

\* \* \*

12:30 noon

Disciples' meeting. Syamananda reading selections from *Castlegregory* prose-poems. After awhile it began to feel too personal. I was describing my own way, my writing life. I suggested we chant a round of *japa* together and I tried to make things more generally applicable. Is it best for devotees to go off alone, sit by the ocean, and yearn for improved chanting? Maybe not for everyone. It's better to live in Radha-Govinda's temple at Inis rath or wherever. I didn't feel saying that was untrue to what I had written in *Castlegregory*, but that was a personal expression and not necessarily the path for everyone. What's probably good for everyone is an occasional pilgrimage or retreating from the social scene to actually find solitude to chant. Not only should that be done occasionally, but every day we should find some alone time.

\* \* \*

2:45 p.m.

Swan ducking. Me in bliss.

What about it?

What will I read after this Chapter Fifteen of *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*? And when the well runs dry on the *Mexico City Blues* take-off, what will I write?

Oh, if nothing else, I'll revert to no poems and more little life.

And when life runs out?

\* \* \*

Don't just write, "I did this at 9 a.m., I did that at 9:05 a.m."

Why not? If I was only always engaged in Krishna's service, then the little life would be thrilling.

You could write *japa* with pen "Hare Krishna mantras all over the page. No one would criticize that or make you stop chanting. Do you think you owe a debt to the Beat poets?

No, I owe a debt only to Govinda. That is truth.

I tell myself to cross out the bad words. My heart is one big cross-out. I go blank and can't think.

That's because prayer is hard. Why? Because the mind loops back to myself instead of remaining focused on Krishna "to myself or to so many false concepts of me and the things I do, my fears, schemes, dreams, poems, homes, friends, and enemies. Therefore, how can I pray?

Anyway, what more is there to say but, "Please accept me"? Yes, that's all.

I was happy this morning. I felt my heart beating strongly and thought, "I could burst with happiness!" It's the ecstasy of service, of empowerment, or electricity flowing through the line. I am alive and protected in His service. That is real happiness.

I know it's not much. I have a long way to go before I can reach the *bhava* in which I am trying only to please Krishna and in which it is revealed that He is pleased with me. My cup runneth over, but it's still only a little cup. Take away my lunch and my happiness may become tarnished. Give me a stubbed toe or a bruised shin and I lose my focus on the bliss.

December 8, 1996

12:45 a.m.

Overnight my sleep was broken many times. I dictated dreams into the tape recorder, thought of today's Cc. class, and came up with a subtitle for Volume One of *Every Day, Just Write: Welcome Home to the One Big Book of Your Life*.

I'm peaceful here at Geaglum with kind and gentle souls. One dream, however, reminded me of vicious people in the world:

\* \* \*

### Confrontation with a tough kid in Great Kills

I was stopped from going through a turnstile to a train because I didn't have the proper token. One man told me he would have to "phone Vancouver" to see whether the piece of cardboard I was attempting to use was acceptable. While I was waiting for this situation to resolve itself, I walked out onto the street and saw something that belonged to me. It was a *Suci* kit, lying near the door leading to the trains. I went to pick it up, but a tough kid, about fourteen years old, came up to pick it up at the same time as I did. He wanted to fight me for it. I explained to him that it was mine and why it was mine. He listened and I showed him the contents of the bag. It was all kitchen stuff.

Suddenly two of his friends came by and I realized I was in the company of *very bad boys*. They could do anything. Although they were young, they were desperate bad kids without scruples, potential killers. I wanted to get away from them as soon as possible.

After I woke up, I remembered a scene I had witnessed when I lived in Allston, where some kids about the same age as the kids in the dream were terrorizing the owner of a small superette next to our temple storefront. We were similarly terrorized by the older kids in the neighbourhood. I often think about the cruelty people face in this world and how I have not had to face anything so terrible.

I also thought about how dream teachers advise us to confront adversaries in dreams. Perhaps in this dream, I missed an opportunity for some kind of realization or resolution. The dream teachers claim that dream adversaries often turn out to be well-wishers in disguise, and we have to face them down in order to receive their messages. By hearing their messages, we may be able to become braver and more confident in waking life.

Following this train of thought, it occurred to me that a Krishna conscious person really has nothing to fear. If a devotees met a vicious killer in this world, he would remain aware within himself of Krishna's protection, remember that he's not his body, and perhaps would try to give Krishna consciousness to his attacker, just as Lord Nityananda blessed Jagai and Madhai despite their aggression.

I once read an essay on frightening confrontations in dreams by Strephon Kaplan-Williams. This is what he said:

Many dreamers come to dream work scared of their adversaries. They have a nightmare and wake themselves instead of staying in the dream situation. So to take a journey means a commitment to dealing with whatever comes up, including that which would limit or destroy you . . . A commitment to dream-work means a willingness to

stay in the dream to face whatever the Dream Source presents us with . . . Thus the journey is not what you expect but what you get . . . so often in dreams we are presented with situations to resolve and not the resolution . . . the Dream Source evaluates our behaviour and wants more from us than we presently express . . . Most dreams can be seen as challenges by the Dream Source to give up attempting to control, and instead serve the Self, the centre within.

"*The Elements of Dream Work*,  
by Strephon Kaplan-Williams

The last statement by Kaplan-Williams reminds me of surrender to Krishna, the Supreme Self. Instead of being afraid and fleeing from a vicious kid in a dream, I could have remembered Krishna and preached Krishna consciousness. Even if I was attacked as a result, I would not have forgotten Krishna. Of course, doing it in a dream is easier than facing similar situations in waking life, but dreams are a place to begin to build resolve and courage I guess.

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

6 a.m.

Madhu must be in the air now, approaching England. He'll be here around 1:30 p.m. I had another dream about my father with a hernia.

\* \* \*

In this morning's Cc. reading in the temple we'll discuss Lord Caitanya's ecstatic bodily symptoms when He entered the Jagannatha temple. It's significant that Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, although a Mayavadi, was fully acquainted with the science of *prema*. Thus he was able to discern that Lord Caitanya was experiencing the highest stage of *maha-bhava*. The purport also demonstrates that Prabhupada is certainly capable of discussing the technical terminology of *raganuga-bhakti*. Still, he doesn't dwell on it.

According to the *Gaura-Ganoddesa Dipika*, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya was formerly Brhaspati, the spiritual master of the demigods.

\* \* \*

Avoiding surveillance: a dream

I was sitting with three people around a table. We were high school students. Two of the boys "they were my pals" hit each other while the teacher looked on. My back was to the teacher and I was glad she hadn't caught me hitting anyone.

In a subsequent dream, I was talking to someone secretly, concealing myself from the authorities. I think we were hiding from the Nazis. The person with whom I was

speaking came into a store where I was waiting and I played a tape recording of a phony conversation ""Hello, how are you? Good day. Nice weather." This was supposed to throw the authorities off our track so we could say what we actually had to say, but I don't remember what that was.

I want a private life and I like to discourse with my friends not secretly, but discreetly. Neither dream provided any resolution to these feelings, or even hinted at ways in which such discretion could be carried out. Neither did they present a challenge to that mood. All I felt was that I had to escape surveillance.

\* \* \*

12:26 p.m.

Ever since I gave class this morning (8:30 - 9:15) and walked cheerfully down to the quay with the devotees, I've been struggling to subdue head pressure. I tried a wet rag, aroma therapy, rest, a hot-cold shower, deep breathing, and relaxation exercises. Now it's lunch time and the pressure is still on the rise. Maybe the *bhakti*-filled lunch prepared by Syamananda will do the trick.

Anyway, it proves I am still a delicate creature and can't run the mile marathon. Simply give a class and this is what comes of it.

\* \* \*

O swan, I'd rather  
be writing vigorous songs  
but can't now. Like you, I  
float on the cold lake and wait.  
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare.  
Let mantras be heartbeats.

December 10, 1996

1:25 a.m.

Yesterday I was not able to write here because of an all-day headache. Does that mean I should change the title to *Almost Every Day, Just Write?*

It's not as easy as that. More questions and doubts about this writing come up on days when I am not able to actually get to the page. I'm still feeling shaky from yesterday, but I hope to clear the air and explain myself. However, the batch of mail has just arrived and must be tended to. It appears that my meditation of the last three weeks in which I was able to write and read undisturbed is broken. Still, that doesn't mean I should stop writing.

\* \* \*

Here are some of the questions that arose yesterday:

How much of *Every Day* is written for therapy, coping, and how much with the hope to discover art or literature?

If it is entirely therapy, then should my attitude toward it be different? Should its form of expression change?

Some answers:

Art is also part of my therapy. I cope by writing. I practice writing.

The form and subject of *Every Day, Just Write* will change according to time and place. When I am traveling or when I'm busy lecturing, the writing will reflect that. One might say, "The writing will be more shallow and less concentrated when you can't work at it full time," but that's not necessarily so.

Doubts come to test how badly I want to write this book. It's a new project in that I have decided to write it one volume at a time. I'll use the umbrella title, *Every Day, Just Write*, and then subtitle each volume according to the mood in which it was written.

The real response I have to give is that I shouldn't write to make publishable literature. *Every Day, Just Write* can be a matrix from which other books can come. That's what the subtitle of the first volume means: "Coming Home to the One Big Book of Your Life."

\* \* \*

#### Student beaten to death: a dream

A student took an anti-war stance and refused to go into the war. This was legal at Harvard, where he was on campus, but still everyone mocked him and spat at him. I saw a bunch of guys grab him and throw him into a room where they each began to punch him. The student realized he was going to die and his assailants realized they were killing him.

The dream turned into moralizing as I dreamt on. Because the other students were mocking him even for majoring in English Literature and for sympathizing with the black students, I began to identify with him. I imagined what it would be like if I had to die in this way and how you would just endure it until you left your body.

When I awoke I was still enduring the pain of a headache. That is my "beating."

\* \* \*

#### 5 a.m.

Madhu was telling me about a disciple of mine who attended a meeting I was holding. This disciple confided to Madhu that at the beginning of the meeting he had some bad thoughts (which he called his "demonic" thoughts toward me), and it seemed that I looked at him and read his thoughts. He left the room and prayed to Lord Nrsimha.

When Madhu related this to me I said, "Sometimes that may happen. Srila Prabhupada has no fault, but sometimes I may find fault in him." As I said that I felt good about it. I had sincerely stated that Prabhupada has no fault. I spoke it as fact: the struggling with *anarthas*, by which I may see some fault in Prabhupada, is *my* hang-up.

\* \* \*

11:20 a.m.

December 11, 1996

1 a.m.

Answered almost all the mail yesterday. This morning I answered a letter to a friend who was raising the question of how to balance traveling and preaching and concentration on chanting and reading. He read something I wrote in "Among Friends" where I referred to Prabhupada sankirtana in association with devotees. Furthermore, go out and preach the value of chanting Krishna *nama*, for by this process you will be able to deliver all fallen souls." (Cc. *Adi* 7.92)

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

### Firing the stoves: a dream

I was with some devotees and we were all putting fuel into stoves. The heat became intense because the stoves were good quality and the heating system complicated. I was part of an award-winning team of men building these stoves.

Then one of my Godbrothers from the beginning days said, "Satsvarupa, you used to fire these stoves long ago when it was a simple job. Now it's been built up and become complicated, but you're still here."

I went back to tending the fire, but thought, "I'm an old-timer in ISKCON. I was here in the days when we did everything simply." Often I think I can't keep pace nowadays and I'm not even that interested in making the change to how devotees do things now. In the dream I was there stoking the fire. Seems similar.

\* \* \*

8:45 a.m.

Chant a little, cry, beg for mercy. Prabhupada is merciful, has been merciful already. Now it is my turn to show mercy.

How to help myself on this page? Bolder strokes? I'm still recovering from the disruption of the last few days' headaches. First time in three days in the shed. Swans out on the lake, the lake cold, dark, gray at near nine.

Photo of Prabhupada at the airport and we, his young disciples, looking up to him. Open adoration on our faces even though we are in public. The nondevotees can see our bliss. Good for them. He was an elderly saint and we were young kids in those days.

I write these sentences with no oomph behind them, or clarity. I write on anyway. My endurance is low right now.

\* \* \*

Someone told me that in Vrndavana it's going from bad to worse. She meant that devotees were leaving ISKCON and moving into the Gaudiya Math. The same in Australia. Some devotees are sad and disgusted and heart-broken over my Godbrother's

departure. They're afraid they'll keep accepting one ISKCON guru after another only to hope that one won't fall down before they die. Therefore, they run to an Indian guru, someone older and proven and who will teach them of the higher topics. I think about this often and feel sorry.

This propaganda that other gurus are discussing more advanced topics and that we are missing out on something doesn't hurt my faith in Prabhupada. I'm not concerned that much about objectivity in my following of Prabhupada. I have decided that I want only to be nurtured by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Krishna consciousness is ultimately subjective in that sense "who we give our faith to and our individual relationship with Krishna.

We all want to be enlivened in spiritual life. Prabhupada says we should preach if we want to taste *bhava*. We will taste Lord Nityananda's *bhava*. That's what Prabhupada said.

\* \* \*

2:55 p.m.

Do what Krishna says. His representative, the spiritual master, gives Krishna's order and we shouldn't neglect it. Don't make whimsical offerings in the name of service. Don't try to act as the master and enjoyer of the world. Get it?

Yes.

What is Prabhupada's order?

Follow initiation vows "four rules and sixteen rounds. Preach. Always hear always about Krishna in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and *Bhagavad-gita*. Live with devotees. Don't deviate. So many instructions. Among all the instructions, however, the practical details as to where in the world I'll live, what kind of preaching I'll develop for ISKCON, which devotees I'll work with, whether I manage affairs or lecture or write "and to what degree I "do everything" "that depends on my capacity as a person. And on other factors too. Some of those crucial factors have to be decided by the devotee himself by careful discrimination. Srila Prabhupada didn't tell us what to do exactly in each and every circumstance in changing times, but he gave sufficient instruction so that we can carry them out no matter where we are and who we are.

Do you understand, Satsvarupa?

Yes, I think I do, and I'm trying.

\* \* \*

Swans duck their heads under the water. *Hamsas*. That is mentioned in King Kulasekhara's prayer. As the swan entangles its head in the network of the lotus's underwater roots, please allow me to entangle my mind in thoughts of Krishna's holy name, pastimes, and form. Let me die now chanting while I'm able to utter the name well because at death my throat will be choked and I may not be able to speak *hari-nama* or think clearly of Krishna.

Do you hear that, Lough Erne *hamsas*?

Yes, they know. Everyone knows.

December 12, 1996

12:40 a.m.

This is my reading time, but I'm praying here and noting it down. I attempted to incubate a dream last night. I wrote this down on an index card and put it under my pillow: "Please send me a dream to help inspire me to read Srila Prabhupada's books in a fresh, worshipful way."

I'll tell you what dreams I had later, although they remain enigmatic. Here I am in the waking light of the desk lamp with the intention to re-read *ISopanisad*, starting with Mantra Fourteen. I still feel a little haunted by hearing that we need more than Prabhupada's books to go all the way back to Godhead. Therefore, I want to enter his books slowly and stop and pray on the way. That's harder than the usual way I read, but I think it's required. Prabhupada has packed his purports with thoughtful statements and I should read them carefully.

For example, the purport to Mantra Fourteen states that the advancement of material knowledge has not relieved us of the basic problems of birth, death, disease, and old age. Everything and everyone in the material world has to pass through six stages of transformation. "Therefore the entire material universe is called Mrtyuloka, the place of death."

Do we doubt it? I mean, the literal truth of Vedic knowledge? It contradicts *all* material knowledge, and it demands that we accept eternal spirit and the Supreme Person in the specific way presented in India's spiritual heritage. I contend with those ideas and go on reading. Determination helps.

Then another thought passed through my mind. I could turn to a Godbrother and find out how he reads, how he maintains fresh interest and faith. It wouldn't hurt, but ultimately no one else can do what's necessary for me to do. In that sense we are each alone with Prabhupada and his books. That's good because if we become conscious of it, it will create a prayer of desperation and hope.

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

5:30 a.m.

Here's the dream that came from my attempt to incubate it:

I was observing the President's chauffeur. He was always on call, but he also had privileges and security clearance, and wherever he went people honored him.

What does this dream have to do with my question about reading Prabhupada's books? Is it that I am privileged to be close to the great man?

\* \* \*

8:40 a.m.

"The living entity gets what he deserves . . ." (Bg. 18.61, purport)

I'm leaning to this "Vedic study, truth, being situated in Krishna consciousness. O master, please believe me.

I'm reading 18.64, 65 and 66 where there is mention of surrender, especially in 18.66. But it makes me wonder what surrender actually means. How do we do it?

Well, if you don't know by now . . . It means giving up material attachments and following the will of the Supreme, and following the principle of accepting the favorable and rejecting the unfavorable.

It's the high point conclusion of *Bhagavad-gita*, but I'm subdued (fear of ache).

There go six low-flying swans. Only two remain in the drink. Another gray day, but lovely nonetheless. Faintest trace of pink "smoke" behind the overcast. The trees are winter brown and the evergreens cold and dark.

\* \* \*

2:40 p.m.

Ah man, I tell you, this is the way it goes. The rasta-man sells ices and bananas. He holds no shiv or machete, but other fellas do. In these pics I drew in Guyana in '95, I get to go again. Will they laugh at me at the airport?

\* \* \*

An older devotee is not necessarily better than a young one. It's your sincerity that counts. Thus Prahlada was asked to go forward and pacify Lord Nrsimhadeva although it was like putting a child into a lion's cave. No one would do it . . .

\* \* \*

So intense, Sharon Olds writing on the goodness of her daughter on her way to summer camp. Where is my intensity? I recall someone saying Robert Frost wasn't a great poet because he lacked intensity. Frost heard that remark and replied, "It depends what you mean by intensity."

As a pre-Krishna conscious writer on the Lower East Side I said I wanted vividness. Someone said I had it. I wanted intensity. I said someone else lacked it. Burning bright, my candle lit at both ends. Intense to find truth, to pose as an artist truth-seeker.

Intense temple president of Boston temple, intensely afraid of thugs and teenage ruffians, intense in mouthing *japa*: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna,

ah, you were intense but

don't fade, do not go gentle into that good night.

If to be intense I have to get angry, then no.

And intensity in pain provokes stress.

But what about the *gopis*? Yes, they were intense. I fall short. I say, "Take it easy."

*Nice 'n' easy*

*does it*

*every time.*

\* \* \*

## Krishna, Krishna

spleen, pancreas, liver and all "this body of mine, the soul one ten-thousandth the tip of the hair "me, Krishna's eternal servant. I am hereby ready to go back to the house, calm, burning.

December 13, 1996

12:45 a.m.

Hearing submissively, applying intelligence to understand the Supreme Lord from *sastra*. Don't need to hear any emphasis other than Srila Prabhupada's. Krishna will help me if I sincerely want to approach Him. I am tiny and prone to doubt, prone to maintain contaminating association in this world. Nevertheless I pray to be uplifted and kept in devotional service. Any service is valid and pleasing if it's done with devotion. Prahlada was able to please the Lord even when Brahma and Lakshmi-devi could not approach Him in His anger. Prahlada acted as a simple boy and went forward when asked, "Lord Nrsimha came to kill your father, so it's your duty, Prabhu, to calm Him now." All right, Prahlada agreed. He was unafraid. How sweetly Srila Prabhupada described it in his '76 Vrndavana lecture.

Steadily, slowly, I approach Prabhupada, although he may be angry with me sometimes. If he is displeased with me I have to face it and accept the punishment or penance. That's how confession operates: you confess sins, feel the contrition, and accept the blessing. We are meant to live a life of service.

\* \* \*

A Godbrother's "monks" outrage a strong man in Chinatown: a dream

Wandering through Chinatown, dragging behind me a luggage carrier. I am with a Godbrother and someone else. My Godbrother is in charge of our particular order of *sannyasa*.

We walk around like Japanese monks, going door to door to beg, under my Godbrother's order. One young, very strong man feels cheated by something we said. He comes to the *asrama*, ready to fight. I sit in a corner hoping he won't hit me, then step out to reason with him. I say, "We are not a society of cheaters, although you may have been cheated by one of us."

Now the parts of the dream: who is the Godbrother and what does he represent to me? He's a strong person, and perhaps I am intimidated by him too. I needn't be afraid of him, however, even though in real life, I don't always appreciate everything he says. He's often right, actually, and he sees it as his duty to protect ISKCON.

I was and am willing to face the giant young man who was angry with us. He's a symbol for all the adverse reactions against Hare Krishna devotees. Such persons exist. It would have been good to reason with him that ISKCON is not corrupt, although we have experienced corruption among some of its members. I would like to try to pacify that anger people sometimes feel toward the movement, but that anger is still too volatile and dangerous. Is that it? I fear violence and I fear the bad opinion others have of us. I also sometimes fear my own negative feelings toward ISKCON. Sometimes ISKCON's

critics have dared me to stand up and speak honestly what I feel, but I never really do. I'm not the kind of man who rages against monks.

\* \* \*

8:45 a.m.

I'm anxious about the spider. He came wonderfully into my view, lowering himself on an invisible thread, stepped onto the desk, and was cavorting around when to avoid having him crawl onto my papers, I put a paper under him and lifted him away. but it didn't happen so smoothly, and he fell about a foot. I thought he'd be able to take it, but he remained contracted into a ball. I worried that he was unconscious or even dead. After some time I placed him back on the desk. Finally, he stuck out a leg. Minutes passed and he stuck out another leg. He's definitely alive. I'll have to be more careful how I handle Krishna's creatures when they get in my way.

\* \* \*

If I write past immediate concerns I can get in touch with myself and then something good may happen. I may even be able to pray in words, meditate by pen. Dear Lord Krishna, I can pray to You because You are everything. If I have the slightest grain of *bhakti*, or even a shadow of it, I can attempt to address the Supreme. He's hard to reach "He withholds Himself "yet He's easy too. The starting points of meditation are to taste Him in water, see Him in the light of the sun, hear Him in the sound of ether. Let me feel it to be so.

(I'll be relieved when that spider recuperates and starts walking. Don't want it held against me that I crippled him. Why is he so slow to move about? What can he be *thinking*? )

Krishna, Krishna.

\* \* \*

Random items:

1. M. said he's wearing his blue winter coat (purchased in Boston, 1991) to India. He invites me to wear mine.
2. Tickets, tickets, he's struggling to get the tickets.
3. A devotee calls and asks M., "I heard there is going to be a little get-together" (on my birthday). He denies it but feels bad later. I plan to stay out of it. Whoever comes here on that day, that's okay. I can't guarantee my participation. I could have a headache that day for all I know.
4. I moved books and items into my room today. My clerical nature was aroused as I sorted out drawing pads, writing pads, "notes to secretary" pads, pocket folders, labels, typing paper, books in categories of Srila Prabhupada's, SDG's, health, Gaudiya Vaisnavism, etc. So?
5. Feeling good about *Every Day, Just Write*. Don't know how long it will last.

6. Dreams. If you want to take them seriously, you could get involved in them more. I don't. I'm just taking advantage of this period when I'm on my own schedule to record dreams and learn more about them for my own use in Krishna consciousness.

7. Drawings are important in my life. Planning to carry sketch pads and color instruments to India and the Caribbean. Wherever I go. They go well with published writings.

8. Heigh ho, your honor, your unconscious, yourself who wants to express.

9. Not to make it a mere number nine on a list, yet say, "Last but not least" "I read my master's books. Let my body-earth enter the total earth and my life air enter the total air, and may the supreme beneficiary of all my acts, Lord Krishna, please remember all that I have done for Him. Thoughts by a devotee at the time of death. He prays and I study it.

The spider is on a sit-down strike. I know he's not paralyzed, but he remains immobile. His front legs (there are two legs, but they divide half-way down so that he has a total of four front legs) and two rear legs are poised, and his body is one turtle-like lump in the middle. If he's going to walk, he will unfold more and start gallumping around. I could touch him to get him going, but I have meddled enough.

\* \* \*

2:45 p.m.

In the shed and I'm glad to say the spider is not where I left him, crumpled and inert. He's nowhere to be seen. I hope I learned my lesson not to meddle with or hurt creatures. I got away without having killed that one. He was handsome (God-made) in his spidery way.

Be Krishna conscious. Chant Hare Krishna.

Oh, there he is, walking around like a blind man with several canes. Started up the wall. Now he has drawn himself into a tight ball again, but I didn't cause it this time. His thinking is inscrutable to me.

December 14, 1996

Midnight, World Enlightenment Day

Mantras Seventeen and Eighteen from *ISopanisad* are wonderful. All the books are wonderful if we can just find the clarity and patience to read them. When I read alertly I see how Prabhupada addresses my immediate concerns.

In Mantra Seventeen the devotee prays to enter the Kingdom of God after death. What happens in the next life is determined by our thoughts at the time of death. "However, the devotee develops a sense of love for Godhead by practicing devotional service. Even if a devotee does not remember his godly service at the time of death, the Lord does not forget him."

In Mantra Seventeen the devotee asks the Lord, "Please remember all my sacrifices." This sacrifice refers to, "denying the interest of the senses. One has to learn this art by employing the senses in the service of the Lord during one's lifetime."

Prabhupada begins his purport to Mantra Eighteen: "By surrendering and praying for the causeless mercy of the Lord, the devotee can progress on the path of complete self-

realization." It's nice to see Prabhupada stating that prayer itself is an *act* of devotion. Then I should pray for the Lord's causeless mercy. That's like the Jesus prayer, "Jesus Christ, please have mercy on me, a sinner." Krishna can respond to the person who is praying to Him and trying to surrender. "He can give directions to His sincere devotees by which they can attain the right path. Such directions are especially offered to the devotee even if he desires something else."

Of course, we have to try to rectify ourselves, but Krishna is powerful and He can do cleanse our hearts from within. In the purport Prabhupada quotes *Bhag.* 11.5.42:

"The Lord is so kind to His devotee that even though the devotee sometimes falls into the entanglement of *vikarma* "acts against the Vedic directions "the Lord at once rectifies the mistakes within the heart of the devotee. This is because the devotees are very dear to the Lord."

Prabhupada goes on to say that it's human to make mistakes and the only remedial measure against our perhaps unknown sins is to surrender to Krishna in the heart so He can guide us. We're guided in two ways, by the saints, scriptures, and spiritual master, and by the Lord in the heart Himself.

\* \* \*

8:30 a.m.

Manu noted tension in my writing, uncertainty whether this way is best. He compared it to the nerve-jangling courage and the insistence of an existentialist who thinks life has no meaning "as far as they could honestly see" yet he would give it meaning anyway. I am leaving a testimony, Manu said, of one who applied American skepticism to Krishna consciousness, never let up on it for an easy ride, yet came out faithful and convinced in the *bhakti-marga* and Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. What I write will be convincing to other Westerners. I am trying like that, even if not deliberately. I have no other choice.

\* \* \*

Does it mean to be calm I need to remain on the surface? Swans do, but I notice they also duck underwater when they have to. Manu likes to see energy released, and tension expressed. He says it makes better reading. But it's calm here this December, and my schedule is quiet.

Calm and simple,  
spare the spider,  
pet the cow,  
walk your way and  
pray to God  
Hare Krishna mantra  
sixteen rounds.

We have become afraid of excessive self-expression. We don't want to wind up like those who have left, saying that to be true to self is higher than any duty given by guru.

Draupadi (the cow) is growling, then moaning right outside this window. I could go out and pet her . . . She's a strange cow.

Be confident. Guy standing with hand on hip, right hand in beadbag. He's heroic in swell of chest, cock of head, happy and simple but daring and active.  
Wearing *brahmacari* dress. My attempt at an earnest portraiture.

\* \* \*

2:30 p.m.

Manu and Isani have gone for the afternoon to distribute books. Uddhava and Patri are going into Dublin today to distribute books and then they'll come here for my class tomorrow morning. I'm going to play excerpts of Srila Prabhupada speaking on a morning walk in Chicago. He praises the book distributors, asks GhanaSyama dasa to increase his enthusiasm (it was already great) for distributing books. He said the preacher will be quickly recognized by Krishna and, "Once recognized by Krishna his going back to Godhead is guaranteed." Preachers don't have to follow all the regulations (such as chanting extra rounds and fasting on Ekadasi). Preaching is so exalted.

Then why don't you do it?

I do, Sam. This is it.

What, this scribbling?

Yes, watch your language. Don't offend me. I's preaching by this word. Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead "that's preaching. To say it and mean it and get it out somehow on the airwaves or the printed form.

Ah, look at all those swans gliding in the overcast day on the rippled lake. It is a most aesthetic sight, like seeing ballerinas in "Swan Lake." They glide by.

Open the door to the shed, feel time passing when soon it'll be my last time in and out of here. End of year? Yes, that too.

Parry and thrust. He's going to write every day. You mean until the gas bottle runs out?

In mail "letters from Bhaktin Sile of Dublin, Pradyumna of Port Laoise, an Irish sweater mailed by Patri, and two tapes of poets reading their works.

O fallow, O Derry  
O dew and blood and  
Rocks and fists by the  
heart that ails you,  
mortal men.

\* \* \*

Believe in poet and jazzter. Don't forget you're supposed to be a devotee first and last. Muster, fall in for muster.

"Guarino!"

"Here! Yo!" and so it goes. The exact welfare route I go down is bugged and booted to speak ISKCON message no mistaking it. He says it sounds so predictable.

Be careful "our master talks that way. Yeah, but he's got surprises and authority and he did it, he spread the Krishna consciousness movement all over with his words. It's different in your mouth.

I repeat. I thought that was the supreme virtue.

Yes, you should be true.

You *should* be. Take the chance to serve him under all conditions. Prabhupada admitted the nondevotee enjoyers are not likely to take to Krishna consciousness. "Don't bother us," they say. But the devotees keep plugging away at them.

Getting close to Friday night.

\* \* \*

Night Notes, 6:10 p.m.

This is the way it ends. I drew a Ying Yang circle to show Manu that I strive to write as much as possible, cutting through with free-writing to reveal my hidden truths, and with the other half relax and don't strive to achieve, flow with the little life as it occurs each day. In either case I try to let go of words, to write without premeditation. Touch Krishna consciousness.

Tonight it's over; tomorrow, keep going.

December 15, 1996

12:08 a.m.

I have my agenda for the 9:30 a.m. meeting and I hope I'll be well enough to speak. This excerpt from a purport praising preaching: "Now, we can imagine how merciful Krishna is to those engaged in His service, risking everything for Him. Therefore it is certain that such persons must reach the Supreme planet after leaving the body." (Bg. 11.55, purport)

In his purport to Bg. 12.2, Prabhupada mentions the simple services we can render to please Krishna. "Sometimes he chants, sometimes he hears or reads books about Krishna, or sometimes he cooks *prasadam* or goes to the marketplace to purchase something for Krishna, or sometimes he washes the temple or the dishes "whatever he does, he does not let a single moment pass without devoting his activities to Krishna. Such action is in full *samadhi*."

And this: Krishna personally rescues His devotee from the ocean of birth and death.

\* \* \*

Things to say: I'm taking the bluish sheets off the bed and giving them to Isani to wash.

The hallway is cluttered with the belongings we have stored in trunks. Madhu will have to sort them out.

Autobiography is supposed to be more than an annotation of a life. It should mean something to others; it should get things moving for them. Still, it gets things moving by speaking in a personal language, in one's own words, by being who one is.

Something else: I face the fact that I don't know a damn thing. But that's momentary emotion. Actually, I *do* know who I am "I am a gaunt-fat creature (but not a frog), who speaks a language that slides away and returns (although I no longer care who hears). I'm someone who would like to think that whatever I wrote was readable, or even better,

helpful, that Prabhupada was sanctioning it as useful for his preaching movement. But how can I claim a .1000 batting average? The best don't hit more than .350. An impossible best would mean that one-fourth of my chances were successful hits.

Well, this isn't baseball. Even when a baseball champ strikes out, no one says he's worthless. They recognize his failure in the moment and wait for his next success. They chalk it up in his statistics. In devotional service there are no losses. You never strike out and you never lose anything.

What about if you commit an offense?

Oh yeah, that creates not a loss, but a strike-out. That is especially true of Vaisnava *aparadha*. Your devotional creeper can be uprooted, it can need to be re-rooted. What you have already done, however, is never lost.

If Krishna consciousness is to relieve the miseries of the world, we have to preach it. People are free to take to it or not, as they like. I like to preach to the devotees who have already pledged themselves to the practice. They too are free to hear or not, as they like. After all, we're asking for a lot "complete surrender" and even we who are preaching it have not always attained that ideal. Still we teach it, speak it, recite it from memory, repeat it again and again. To whatever degree we each surrender, to that degree we will become free of the material miseries. To that degree we give up hope of seeing improvement in this world. Seamus Heaney wrote poems touching on the violence in North Ireland. You see, he wants to make things better, but he doesn't know how. We "know" the answer, but can't live in it enough to show the way completely or to cause a major shift in world consciousness. Our stories are still incomplete.

\* \* \*

Poets. Writing poems about windy days, enchanting language. Do such words give us strength? Maybe. Poems are stories, and the words are carefully planted to create an effect. Why? Because life is inexplicable and a poet is talking about life. It's not philosopher's talk or preacher's talk, yet he presumes to write his own "scripture." He *works* at it, is humble perhaps, or not, but he's a craftsman speaking as deep a truth as he can muster up in his own words.

There are jazz poets, nature poets, rural and sophisticated poets, inner and outer poets, academics, and Beat generation rappers. Well, why not devotee poets speaking in their own language?

\* \* \*

My belongings can be taken by whoever needs them, he said. I, Father Sergius, will disappear into the peasantry. In Tolstoy's tale, Sergius left his famous monk's cave and wandered with a group of peasants going to Siberia. We get only a brief final scene where he is completely obscure, now salt of the earth. He gets harassed by a military officer demanding ID. He accepts it and he's holy. Holy of the earth. No more monk Sergius.

\* \* \*

9:30 a.m.

I was talking with Madhu about next Friday, my birthday. We had to make definite plans. He said I shouldn't think of it as a day I was going to enjoy, but a day in which I would have to put out energy. I should think in terms of how much I could do. I said, "That's right. For me, an enjoyable day is quiet and I can go to the shed."

I had been thinking perhaps that my birthday would be a day *for me*. Now I'm seeing it differently; it will be a disruption to my regular life, and a real challenge. The main external challenge will be that after inviting people here, I may get a headache. Then what? We're going ahead anyway, planning and gambling on my health. The highlight for me will be the afternoon session in which I'll read selections of things I've written in 1996.

December 16, 1996

12:45 a.m.

Took rest at 5 p.m. with ache. Gradually it went down. Up at midnight doing editing work I missed yesterday. "Last days" feeling closing in. I'm getting trained to write under more difficult conditions. I'll try to arrange for more full-time writing, but I can't always have it. Don't get distressed at those times or think that writing is only superficial unless you're in a writing retreat. Go at it any minute you have. Give us a hasty note, like a kiss.

\* \* \*

#### Vision of confronting a *sadhu* at a distance

I was half asleep, walking on a dirt path in India. It was dark, the sun wasn't up yet. Far ahead there was a *sadhu*. He had a child with him. He was startled to see me just as I was startled to see him. We were both afraid to go forward, thinking that the other might be an attacker. I thought, "There's two of them, they're more threatening to me." I woke up with a vivid remembrance.

Because I remember this dream so vividly, I tend to think it had some importance. Maybe some day in the future, maybe on Vrndavana *parikrama*, I'll see in reality what I saw in the dream. But how will I take advantage of it? Why were we afraid of each other? It's as if we were half asleep and we were suddenly startled to see each other. Such a dream would definitely have to be followed up to get more out of it. Maybe sometime when I'm in a similar "twilight" state of consciousness I can remember this and try to re-enter it.

\* \* \*

8:45 a.m.

Saw a big hare on my way out to the shed. The four Kerry cows were sitting in the green meadow near the footpath. I passed close by, chanting quietly so as not to arouse Draupadi. I heard one cow breathing heavily. Now here . . . tired from the long stretch I've gone through and the one still ahead.

Reading random verses from the *Gita*. *Karpanya-dosopahata . . . Sisyas te 'ham Sadhi mam tvam prapannam*. (Bg. 2.7) Now I am feeling weak and can't do my duty . . . please accept me as Your disciple and instruct me.

I don't feel that way, desperate and lost. Should I ? I claim, "Krishna was there face to face with Arjuna, but my spiritual master has left." Prabhupada is here, but it takes real cultivation to hear him now. He has given us our freedom in separation, so we have to show him clearly and repeatedly over a long time that we want to hear from him and we're willing to follow him. Arjuna said, "Now I am Your disciple and a soul surrendered unto You."

What can we learn? Don't be a *krpana*, but a *brahmana*.

O black cow on wet earth  
wet grass "not frozen today  
this Monday in rural North Ireland,  
we're people too.

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

December 17, 1996

12:30 a.m.

In preparing for Friday morning's talk, I've gathered quotes on the spiritual master and the disciple. I'll go over them with the devotees, not attempting to present a structured lecture, but to gain insights from each statement and tell them what they mean to me personally.

The first one that came to mind was a phrase in Prabhupada's purport to Bg. 2.7: "He wants to stop friendly talks. Talks between the master and the disciple are serious, and now Arjuna wants to talk very seriously with the recognized spiritual master."

"Serious talks" mean I must give my disciples what Prabhupada and the *sastras* teach. I'm aware that they've come to me to solve the perplexities of life.

One who falsely poses as a spiritual master is incriminated. An outstanding example of this is the verse and purport to *Bhag. 5.5.18*: "No one should become a spiritual master unless he can save the dependents from repeated birth and death." This statement is daunting. I become fearful whenever I hear it. When I examine the statement I tend to think I can deliver my dependents if I stick to the process as Prabhupada taught it and then share the knowledge I receive with disciples. (Whether or not they take it is a matter of their own free will.) In that sense, the *Bhagavatam* verse doesn't describe something impossible for me to do, but it presents me with a grave responsibility. I'm committed to my disciples for life, and that in turn further commits me to the basic duties of *sannyasa* and *sadhana*.

I seem to feel the need for assurance that I can function as a spiritual master. Prabhupada has made many statements that indicate that it is not difficult to become a guru, but these liberal statements force me to pursue the highest standard possible. Here

is one statement defining that standard from Cc. *Adi* 1.46, purport: "The bona fide spiritual master always engages in unalloyed devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By this test he is known to be a direct manifestation of the Lord and a genuine representative of Sri Nityananda Prabhu."

And another from Cc. *Adi* 1.46, purport, "A spiritual master is not an enjoyer of facilities offered by his disciples. He is like a parent. Without the attentive service of the parents, a child cannot grow to manhood; similarly, without the care of the spiritual master one cannot rise to the plane of transcendental service."

And a statement to guide and shape the nature of the guru-disciple relationship: "The relationship of a disciple with his spiritual master is as good as his relationship with the Supreme Lord. A spiritual master always represents himself as the humblest servitor of the Personality of Godhead, but the disciple must look upon him as the manifested representation of Godhead." (Cc. *Adi* 1.45, purport)

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

I don't have to pretend to an exalted status I don't have, yet I can play the role of God's representative, of Prabhupada's son. In this way I can guide disciples to maintain their initiation vows and to develop their spiritual lives as much as possible.

How do I dare take a position of being honored by others? In his essay, "Humbler Than A Blade of Grass," Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura speaks on this point eloquently and humorously. I will read his statement where he quotes Caitanya Mahaprabhu, "By My command, become guru and deliver this land." Since it is Lord Caitanya's order, we have to do it and assume we will be protected from arrogance. He says, "As the saying goes, 'Having started on the dance, it is no use to draw close the veil.' I am doing the duty of the guru, but if I preach that no one should shout, '*Jaya*,' that is to say, if I say in a roundabout way, 'Sing *jaya* to me,' it will be nothing short of duplicity . . . I have to serve God in the straightforward way . . . Especially as Sri Gurudeva has directed me saying, 'On My command, being guru, save this land.' This command has my Gurudeva preached. My Gurudeva in his turn has conveyed the command to me. I will not be guilty of any insincerity in carrying out that command."

I also want to discuss the important topic of the spiritual master as a Prabhupadanuga in ISKCON. Prabhupada is the founder-*acarya* of our ISKCON *sampradaya*. My main qualification is that I'm Prabhupada's disciple and I present his teachings with the exact emphasis that he gave them.

\* \* \*

3:36 a.m.

Seamus Heaney wrote a poem called "Exposure" while living in Wicklow and feeling anxious that he had escaped the violence of North Ireland. He wanted to know if that was the right thing to do to nurture the kind of poetry he wanted to write. He hoped he could write poetry that would be "adequate" to what he felt a poet should do. Poets want

to speak of the times in which they're living. Poetry shouldn't be just pretty music for the ear.

Devotees are preaching poets, not just propagandists. A devotional poet wants to be Krishna conscious, but not in a narrow-minded way. He wants to offer hope to others and prove that Krishna consciousness is for everyone. He wants to explore his own moments of hesitation in spiritual life in case others also hesitate from time to time; he wants to tell you what he felt when he took a walk outdoors. He wants to give you his Krishna.

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

I know Krishna consciousness is demanding and requires total surrender, and I also know I'm not up to that standard. Perhaps because of that I want to offer solace or some sort of compensation to those who are fellow walkers on the same path. I don't want to be pretentious enough to assume that as a poet I have a big task in the movement, but I do like the sense of responsibility Heaney also expressed. He seems to feel in "Exposure" that he missed the chance to speak out when he left the dangerous North for the safer South.

\* \* \*

The bounce I got from springboarding  
Kerouac's *Mexico City Blues* I can't  
find in the lines of British and Irish poets.  
I can't turn it on unless  
the Lord gives me that gift  
to sing in modern idiom.  
In the meantime I can appreciate,  
like doing push-ups and stretches,  
the loveless uninspired attempts  
of imitative ruminating bellowing  
pisswissing the exact count.  
No, this morning I feel I want to be  
in tune with straight Krishna consciousness,  
something like that.

\* \* \*

I am afraid people won't accept Krishna. Of course they won't. But I accept Him. If I speak with my own conviction, I should trust that a few will pull away from the masses and accept Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The whole thing in preaching revolves on the preacher's conviction which in turn provides him the ability and willingness to speak the truth. From the will to preach grows more personal conviction. The preacher is rescued from matter and so are those who hear him with faith.

\* \* \*

8:30 a.m.  
Cold page  
icy windows  
warm blood and heart.

The Christmas rush, the Krishna conscious rush. I want to say . . .

I want to be a better devotee, but what? At my price? If the Lord increases my powers I'll suddenly notice I'm not interested in non-Krishna conscious things. I'll find new lights and interests wherever I dip into Srila Prabhupada's books. I'll sincerely want to help others in Krishna consciousness. I'll have the strength to do this. Pure desires. Let me do what Krishna wants, not what I want.

Can I expect such a windfall blessing? Oh, let me work for it, reading even when it's dry, preaching, chanting, doing my duty, waiting for joy, waiting to taste deeper faith, not living for the pleasure, but loving Krishna.

But . . .

I'm just saying I need help. I can't do it on my own.

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

I'm just saying it's cold. The word "science" means "knowledge," and Sadaputa Prabhu explains how scientists have tried to kill God because they consider Him unnecessary for the equation explaining nature's laws. Ockman's razor .

\* \* \*

Read *Gita* verses. In *Show Me Your Face, Lord*, an Italian priest teaches *lectio divina*. American Hare Krishna sees if he can swan something from it. Dreamt we were in the old Boston temple. Exploding up through the roof "gushing water up there. What?

Sleepy, wake up. Whatcha got? Arjuna's new used car parked with headlights on while Arjuna is inside the house. I walk past it and down toward the shed. Stop and see over shoulder first light of sky.

Now light yellow sunlight through ribs of bare tree and through the icy window pane. Into my eyeballs.

Lord, we've got these senses on loan from You and not for long.

\* \* \*

2:30 p.m.

Lord Krishna says, "Whoever renders service to Me is in Me, is a friend, and I am a friend to him." I wrote it on 3 x 5 index cards years ago. Bhagavata Purana dasa wrote some of them out for me; he has neat handwriting. I used to sit on the rocks in the hills and read such verses aloud. Was I actually praying? Yes, when I *think* of what I was

reciting and reading. When I feel it. That's a good state. That's what I should do with my time.

\* \* \*

Srila Prabhupada on the roof in Mayapur, '76. You can hear him and the disciples walking over the boards on his morning walk. They were challenging him about science. I felt at ease, not intimidated. I didn't need to hear Srila Prabhupada give a materially learned explanation of why the sun moves or doesn't move. It was a nice listening experience. But I couldn't tolerate his talk with the woman TV interviewer in Chicago. I had it on during lunch but said aloud, "It's too hard!" and turned it off to play later. That interviewer was just too hostile. I know what Srila Prabhupada means when he says we approve of polygamy or that a woman is less intelligent, but I wince when I hear him speak those phrases to an American woman reporter. Her dislike was painful.

O Krishna, this day You let me have good health and all I did was read and write a little. I give thanks to You. The ease also comes from You.

\* \* \*

Krishna says whatever you do, do as an offering to Him. When you eat, when you perform austerity, when you sit in this shed, make it an offering. Dear Lord Krishna, I can know You only through my spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada. This is right. He guides us. I pray to You, Lord, He who gives intelligence in the heart, *antaryami*, please guide me to worship my master's words. I will accept him as absolute because he is Your representative. I will carry out his orders.

Dear Lord Krishna, when You speak *Bhagavad-gita* and when my spiritual master explains it, that's *good*. He explains it in such a way that even if You are not directly speaking of *bhakti* and pure surrender, Srila Prabhupada reminds us of the goal. Consciousness of You is the topmost yoga and meditation. All else is nonsense and all but devotees are rascals. Hare Krishna.

A materialist thinks he's big. A devotee knows God is *vibhu* and he is "nothing." We know we are small when we compare ourselves to Krishna's greatness. He's the source of all gods and the material and spiritual worlds. To disagree with this conclusion of *Bhagavad-gita* is to leave yourself with only the words of speculators. Eclecticism is a lonely path, never surrendering to the teacher of Absolute Truth. You are left only with a little rilke, a little short change, a little dream life, a little Jung and Freud and Gurdjieff and Kowit and Garibaldi "the list is endless and leaves me aching just to recall it.

\* \* \*

4 p.m.

I walked back from the shed. It was sprinkling and the rain smeared across my eyeglasses. I heard noises from the old buildings. That's the place where Arjuna dasankirtana party loading books. Are they here again? No, I didn't see their van. We heard they're the leading book distribution party in all of the UK. remarkable. I'd be shy if I saw them now. I could say, "You guys are champions!" They would compare me in

their minds with their champion spiritual master, who inspires them to distribute Prabhupada's books. Or would they? Well, it doesn't matter because they weren't here. Just a noise in the building. Maybe Aniruddha was looking for piping to fix the heating system in the temple. I walk on, the collie behind me.

\* \* \*

I'm a Hare Krishna boy. I've got no more songs for awhile. I've got no voice for awhile. Be *still* and let the Lord inside you make you the best musician or take away your voice. He can knock you down in the woods and you could die. I thought of that in passing. He could knock me down and I'd think, "At least I had time to finish two volumes of *Every Day, Just Write.*"

Is that what you'd think at the time of death?

Death takes you to your roots, so where are my roots? Are they on those 3 x 5 index cards with *Bhagavad-gita* verses on them? Are they sunk into pop songs of the 1950s? Am I rooted in Prabhupada-isms?

Oh, who will help me among the devotees? Will my master come to me or leave me to my own devices because I too often chose selfish comfort instead of his remembrance?

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

O Prabhupada, I accept it all, the whole hog "polygamy, kill the murderer (it's good for him), the words about women, the demigods with a million heads, Lord Siva and *dharma* and Ganesa's rat carrier. I accept it all. And I give the rest up. No more New York City nightlife, no more *karmi* clothes, no more wife or striving to be a Kafkaesque writer, no more attachment to posthumous fame. I give it up. Talks between the spiritual master and the disciple are serious.

\* \* \*

6 p.m.

Browsing through *The Spiritual Master and the Disciple*, I found a heading, "The spiritual master trains and engages a disciple according to his ability." Then this statement by Srila Prabhupada:

There are many different departments of activity in Krishna consciousness, and the spiritual master, knowing the particular ability of a particular man, trains him in such a way that by his tendency to act he becomes perfect . . . Arjuna offered his service fully as a military man, and he became perfect. Similarly, an artist can attain perfection simply by performing artistic work under the direction of the spiritual master. If one is a literary man, he can write articles and poetry for the service of the Lord under the direction of the spiritual master. One has to receive the message of the spiritual master regarding how to act in one's capacity, for the spiritual master is expert in giving such instructions.

December 18, 1996

My persona in my writings (whether it be titled *Every Day, Just Write* or something else) is a person whose mission is to survive in ISKCON and in spiritual life. He's not out to reform the world. Indeed, he often checks such reformer tendencies as presumptuous or "too controversial." He doesn't have that hope or desire to be a social or institutional leader. He feels the wrongs, alludes to them, but mostly talks of his own survival activities. You could say he is a survivalist, or more simply, a survivor.

Is this my actual self? Or is it yet another mask? Am I trying to portray the simple *brahmana* who remains free from management and doesn't want to make waves? I don't know. Is it even desirable that I be a survivor, or should I become someone different or better? I don't know that either. All I know is that if I keep writing as truthfully as I can, I may eventually climb beneath the present "I" to find the real self. We are each carrying personas and masks, and we create characters from which to live out our lives. I have to keep writing to get beyond that.

And perhaps that's the beauty and facility of *Every Day, Just Write* as I originally conceived of it. It invites me to be inclusive of everything I am and want to be. It fulfills the advice to spend all when I write. Not only can I express my desires to survive, it doesn't bar me from artistic or preaching aims. I want to therefore be intense when I write, and to think of the writing life as a diamond: as you turn it this way or that, you can see all the facets.

\* \* \*

4 a.m.

The spiritual master says what he says and the disciple should not criticize. The female TV interviewer didn't like what she heard. She got angry and left. A disciple, however, shouldn't become angry. We should allow the spiritual master to blast our scientific allegiance, our national allegiance, and anything else that is not Sastric or Krishna conscious. We have to listen to him.

I said, "Prabhupada, in Hong Kong you told the interviewer that Guru Maharaji was a cheater. You couldn't help yourself."

"Yes," said Prabhupada, "and it has been proven."

It has been proven. Therefore, I should be quiet. Sometimes it takes time for things to be proven or to be revealed, and I simply have to be patient. I should never think my spiritual master is wrong in what he has said. Srila Prabhupada told us that he had once had a doubt in his Guru Maharaja when he ordered that a snake be killed. Later, he Prabhupada found a *Bhagavatam* verse that stated that even a saintly person is happy to see a snake killed.

\* \* \*

9 a.m.

Unseasonably warm, foggy drizzle. The shed door is swollen shut. I can't pry it open. I look in the window (in case someone locked it from the inside) and see the cozy setup with desk, sketch pad, etc. "a nice place to work. Pause and pee outdoors, then try again to open the door. I look it over intelligently as Madhu might and as he will have to do once I tell him I'm locked out. I see the door is shut tightest at the bottom. I reach down there and find a pulling leverage underneath. Tug, tug, and it's open.

Now faced with a blank.

But I brought a list exercise with me: "Make a list of a hundred." It's all right if you repeat yourself. Use words and phrases.

One hundred sources of stress.

(1) Anything.

(2) Stoves when they heat up too much.

(3) Aroma therapy when it makes the air too thick with oily odor.

(4) Lecturing

(5) Complicated talks with Madhu.

(6) Lectures, meetings.

(7) The walk if it gets too brisk.

(8) Car travel, airplane travel.

(9) You name it "anything too much causes stress.

(10) Thinking of dangers that may befall.

(11) News from ISKCON that threatens me and my publishing, my freedom, my reputation, etc.

(12) Hate mail.

(13) Individual meetings face-to-face with someone who starts to speak at length.

(14) A trip to a bookstore.

(15) Too many loud noises.

(16) The thought of going somewhere and doing something.

(17) Trip to the doctor.

(18) Walk in the fields too long in some place where someone wants to show me something.

(19) Mathematical or accounting puzzles I'm asked to comprehend.

(20) Politics I'm drawn into.

(21) Long complicated situation I have to hear and sort out.

(22) Staying up instead of taking rest on time.

(23) Late meals.

(24) Any delay or disruption in my schedule.

(25) Missing sleep at night.

(26) Pain.

(27) Anxiety of possible impending legal implication.

(28) Telephone call I have to make.

(29) Anticipation of any group meeting "as the hours go by and I have to wait.

(30) Editing too many pages.

(31) reading "paying attention.

(32) Attending a *Srimad-Bhagavatam* lecture.

(33) Paying attention to Srila Prabhupada's tape conversations when the people are hostile or he's heavy.

(34) Answering mail "making my reply.

(35) reading a *karmi* magazine with cheap print and photos.

(36) Watching a video.

(37) Deciding what to write next.

38) Worrying about what I'm writing now "if it's okay.

39) Demands of dreamwork.

(You simply want peace and ease, but hardly know how to enjoy it. You push yourself to produce, produce. It would be nice to release strain and just walk in the woods or look out the window at the lake.)

40) Writing for a quota.

41) Guilt if I do anything that seems like sense gratification.

42) From here on my list will be repetitious: car or plane travel and meetings head the list as triggers for headaches. To me "stress" means triggers for headaches. A fully developed headache is the result I get several times a week when I feel any of this stress, and slighter versions of it every day. Therefore, I avoid stress as much as possible. But even normal events are stressful for me and promote headaches.

43) Another cause of stress is when people don't understand my illness or I imagine or guess that they don't sympathize.

44) Queues for immigration, especially in the Caribbean.

45) Waiting of any kind, especially in dealing with the outside world.

46) Opinions of others, whether long distance, merely in my own head, or met with in letters or face-to-face.

47) My envy "my faultfinding does it, I guess. At least I don't like it.

48) "Life itself is stress for you," said TKG, claiming that he had hit on the actual cause of my headaches.

49) rodents (phobia).

50) One becomes free of stress by chanting Hare Krishna, but vigorous *japa* seems to causes headaches.

51) Loud temple *kirtanas*.

52) Being kept awake when trying to sleep by loud noises coming from the nearby apartment or street during the day.

53) Fears of criticism, bad press, or even the attacks of inimical people.

54) Aging "the body finds it stressful to do anything much, such as physical exercise.

I better end this list. It's not a transcendental list. It does teach me that stress is all around and I should live in such a way as not to aggravate it. It leads to headaches. relax, relax, breathe deeply and easily. Or lie down and deep breathe.

Peace.

Oh man, you sure are a case.

If life is such stress then

do you want to die and

Rest in peace?

Impossible. There's rebirth,  
the biggest stress.

I need relief from *samsara*.

\* \* \*

12:05 noon

"This folly," he said, "this folly."

What?

He said, "This folly, this folly."

Quicken the pulse, the life, the dance, the ache of a thumb pushing a pen as long as it can. Krishna protects His devotees and rich men's sons don't work.

White fog-like smoke low and horizontal over the lake. No boats.

It hurt

trying to open the shed door.

Krishna, Krishna,

our peons (I mean paeans)

Raise praises to Krishna:

All glories to the *sankirtana* devotees!

All glories to each of the nine practices of *bhakti*!

All glories to each of the devotees who serve in each way or in several at the same time;

All glories to *Srimad-Bhagavatam*;

All glories to the devotees of Lord Caitanya;

All glories the *acaryas* who wrote blissful and learned *bhakti*-filled commentaries!

All glories to Srila Prabhupada who stayed with us on walks, in lectures, in his orders, in his books!

All glories! All glories!

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

2:35 p.m.

Kathleen Adam's book, *Mightier Than the Sword*, contains a chapter called "Authenticity." She writes, "The discrepancy between image/ being, external/ internal, acculturated self/ authentic self "the maintenance of the lie" reverberates in the journals of men like an echo bouncing off canyon walls. The search for authenticity is a modern-day grail quest. It is the beating heart of many men's writings."

At the end of the chapter she gives exercises.

"Complete these Sentence Stems:

"Authenticity is . . . "

Here's what I wrote:

Authenticity is when I don't lie, when I let my actual voice speak. We say an authentic ranch, an authentic American Indian village, or, "It had the authentic sound of bop." For myself I'm authentic when I admit that I'm a Hare Krishna man with all my flaws. I'd like to say I'm a *perfect* Hare Krishna man, an authentically pure devotee, or an authentic spiritual master, an authentic *maha-bhagavata*, but authentic has to mean the truth. I

can't make phony claims that although they sound Sastric are not actually true for me. When a devotee speaks in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* class, we can immediately hear the authentic ring of truth. It's not enough that the quotes he offers are perfect.

"My authentic self . . . "

My authentic self comes out when I allow the different sides of myself to express themselves. That is, when I listen to more than one voice. Ultimately, however, I know my authentic self is close to the pure spirit soul. When I'm able to hit the ring of truth, that's when I'm Prabhupada's disciple, when I can remember and *feel* my contact with him.

\* \* \*

Now complete the sentence stem, "I am . . . "

I am that I am. I am an eternal fragmented part and parcel of Krishna. I am the disciple of my spiritual master. I am, like it or not, serving as spiritual master to hundreds of devotees. I am sitting in this shed, glad to be alone, peaceful, for at least a little while every day. I am witnessing what I see with my senses, and right now I see beautiful swans and the calm lake. Another bird has just arrived and is sitting on the shore, its long neck extended.

\* \* \*

And, "I am not . . . "

I am not a GBC man anymore. I was one and I am glad I was, (but that's an "I am" sentence). I am not a woman-chaser, a homosexual, an uptight priest, a musician, a toady. I am not a politician. I am not responsible for the management or income of any ISKCON temples. I am not trying to run away from ISKCON. I am not immortal in this body. I am not somebody's husband or boyfriend. I am not trying to enjoy myself at the expense of disciples. I am not able to write the truth as deeply as I'd like to or as well as I could.

\* \* \*

"Something very few people know about me . . . "

Something very few people know about me is that my actual name is Popeye. Very few people know all the books I write. They only know the few that are published. Very few people know, therefore, all the sins and confessions that I've made. Few people know my inner feelings, my dreams, the dirtiness, and they don't know my real spiritual aspirations. That's all right. Privacy is part of my authenticity, and I preserve my confidential self even though others don't care or don't know what I'm about. That is, I am someone beyond my image. That's another meaning of authenticity. You just be yourself as best you can, and serve your spiritual master according to your capacity and nature. You don't have to live up to others' expectations unnecessarily. Few people know that I'm just a little boy inside who's afraid of the sins he's committed. Although I keep telling people that I can't pay attention in chanting, few people know how difficult it is for me to maintain attention on the holy names. Nobody knows how I ride the little

bubbles and waves of happiness each day. Few people in my life now know much about my pre-Krishna conscious life and all the junk that it constitutes, although slowly and gradually I'm sharing little bits of it.

\* \* \*

"Look back at your childhood joys and pleasures. What do you remember? Jot down words or phrases."

Lying on my back in the grass, exhausted from solitary play, throwing a rubber ball against the house or just running around. Smelling the grass, looking up at the sky. Picking blackberries. Eating breakfast, especially Nabisco Shredded Wheat with milk, sugar, and blackberries. reading the Sunday funny newspapers, reading comic books with family or friends. Feeling secure in our house because of having a strong father.

I can think of plenty more, but they're too domestic to repeat "family outings and so on.

\* \* \*

"Think of somebody who only knows the public you. See yourself through this person's eyes. How would he or she describe you?"

He's a thin *sannyasi*, aging. He was one of Prabhupada's first disciples. He tells Prabhupada stories and teachings that he personally heard from Prabhupada. He's humble, but he seems to have retired from active preaching. He used to be a GBC man and manage temples. I'm not sure what he does now. He writes a lot of books. His disciples are fond of him. He gets headaches. He travels a lot. He's faithful to Prabhupada and repeats him in his lectures. He's into creative writing. I hope he's not another guru who falls down and disappoints us.

\* \* \*

"Imagine yourself doing something you really, truly love. Now imagine that a private detective known for his brilliant powers of observation watches you. What does he write in his report?"

I followed Satsvarupa out of the house around dawn in late springtime in County Kerry. He walked with a walking stick toward the beach. I could overhear him chanting Hare Krishna on his beads. He had a brisk stride and seemed to be happy to be out walking. I became interested when he took a tape recorder out of his pocket and start talking into it "talking to himself or about himself, about how he felt. He seemed to be making a rough draft or composing poetry or something. And trying to pray out loud.

When he thought he was alone on the beach he sat on a rock and began making a speech as if to an audience. He seemed to really get off by doing that. I guess he was rehearsing for lectures he makes in his church. He started writing in his notebook. The real thing will be to find out what he writes in his notebook. Otherwise, he's a quiet person who keeps to himself and takes a solitary walk, talks out loud, and records it. I'm not exactly sure what he's up to or why he's accumulating all this evidence about his thoughts. I've watched him follow this routine for several days in a row "he regulates his

day by his watch. On the way back from the walk I saw he was limping and he had lost the briskness in his pace.

\* \* \*

One hundred ways I fake it:

- (1) I fake it by persona in writing even when I try to be honest "the scribe, spiritual journalist, Beat poet for Krishna, etc.
- (2) I do what people whammy me to do.
- (3) I imitate my spiritual master.
- (4) I imitate a pure devotee, act humble.
- (5) Bluff on *vyasasana* in all sorts of ways, giving right answers, but a basic or subtle pose is always at work.
- (6) I don't eat much, but I desire to eat more.
- (7) I don't let on that I'm attracted to women.
- (8) I may exaggerate my illness. No, I don't think I do. I fake myself.
- (9) I appear to be a good student, always faithful to Srila Prabhupada.
- (10) I pretend to be interested in improving my *japa* "I give that impression.
- 11) I pretend to be exclusively interested in Krishna consciousness, but I read other books
  - (12) I don't know *Slokas* accurately, but fudge my way through the Sanskrit when lecturing.
  - (13) I sometimes allude to interest in *madhurya-lila* or a taste for it beyond what I actually have.
  - (14) I fake by doing just the opposite "I pretend that I don't or never had interests in *gopi-bhava* literature or pursuits.
  - (15) I pretend to be an honest guy.
  - (16) I tell people I don't write much.
  - (17) I don't let on that I draw pictures every day.
  - (18) I fake it, I fake it "I am not a pure devotee.
  - (19) I don't tell how I stop after sixteen rounds.
  - (20) I don't let on how weak I feel when my head starts to ache while I'm lecturing. I fake it.
  - (21) I fake composure when I'm sometimes afraid.
  - (22) I fake compassion.
  - (23) I have fake teeth.
  - (24) I fake my prayers.
  - (25) I fake devotion to Srila Prabhupada *murti*. By that I don't mean that I lack complete devotion, but I pretend to more than I actually have.
  - (26) Bow down with body, but not mind and heart. I make fake obeisances.
  - (27) Sometimes I fake that I'm a refined, quiet gentleman, when actually I'm a coarse New Yorker.
  - (28) Sometimes I fake aesthetic pleasures and aesthetic appreciation.
  - (29) I also fake it in poems, in writing them and in appreciating poems that I read. I'm in on the big fake of modern art.

(30) Sometimes I fake it when I talk about death. I don't really think about it deeply, but I sometimes give the impression that I do.

(31) I fake being serious and very much interested in Krishna conscious topics. Actually, I'm usually more interested in light topics that touch upon Krishna consciousness but that are not so heavy. Therefore, I basically fake it as a lecturer.

(32) I fake it if I say I have no ecstasy. I feel bursts of happiness every day and certainly it is due to Krishna consciousness.

(33) I fake it if I say I don't have love for my spiritual master.

(34) Sometimes I fake it in admitting a fault which I don't really feel to be a fault. I basically think I'm doing the best I can, but because there's such a virtue in admitting faults, I bluff it and admit faults without actually believing I have them.

(35) If, when I appear in a temple room carrying a *danda* and give a lecture with enthusiasm, people get the impression that I do this every day, then they're wrong. I'm faking it. Because of my weak health, I spend my life in another way. My appearance on any occasion in a temple room is faking it because I'm acting as if I have the strength of a normal person. I don't. Those who are taken in see only the thin veneer covering my tottering weakness.

Having admitted so often my shortcomings, if I go on in any number of ways to give the impression that I'm a topmost devotee, that's faking it. Just as I said that I sometimes have to give the impression that I'm healthy in order to get through a lecture, and that's normal, so it seems inevitable that we have to fake our way through so many things. That's just part of life. We can't be utterly true to ourselves at every given moment, or even at many given moments, and we certainly can't be utterly true to others either.

It's not innocent or harmless to fake it as a spiritual master, but as they say, once you agree to dance you can't cover yourself with a veil. That would be another kind of faking it, another insincerity, as Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati calls it. We have to go forward and serve, confident of Lord Caitanya's support. We may hesitate as we go forward, because we are rookie policemen. That is, we're afraid as we walk down the street and possibly encounter criminals. But what can we do? We *have* to fake the courage and confidence because we have to inspire confidence and courage in others. That is our bravery. And when it comes down to it, we have been given the pistol and the club; we have been given the charge to use them.

Yes, I have to do things that are not entirely harmonious with my inner self. For example, on Friday we'll celebrate Vyasa-puja here. I'll sit on an exalted seat and receive the honor of my disciples. I'm asking them to be prepared to speak their homages and yes, I will listen to them. It's all less than authentic, but it's not that the inauthenticity is entirely rotten or hypocritical. We are all filled with imperfections and we are not one hundred percent true, but that doesn't mean we should give up trying to make what we do authentic. In the meantime, we have to fake our way through. Best to do so with a smile or a laugh or even by letting others know, "Hey, I'm faking it here."

Eventually, as we practice *sadhana*, the outer man will become harmonized with the inner man.

\* \* \*

4:15 p.m.

Heaney said he read Dante with "intense gratitude." I believe him. He got so much out of poetry. I'd like to feel that gratitude as I read Vyasa and Prabhupada. Dante is intense with his grotesque descriptions of pain and suffering. Heaney sees these as parallel to the troubles in North Ireland. Vyasa, however, gives descriptions that relieve us from the pain and suffering of birth and death.

December 19, 1996

4 a.m.

Heaney speaks of the joy of poetry, its prerogative as well as its responsibility. What about the joy of Krishna consciousness and its prerogative and responsibilities? We have the joy of freedom from birth and death. Not that we have already achieved it, but this is our purpose; we already feel some of it. We are working for the highest cause. Surely the joy we feel is a shadow of *hladini-sakti*, the love of God Krishna confers on His pure devotees.

We have the responsibility to preach Krishna consciousness truthfully and to not let up. To preach effectively we must experience taste. I feel that way every day when I go to write. I can't bluff the readership. I have to say where I'm at and at the same time, give perfect teachings. The teachings are more perfect than *I* am capable of expressing, but still, my speaking them is proof that a Western student, a conditioned soul, can rise up and aspire to really practice Krishna consciousness. It's also proof that conditioning creates difficulties on the path. Despite the difficulties, however, we stay with it and triumph. That's a joy in itself. Therefore, I am not a poet in the tradition of Dante or Joyce or Heaney, or any of those who don't have the joy, prerogative, or responsibility of Krishna consciousness.

\* \* \*

8:35 a.m.

\* \* \*

#### A List of Fears I Have About Being More Authentic:

(1) I'm afraid that if I try to become authentic, it will turn into mundane realization and I may go the way of a Godbrother who gave up guru and *sannyasa* duties.

(2) If I become authentic, it may not be acceptable to ISKCON authorities. This fear I will attempt to subdivide under other numbers on this list.

(3) I'm afraid that authentic is something I don't really know. I'll go off on a blind alley.

(4) Or if I take authentic to be pure surrender to Krishna, then I'm afraid I won't like it.

(5) If becoming an authentic devotee means I have to give up sweets with lunch, then how could I do that?

(6) If to be authentic means I shouldn't write anymore . . .

(7) Or if authentic means I have to write strict essays acceptable to the editors of *Back to Godhead* magazine and nothing else . . .

(In making this list I see I have two definitions of authentic. The absolute definition is to understand that I'm the eternal servant of Krishna, so I should follow the six symptoms of surrender which begin with doing everything favorable for Krishna consciousness and avoiding anything unfavorable to Krishna consciousness. By this standard, I would have quite a different list. Thus my list has started off mixed because of the two definitions of authentic I am carrying in my mind. I need to find a synthesis. I need self-realization and self-fulfillment of my individual nature in the conditioned state before I can fully surrender. Or, to say it better, I *think* I need that kind of concession. I think if I can be satisfied and develop my psycho-physical nature, I'll be better able to give my love to Krishna. If I am told too abruptly, "Your authentic nature is to do everything for Krishna and nothing for yourself, Prabhu. We will now give you a detailed account of what you should be doing," that introduces another problem. That is, that different people inevitably have their own ideas of what it is for someone else to be authentic.

Well, who is the authentic Satsvarupa dasa? Someone might say, "Satsvarupa used to be an authentic devotee of Prabhupada and ISKCON, but now he's gone a little weird." I tend to think I've become authentic by searching on my own. This is what the psychologists refer to as the "acculturated self" and how it comes into conflict with the authentic self. Inauthentic means to live a lie. For example, a *brahmacari* might be living a lie because in his heart he's not a *brahmacari*. For him, it would be truth to admit something less than the highest standard of renunciation, something less than the fast lane for going back to Godhead. He'd have to go slower, but the true admittance would make him surer and stronger in the long run. That might be a humiliating position, but it's actually a more purifying one than pretending to be on a platform he's not.

This is all quite tricky and not easy to write down on paper "what is authentic and what is not, what my fears of authenticity are, etc. I'll proceed with the list, but I will add in that I understand it's basically coming from a confused person who is not always sure which action is authentic "whether an act of indulgence toward the psycho-physical nature or an act which rejects an inner urge is the more honest approach to Krishna.)

(8) I'm afraid that if I try to follow the path of the authentic self in terms of psycho-physical nature, I will miss out on the more single-minded path to Krishna. Examples of this could be thinking that it's useful for me to read nondevotee poetry. It *might* be useful to my writing, but it could also possibly cheat me from concentration on Krishna. It will block me from the necessary practice that would make me the authentic Vrajavasi that I want to be.

(9) One could also say that an authentic devotee of Lord Caitanya lives in Mayapur or Vrndavana. I'm afraid that may be true, in which case I'm going to miss out. I am not even *trying* to live in Vrndavana and to renounce my Western ways. Rather, I'm dovetailing them in Krishna's service. One might call it a gamble, but Prabhupada authorized using Western ways as cultural weapons for preaching Krishna consciousness. I'm afraid my being true to the authentic self in terms of my background, my knowledge of myself as growing up in New York, the literature I read and continue to read which is not devotional "I'm afraid that this authentic self will leave me at the

end of life far short of being one who thinks of Vrndavana as his home in either this worldly Vrndavana or the Vrndavana of Goloka.

(10) On the other hand, if I try to live always in Vrndavana and develop my *bhajana* and the authentic meditation of a Vrajavasi (i.e. meditating on Krishna's *asta-kaliya-lila* twenty-four hours a day), I could also become inauthentic in a different way. It would be false and imitative of me to turn myself into a so-called Hindu *sannyasi* since I am not one. Neither could I make myself, by imitation, into one of the Six Gosvamis.

Regarding the fear of social condemnation or institutional reprimand, I'm afraid about that too. I'm afraid if I publish something criticizing the GBC, I'd be reprimanded. They could take away my freedom to lecture in the temples, to initiate disciples, to share my books with ISKCON devotees, and so on. This is not so much a conscious fear, but it may be lurking underneath, telling me, "Don't go *too* far. Don't make waves. You'll get into trouble."

I'm afraid if I followed my own nature I would gradually do less outward preaching. This might feel right for me, but it is different from what Prabhupada writes in his purports. I'm afraid of not lining up with the image of a *sannyasi* and devotee that Prabhupada presented to us.

Since I'm not perfectly clear about my authentic self, I can't go ahead boldly and single-mindedly in this endeavor. Prabhupada also discusses self-interest in Krishna conscious terms. He says self-interest is good, but most people don't really know how to pursue their "super-self interest." They pursue a limited self-interest, starting with a kind of physical selfishness, then extending it to community and nation. *Na te viduh svartha-gatim hi visnum*. They don't know that the real aim is to satisfy Visnu. I'm aware of that, at least in a theoretical way. It seems that sometimes I have to make a concession and do things I may not feel to be authentic for me, but I know they're absolute. This is the nature of *vaidhi-bhakti*, which is regulative and not spontaneous. I have to do the things a devotee *should* do every day, and I have to do them even if they don't appear to correspond with my nature. The more I practice *vaidhi-bhakti*, the more my original nature will be uncovered. Prabhupada said that when we uncover our pure intelligence, we won't know anything *but* surrender to Krishna. We'll *want* to bow down to Radha and Krishna, to get up early, to preach Krishna consciousness. That's the hope we have in following the rules and regulations.

But it's a razor's edge. Prabhupada also defines *niyamagraha* as a too-rigid following of rules and regulations without knowing the ultimate goal. The ultimate goal is to love Krishna. I can love Krishna *now* by writing, and, strange as it may sound, I can do it by *doing things I love to do and offering them to Krishna*.

I just said that sometimes I have to concede to my psycho-physical nature. But it's not always a concession. Sometimes it's the bold, right, and most Krishna conscious thing to do; it's surrender to be myself as I understand myself right now. Sometimes it may be more Krishna conscious to give up that sense of self, to consider it an attachment to be sacrificed. Day by day, hour by hour we weigh the pros and cons and consider not only what is authentic but how much we're willing to *be* authentic. I know I can't claim that as soon as I find out what's authentic I'll immediately do it. I'm afraid, and maybe others are too, because it's hard. We think it's easier to remain imitators. Or if not easier, then safer.

That's sad. Imagine going through an entire life with the blessings we have been given and choosing to remain mediocre. It's hard even to contemplate. To be governed by fear and repression, the consciousness absorbed in projecting a look-good persona rather than striving for the personal offering of self to Krishna.

Devotees sometimes ask how much the psychologist's concept of an acculturated self is in conflict with the authentic self "how much this is true of the life of an ISKCON devotee. The psychologist would probably say that the religious institution is very much like other social institutions in that they apply pressure on the individual to conform. That pressure naturally causes the individual who wishes to be socialized to repress and/or deny what is authentic to himself. In ISKCON's more naive days we used to say with certainty that there was no conflict between the self ISKCON tried to bring out of an individual and the authentic self that *was* the individual. Anyone who saw a conflict was unsurrendered, in *maya*. Now we admit that ISKCON does create certain social pressures that are just that, social, and not necessarily absolute for all individuals in all circumstances. An early absolute was that to be a good devotee you had to live in the temple. If someone decided otherwise in answer to some internal calling, he was obviously not *really* a devotee. Thank God that's changing, finally. Gradually ISKCON is providing more room for individual expression, for *individuals*, and devotees are also not waiting for the society to reform before they decide what's authentic for them.

Enough of this for now. "Whatever you desire to describe that is separate in vision from the Lord simply reacts, with different forms, names and results, to agitate the mind as the wind agitates a boat which has no resting place." (*Bhag.* 1.5.14)

"Thus when all a man's activities are dedicated to the service of the Lord, those very activities which cause his perpetual bondage become the destroyer of the tree of work." (*Bhag.* 1.5.34)

"Sri Narada said: The great sages (*bhaktivedantas*) who had imparted scientific knowledge of transcendence to me, departed for other places, and I had to pass my life in this way." (*Bhag.* 1.6.5)

\* \* \*

### Leaving the false ego behind

I was moving with big-time writers like Allen Ginsberg and other persons of that generation. I was respected on a level with them and doing different crazy things like they were doing. Sometimes, though, I was opposed to them. I had certain powers. I realized that in order to keep up, I had to kill my ego. I had already killed my ego from when I was young, when I was Stephen, but now I had to continue killing my ego in order to remain with these people. There was a long scene where a truck caused me a problem. I shot my gun at it and turned into an elephant which I then drove away.

That's a fragment of the dream. The important thing to me now was the emotion I felt. It almost woke me up. I had already killed the false ego or a certain sense of self, but I realized I had to keep doing it.

Later in the dream we entered one person's house and he looked up, awestruck, to see Allen Ginsberg and the other veterans. I was with them, but I was younger than they were and less of a veteran poet. I could see from that experience that I had given up my

selfish desire to always be praised and given attention. It was gone and I was living in the moment.

Later: giving up the desire for praise is vital to advancement in Krishna consciousness. It's not something you can do on your own; it's a grace that's bestowed by Krishna. This is not abstract psychology; the ego is something we can actually perceive, namely, the false, material part of consciousness. We hope to kill it and to live in the moment of love for Krishna.

\* \* \*

9:10 a.m.

Can't go out now until around 8:30, it's so dark in the morning. Frost on window evaporates into water when I put on the gas heater in the shed. My head may have diffuse pressure, but it may go down. Happy to see the rising sun and to walk in the cool outdoor air. Krishna, Krishna "chanting my sixteenth round at the desk in the shed. Now read.

\* \* \*

#### List of Things I Want or Need

- (1) A subtitle for this book.
- (2) Hope.
- (3) Faith.
- (4) Charity.
- (5) Lord Krishna "at every moment. We all do. He holds the planets together.
- (6) To know the *Slokas* I have already memorized and to quote them sometimes.
- (7) rest and to eat throughout the twenty-four hours at designated times.
- (8) To publish books to please my spiritual master.
- (9) To be rid of material attachments in the spirit of item two in "*Saranagati*": "Avoid whatever is unfavorable to Krishna consciousness."
- (10) God's mercy.
- (11) Ability, determination, and stamina to read Prabhupada's books every day.
- (12) Freedom from sex desire.
- (13) To follow my *sannyasa* vows until I die.
- (14) The mercy of Krishna's pure devotees.
- (15) To keep that exclusive feeling of taking shelter at Prabhupada's lotus feet.
- (16) To hear his lectures daily.
- (17) A sweet at the end of lunch.
- (18) To keep writing letters to disciples and other friendly persons.
- (19) Peace.
- (20) Strength to endure pain.
- (21) To honorably pass through old age up to the end.
- (22) To think of Krishna at the time of death favorably, desiring only to serve Him in the company of His pure devotees.
- (23) To be free of faultfinding and other prominent *anarthas* which continue to linger in me.

(24) To chant Hare Krishna with tears in my eyes, a throbbing heart, and a voice choked with love.

(25) To read scriptures in Vrndavana.

(26) To develop attachment for the dust of Vrndavana.

(27) Krishna's mercy ( already said that, I know).

(28) An easy way (even though that may not be right to desire).

(29) To be able to write like this.

(30) To write poems and poetic prose.

(31) To read *sashtra* and put it into my writing.

(32) To stay awake.

(33) Not to be afraid in times of danger, or at least to remember to chant God's names when I am afraid.

(34) To go on writing honestly through the end of this year and right into next year, enthusiastic to begin a new book as I go to India.

(35) To write deeply and spontaneously (hundreds of books, readable too).

(36) For people to take to Krishna consciousness, and I want the Krishna consciousness movement to be capable of sheltering them.

(37) To go back to Godhead.

(38) For the movement to grow and become pure.

\* \* \*

You say, " I don't know what  
to write, it's a beginner's way  
each time I start from scratch."

You heard this writer's talk  
and you pretend? Or is it that you  
are now a disciple of Writing and  
American writing teachers?

\* \* \*

Or are you your master's  
spiritual son? Are you both  
writer and disciple? Yes, that's  
it. I write as my  
offering. It's my service.  
I keep digging,  
paring away the layers.  
I want to find something  
and I do. I find worms  
and brass rings and bones and  
more dirt and borrowed  
phrases, tulip bulbs, a picture  
(in your mind) of a good-  
looking woman. I keep

digging.

\* \* \*

Sanskrit verses appear on a lower level, with translations and purports. That's me, too, and down and more dirt, clean earth dirt. Not dirty factory rubble dirt, clean dirt and juicy worms and a mouse skeleton and a condom and a prayer book, piece of car tire, a memory, my own fingers digging, a spade, a pen and paper.

\* \* \*

Down I go, digging, and if someone asks what I am looking for, I'll quip that I'm digging for buried treasure on the eastern side as the astrologer said to do. I am digging for love of God.

\* \* \*

4:30 p.m.

Writing what comes, an old habit with me. Try to concentrate, but easy does it too. The pressure was rising in my head, so Madhu massaged my head, neck, and shoulders and for now I'm clear. Hoping to be clear for tomorrow's performances.

A flurry of mail came and I answered it. Mostly Vyasa-puja homages. It's hard to deal with it with integrity and tenderness only because of the quantity. But I want to try. I read them and reply too quickly, though, so please forgive me for that. The best thing I can do for my disciples is to remain true to them by being true to Srila Prabhupada.

\* \* \*

5:48 p.m.

Birthday kid eats fudge sent by a lady disciple. Now I'm free and that's Krishna's grace. He let me get through the tight squeeze.

Now if I can only do better, but how?

The head creates pressure, then I long for peace and quiet. But a preacher meets pressures. All right, I say to myself, then I'll stay quiet externally but write something valuable for others. What is that? I write my day.

I am a small-fry. A small-fry may also be permitted to enter the spiritual world if he or she is a pure devotee.

Krishna, Krishna.

I answered a small batch of mail, but when Baladeva comes on the 23rd, I think he'll have a bigger batch.

I'd like to write a passionate picture story in a sketchbook where I let go my right-brain stuff, clustering.

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

Birthday:

You come out of your mother connected by the navel. Birthday candles. When you go to school, if the kids find out it's your birthday, they slap your behind hard. Seven years old, give me gifts. I'm eight years old. Give me, give me. Greedy kid. King for the day. He wants the *right* gift.

Birth? Not again! Suffering in the air-tight bag for nine months. No one is free no matter who his mother is. Don't come back.

Whew.

The real birthday is the *janma* of Krishna or Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati or Srila Prabhupada. Birthdays of saints are *lila*.

I'm fifty-seven this year, Bill Clinton is fifty, and next year I'll be fifty-eight. How many more? One of them will be my death-day.

December 1939, I came out with the navel, Mom, dead Dad. Birthday cake on my face.

Give me money. It's my birthday. Give me records, give me toys, give me plastic soldiers, cowboys and Indians on horses. Give me records and toy guns.

December 20, 1996

12:30 a.m.

Hello, you're still breathing in this cool air. Write for effect like Emily Dickinson in "A Fly Buzzed When I Died"? Often can't figure out what she's saying. I want the meaning to be clear and easy for a reader to discern. So a simple fellow says to himself.

What you see in the mirror is the outer man. Where is the inner authentic self? He shivers to see it. Even the outer man is difficult "standing naked in line in a military situation with other men.

Will I have to return to the scenes of my dreams? Are dreams pushing the inner naked man into my consciousness? But, Dream Source, the messages you send are so puzzling. In one scene last night I went onto a playing field where athletes were engaged in a game. I was caught way out in outer field by two men from the sidelines. They were

Brazilian athletes. They grabbed me and beat me around the eyes and forehead. Their blows were not staggering, but they hurt. I grabbed their hands and managed to drag them toward where people could see us. I considered the beating an injustice. I thought I could stop it if I brought it to people's attention. Was this symbolic for my headaches "the way they were beating me? Is the dream source some unconscious part of myself. (Some hint that the dream source is a person (or persons) of power beyond the self. Others say it's we ourselves who send ourselves dreams for our own benefit.)

I want to improve. I'm desperate, or like Thoreau said, living a life of "quiet desperation." I'm quietly desperate because I don't know by what method I'll make radical progress during the remainder of my life. I already have an expert guru, perfect scriptures, disciples, Godbrothers, a spiritual movement, a preaching field, and God in my heart. If *still* I don't cross the ocean of birth and death "I don't know what to say. Where else can I expect help to come from? As I grow older I'm less bold, less capable of making big changes in my way of thinking. Aging makes you complacent and in want of peace and quiet to heal your wounds and nurse your aching body. They say we should grow old gracefully. Does that mean seeking a niche in ISKCON? Is that what it means?

\* \* \*

4 a.m.

I came out of the bathroom at 3:30 a.m. and Madhu said "Happy Birthday" with a little laugh. I responded by telling him that Srila Prabhupada was speaking against Darwin and using such strong arguments. Whatever scientists claim as the origin of life, Prabhupada replies, "Where did the ocean [or the explosion] come from?"

"It was an accident."

"There is no such thing as accident. Everything has a cause."

I read a news item that the Pope says the Church now accepts Darwin's theory. It is more than a theory, the Pope said, and recent findings lead us to accept it. They can no longer take the Bible as literal.

Sipping tea.

"Would you like a sweetener in it?"

"Yes, a little, thanks."

Then to poetry. I have no poetic heights to scale. I have only ten minutes to spare for this, then I must get back to chanting *hari-nama* on my beads. Holding up so I'll be able to go out and sit in the chair my disciples have decorated for me.

It's the chair I use for chanting *japa*. They will cover it in saffron, but I told them not to use a lot of pins or stiff lumpy flowers because I have to sit on it. During the homages I may want to rest my head back for a little respite and check how I am doing.

Yes, pace yourself and get through this day.

Heaney wrote a poem about an imaginary land of conscience. He made it up. I don't make it up. The promised land is Krishnaloka. It exists and it's described in Vedic literature. As for the transformed material world and what it would be like, it would be filled with chanting and dancing, *varnasrama-dharma* would be intact, there would be many *brahmanas* and real *ksatriyas*, temples, farming, cow protection "it would be a bit of Vaikuntha on earth. Krishna would be adored and openly served, and everything

would be in tune with the wishes of the *acaryas*. The world would be safe "few thieves, and definitely no big rascals in charge. I can't imagine it actually taking place this Kali-yuga, but we have historical evidence of this in times past when Yudhisthira and others reigned.

"Are they right or are we right?"

"We are right," a disciple said, "the *Vedas*."

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

O Prabhupada, you are my father. Jaya Gaurasundara dasa's father died recently. He said he was not so attached to him, but he wishes his soul well. He's taking a few days off from work. Today they are having a party, a social-spiritual gathering for the disciples of Satsvarupa Maharaja, in the Baltimore area. It will include a feast and readings at Jaya Gaurasundara's house.

I am trying to get beyond pausing for the right word. I go barreling past that to whatever comes "the first frost, the nipple host, the crotchety . . . the, "Yes, I'm from New York" "the weird attachments. Pick up what others say. One disciple said that our material attachments lead us down many paths, some of which *seem* spiritual. Until we attain pure love of God, however, we may not find the right path. He promises to keep on practicing. He asks me to excuse him since he admits he cannot fully accept that I am not an ordinary man. What can I say? Shall I read his statement to others as exemplary or something to preach against? Did he hit the nail on the head? He put the blame on himself, says he has many doubts in the philosophy, but doesn't show them to others. Figures this is all because he is not a pure devotee. The fact remains he doubts his guru and thinks he may be an ordinary man. We say, "No, he is the representative of Krishna." He is ordinary in one sense, in a *number* of senses with his ordinary body, ordinary life history before Krishna consciousness, and you could even say his ordinary service to Srila Prabhupada. He's got an ordinary (mad, uncontrolled) mind. But he's also extra-ordinary. He met Srila Prabhupada in 1966 and is still following, he's not falling down, he's preaching in *parampara*. Whatever he is, he has his spiritual master's mercy.

Out of time. Have to keep hale for today's performance. This was just to say hello on my birthday. Maybe someday in the future I may be able to write beautiful sonnets to Lord Krishna or something exquisite. Or maybe I will always ramble on . . . In either case, I try to write every day to reach, squeaking for eloquence.

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

December 21, 1996

Midnight

Continuing the authentic search.

I gave out a lot yesterday in talks to disciples. Spoke of lifelong commitment to them and to maintaining a good personal example so that I can serve as guru. Heard their praises of me. Gave them my writing mind, writing life, as I read for almost two hours from my writings. Does that deplete me? It shouldn't. Still, I want to return now to my simple life and putting my thoughts down on paper. Yesterday I expressed my faith in and dedication to writing. One passage stated that whatever I hear in the world I relate back to my metaphor for the writing life. I heard last night that ISKCON is threatened by an anti-cult inspired government investigation in several European countries. I worry about it as I fell asleep, but I still choose to write personally, to make this my contribution to helping an over-burdened ISKCON.

\* \* \*

3:45 a.m.

"Follow the *mahajanas*!" Srila Prabhupada says in a Vrndavana lecture. That doesn't mean you become a puppet. "Follow" means you use your brains, your life, and your imagination to visualize Krishna from what you know. When Krishna stood wearing a golden garment, holding a flower, the wives of the yajnic *brahmanas* embraced Him in their minds. Can you picture it? Are you permitted to? You are not a dull stone.

Alas, then your attention slips and the train of thought moves past Krishna into something else, falling into memories. Suddenly I am thinking of a letter I received from a disciple whose guru has given up his duties. She can't believe it because he told her their relationship was eternal. She wants to go on believing that. Why is she writing to me? I haven't read the letter closely enough yet to understand her mind.

Yesterday still lingers too "the room full of devotees reading homages. I tried to relax in the chair as soon as I felt the first sign of a headache. I learned that technique from bio-feedback tapes. Maybe it helped, but the main relief came after the ceremony when I was allowed to go back to my room and use the shower for hot and cold therapy, then get into bed. Madhu took care of Prabhupada so I could rest. Finally, I slept, and by Krishna's grace the pain went down by lunch time.

Is it enough to say what happened? If more is permitted, what should I add? Should I embellish? They say every good storyteller departs from the truth.

Krishna, Krishna. At Krishna-Balarama Mandira, Srila Prabhupada says that Prahlada was a *maha-bhagavata* and that we could become one too, although it's unlikely we would. We should at least lift ourselves up from the *kanistha* stage, though, and become *madhyama-adhikaris*. Prahlada Maharaja was a *maha-bhagavata* even when he was in the womb of his mother.

Hare Krishna.

\* \* \*

December 22, 1996

12:30 midnight

Last night while lying in bed, I thought to quit the *Every Day, Just Write* title and series and start something new on January 1st. After all, it's a new year. Another trip to India. It deserves a fresh start.

It may be partly an illusion to think I can do something new at this stage. I don't claim that anything I write is completely different from anything I've ever written before, but I want to feel as free as possible. I want to write a unique combination of something for me and something for Krishna conscious readers.

It's a paradox, so it's no wonder that I'm puzzled by it. I need to do whatever will help me throw off inner straitjackets.

\* \* \*

8:33 a.m.

Bala's coming a day late, 24th. Didn't feel like talking with M. at our usual time this morning. He was late. I had topics like (1) my writing "I can tell you about it, not now but at the right time; (2) the writing I did in 1993 in Puri.

Went to sleep in dark "woke with first smudge of red on horizon over a calm, cold lake. Frost on the ground.

When is a journal not a journal but a free-writing practice? When am I on my own and following my master with no guilt? What would you like to read later in your own books? There is no narrator, my friend, but musings and moving of days. Now last days of the year slide away. I'll be traveling on January 1st. Changes liable to happen, as in Bala's delay. I could be delayed anywhere along the line "or worse. May the hand move off the line into loops and jots and struts of zigzag lightning and loop and jut and sketch "suddenly another man walking with a creature and no *tilaka*.

Where's the Krishna conscious tag? Aren't we advised to "look for the Union label?" Well, where's the Krishna conscious label? At least write out the holy name to keep away the Yamadutas. Krishna Caitanya Prabhu Nityananda.

\* \* \*

Things to accomplish next year:

(1) Travel to India "Jagannatha Puri and Vrndavana "and while there read and talk philosophy.

(2) Go on writing all year if that's what Krishna wants.

(3) Accomplish more surrender "open myself to what Krishna wants me to do.

(4) Accomplish steadiness in health. It's not up to me what happens, so how can I speak of an expected accomplishment? I can only say, "If Krishna desires." Plan to go to the Caribbean, to speak there, and to not lose hope.

(5) To remain celibate; follow strict *sannyasa* vows.

(6) To remain true to disciples.

(7) Follow in ISKCON with good conscience.

(8) Be present, write, and urge them to go on publishing.

(9) read better.

\* \* \*

Talk to me so I don't go batty in solitude. Give me news, good news or light news or say something personal.

He said, "You can do the *nirjana-bhajana* stage now. Srila Prabhupada has written it in his Fourth Canto. Your writings can go out to people." Yeah, yeah.

\* \* \*

Things I never mourned:

- (1) My father's innocence, his ignorance.
- (2) Death of love in that family. Did it ever exist?
- (3) Mourn your master's passing away "not enough."
- (4) The passing away of ISKCON's innocence and my own enthusiasm in those days when I cared little about myself.
- (5) That I missed the chance to serve him as servant up until the end. I couldn't.
- (6) The gone.
- (7) The dead.

Hare Krishna, I *mourn*. I do. Am I sorry I never loved a woman? A temple? Anyone? God "I mourn that thirty years have passed and I haven't attained *ruci* for *nama* or for hearing *sastra*(*satam prasangan mama virya-samvido*).

\* \* \*

Blessings I forgot to count:

- (1) I didn't forget to thank my Gurudeva for taking me as *Sisya*. But say it at least three times a day.
- (2) Blessing that I came to him and escaped death, escaped falldown, although I was a candidate for that.
- (3) Thank you for getting me free of *karmi* family and devotee wife and now from management.
- (4) I can write, am not broken up yet. Thank you for sending people to publish and edit and distribute what I write.
- (5) I thank you for sparing my life.
- (6) I thank You in advance for considering my service and when I go, for transferring me in the way that You think best to further my progress.
- (7) Thanks that I'm not bitter.
- (8) Thank You for peace and so far, thank You for reducing my suffering to a token of karmic sins.

\* \* \*

Things that really bother me:

- (1) People who make loud noises.
- (2) People who make me wait.
- (3) red tape holding up permission for us to go forward with our plans.

- (4) Late meals.
- 5) Mosquitoes.
- (6) Blasphemers.
- (7) Atheists and their propaganda.
- (8) Oh, my own anger sometimes, but I'll keep trying to control it.

\* \* \*

### Affirmations

Why do I want to continue this series under the title *Every Day, Just Write*? Because it feels right. It's comfortable. I like the idea of an "opus." But not something artificial. I like an opus to be authentic, something based on what I actually do each day rather than something I create or imagine that I do. I want nothing more or less than that. I like the lack of structure. That is, the freedom to write through intense periods of more structured work, then to naturally return to the less intense. I like it that there's no loss in doing so, and that I don't have to go through the big shift of quitting one work and starting another.

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

4 p.m.

Winter full moon bright rising over the island of Inis rath. The sky is pale blue with a faint rosiness down toward the horizon. A jet trail passed in front of the moon's face, but now the moon has risen above it. Mr. Moon has an O mouth and deep cavernous eyes, reflecting my headache. Beam back to me, Mr. Moon, from far away. You are indeed mysterious, and just a fragment of Krishna's glories.

December 23, 1996

12:10, midnight

I want to become deeply appreciative of what Srila Prabhupada gave us "in the form in which he gave it. I may sometimes specialize by reading *Bhagavatam* philosophy in Jiva Gosvami's *Sat Sandarbha*, but I much more prefer to stay with Prabhupada's books. By reading "daily reading.

The fact that Srila Prabhupada writes basic philosophy implies that we should preach it to newcomers. It also implies that basic *Srimad-Bhagavatam* philosophy is nourishing and necessary for us to hear again and again. It also implies that we will see things in deeper ways as we continue to study and think over what he has given.

As for my writing, I can simply trust in the process and where it is leading me. It's similar to Srila Prabhupada's books in that it repeats the same thing and it sticks to basics. But if I stay with it, it will reveal newer and deeper lights. It will also automatically lead to new and varied kinds of expressions and publishable works. This appears to be my particular form of discipline or craft: I write as much as possible. As I do, the process churns up varied shapes and products. I accept the theory that the diligent lab scientist will be the most likely candidate to hit on a brilliant discovery. The daily

work I do, keenly and sometimes agonizingly, leads to discoveries of serendipity and synchronicity. That is, when you're in the right place at the right time, and when you are attuned to your craft by regular practice, the "universe" passes through you as you write. With this in mind, I'll look for what I can at Jagannatha Puri, and I won't fake it.

\* \* \*

Yesterday I heard Sadaputa explaining his current "three-pronged attack" on material science. He's trying to develop a presentation for showing Vedic astronomy in U.S. planetariums. People are interested in archeo-astronomy, the astronomical views of ancient cultures. There's also an interest in finding evidence for a pan-world culture to support unity in today's communally violent world. Sadaputa Prabhu will also take the opportunity to present Vedic astronomy and *Srimad-Bhagavatam* not as mythology but as an explanation of higher dimensional reality.

Hearing this prompted me to ask myself, "What is my three-pronged attack? Am I working on a way to win with my cultural weapons? Am I preparing a literature to conquer the American hearts and minds?" It appears I am not as keenly focused as Sadaputa Prabhu as he scouts out the enemy and tries to penetrate ignorance and prejudice. I admire his meditation and his outreach.

By contrast I seem to write only for my own purification. An inner critic might say I'm just mooling around in my diary. That means that at best my writing is not a cultural weapon but a personal tool to help me cope with the day.

So speaks the inner critic. I say I want to make art. I'm not calculating what will work. I don't have the novelist's insidious cleverness to keep the reader within a world of imagination. My gamble (or tactic) is that the authentic will win out. I simply search for that. Gold will sell. My whole job is to write for truth.

\* \* \*

Read in *Krishna* book how some of the *gopis* were conditioned souls enjoying with Krishna while He was here performing His *lila*. They associated with *nitya-siddha gopis*. When Krishna played His flute calling the *gopis* for the *rasa* dance, these not-completely-liberated *gopis* were unable to escape from their houses. Yogamaya arranged that they were prevented by their husbands or brothers. In the subsequent state of separation they meditated on Krishna, became the greatest *yogis*, and gave up their remaining material desires (their traces of material impiety or piety). "Their severely painful yearnings caused by their not being able to see Krishna freed them from all sinful reactions, and their ecstasy of transcendental love for Krishna in His absence ended all their reactions to material pious activities."

Sukadeva Gosvami then explains to Maharaja Pariksit that any attraction to Krishna, even out of fear or anger or lust, will grant freedom from material contamination and deliver liberation. Srila Prabhupada then takes the opportunity to praise preachers who risk their lives to spread Krishna consciousness. They are very, very dear to Krishna. If Krishna awards salvation even to His enemies, we can just imagine the good fortune of those who preach Krishna consciousness.

On a morning walk in Mayapur I heard Srila Prabhupada talking with Hrdayananda Maharaja, Bhavananda Maharaja, Tamal Krishna Maharaja, and others who spoke, as well as those who didn't speak up to be identified and remembered on tape. One after another the devotees were telling stories of the effectiveness of Krishna consciousness. Sudama Maharaja told how the police came to the temple every day in answer to *mangala-arati* noise complaints, but they told the devotees they actually liked them and asked for *prasadam*. Hari Sauri told how the City Council in Melbourne spent \$10,000 dollars in a case against them. The devotees decided not to contest it, but the judge threw it out of court. Hrdayananda Maharaja told how the police, a judge, and the guests in Caracas were favorable to Prabhupada in various ways. It was pleasing to hear the disciples telling these stories to their spiritual master. I liked them for this. Srila Prabhupada heard it and was pleased, praising how Krishna consciousness spreads and how although his men meet obstacles, they always go on. He said a preacher is very, very dear to Krishna and that we should all preach. That is the definition of a *madhyama-adhikari*. Prabhupada also warned that we cannot imitate the perfect vision of the *paramahamsa* and we should never think we are already perfect. A tiny devotee should not think he is in complete control of his senses or that he does not need to chant his sixteen rounds. It was a good warning.

\* \* \*

Starting to turn in the mind toward travel to India. Picking out which sketchbook to bring. Shall it be the 5 1/2"x 8" or the 6" x 9". I consider the merits of each one. Hard to decide. But I can't take both. We are going as light as possible. They tried to buy me the usual portable battery-run typewriter in America, but typewriters are harder to get these days. Now there are only word processors and computers. I belong to a former age. Go back even further then, to the pen and paper. Progress can't stop me.

\* \* \*

Baladeva is due to arrive tomorrow, and the next day is Christmas. There'll be entertainment at the temple. Time is running out for this volume. At least I've chosen the subtitle and I have declared with hope that I will keep going with this banner into the new year. "O say can you see . . . the star spangled banner still flying." *Every Day, Just Write* is still in the air, lit up by the bombs and rockets of my doubts and the attacks of self-critics "Oe'r the land of the free and the home of the brave."

Krishna, Krishna, Krishna. We now have tickets for the superficial carriage of these bodies to India. Of course, the soul will also fly. I am going to Nilacala to find Krishna consciousness in a place of Indian tourism, crummy hotels, the mixture of sense gratification and the town of prejudiced *pandas* and so-called *brahmanas*, real *brahmanas* too who worship Lord Jagannatha. Nobody really seems to love anyone there "such party spirit "but they tolerate us and we tolerate them. That's the nature of this world.

\* \* \*

Now I am alone with my master. He doesn't want to hear that I walked out to a shed and it is pleasant, just a little cold, and that my ankle sometimes aches. He already knows I get headaches almost every day. He knows what things I say that are untrue, and he knows I try to hide. Yes, I try to hide. But I can't hide from you, O master, so I always try to come out from hiding to tell you the truth.

It's just a few days before Christmas, Srila Prabhupada. The *sankirtana* results are rolling in over the computers, letting us know who is besting whom. All those newcomers and veterans distributing books, so many dollars liberated for Krishna's service.

Here I am at your knee, sometimes dreaming of you and writing these pages. These are the things I say to those coming to Krishna consciousness since your disappearance. They come to hear your teachings, and although they can get them directly from your books, some of them also want to see someone who has been following since he heard them from you and persisting despite America, the end of the century, old age, and all other bejabbers and sentiment.

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

8:43 a.m.

Too dark to read but soon I will. Krishna speaking in fourth chapter when Arjuna asks Him how could He have spoken millions of years ago to the sun-god? Thank God we can receive this message today. This is *adbhuta*, most wonderful. Sanjaya says his hairs stand on end and he thrills at every moment when he recalls Krishna's dialogue with Arjuna. Is this not better than any mundane thriller?

\* \* \*

I asked Madhu to fix the tape that was chewed up in the machine yesterday. He didn't get back to me yet. I'll have to ask him for it.

Pink and white sky will lighten at any moment unless the clouds, already massive and blue-gray, mount a heavier campaign to darken this day. Manu's car is here. He's back, I think, from a weekend of book distribution in Dublin. O Hare Krishna, O Hare Krishna, I'm happy to begin that first round by candlelight. Joy you could say, that I am able to perform this most direct *yajna* to contact God. Surrender to Him by saying His names quickly as Srila Prabhupada also says them on the *japa* tape.

\* \* \*

Six pence two pence  
a hen will do "let  
the creatures run free  
and don't eat them at your  
Christmas feast. For  
Christ was born not to

kill humankind or  
its creatures but to save  
us from sin.

\* \* \*

3:30 p.m.

Walking out to the shed, a thought passed through my mind: what if I could have anything I wanted? I turned over a few options and settled for taste for the holy names. I desire pure devotion to Krishna.

\* \* \*

[artwork, Vol. 3, p. ? of original]

\* \* \*

Then it occurred to me that I was *actually* being offered such a benediction right now. I stuck my walking cane into the mud, felt the cold air, and walked on toward my destination "the little orange shed by the water's edge.

Opening the cold *Bhagavad-gita* I felt my heart and mind warmed. I turned to the purport of 4.11: "But Krishna is fully realized only by His pure devotees. Consequently, Krishna is the object of everyone's realization, and thus anyone and everyone is satisfied according to one's desire to have Him."

December 24, 1996  
Midnight  
The Tenth Canto  
Tenth Canto is all Krishna  
Each chapter is also Him so  
No way to avoid it.  
To read it forever is fine.  
However, you should also  
Choose to read other cantos  
As your master taught.  
Now do it freely and pray  
To render service to the best book  
Over all considerations.

\* \* \*

For three days in a row I had to close down my activities in the afternoon and take rest for the night by 5 or 6 p.m. due to headaches. It makes me want to work as best I can in the morning before it hits. Today Baladeva should arrive around lunch time with two weeks of mail and ready for me to work with him for two hours a day on a memory

project. This signals the breakup of having my own time at Geaglum and the steady, quiet flow of writing and reading I have enjoyed here, the solitude. In a week we leave for England and India.

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

### Prayers

Prayers are taught by Christian saints  
Rupa Gosvami prays in Vrndavana  
and I would like to pray  
yes, but need the desire to love or  
else what is my cry, my prayer?  
"Give me weather? Give me happiness?"

\* \* \*

### Japa Time

*Japa* time, sacred  
inattentive mind I ask you  
please attend to the holy names.

\* \* \*

Time for chanting well spent

I'm a fool  
bad habits but  
even I can be saved.  
O holy name  
sprinkle  
Your mercy upon me.

\* \* \*

### Headaches #1

Headaches come when they like  
each one in its own time  
to stop me from work.  
Don't you know it's silly to write  
and you shouldn't try to make a  
cute poem fit into a concept?  
"Headaches" is a subject but  
each poem

should go its own way.

\* \* \*

### Headaches #2

How the headache develops:  
each one new, right side, diffuse,  
spoil my fun but  
don't stop me from thinking of Krishna.

\* \* \*

Aches, aches "surrender you're  
not lord now, headaches  
your lot  
each one  
sent by the Supreme to  
teach me  
what I forgot.

\* \* \*

Search for the Authentic Self  
Authentic self I seek  
under the moss, under law.  
Teach me who I am through writing "it  
haunts me to know so I can serve  
the ends that justify the means.  
No, no, Nanette, I don't  
teach you what I don't know.  
Is it authentic to  
carp and cut and choose and pick?

\* \* \*

See? It makes no sense to ask  
each line is independent "  
in authentic poem self,  
forget the meaning and just flow.

\* \* \*

Temple  
Temple is haven, hard work  
each moment austere,  
together

mostly for young devotees, they say.  
Parents are not allowed mostly  
instead it's the strain and the surety  
every day you're in His house.

\* \* \*

### Keeping Vows

Vows I made it's a wonder  
all these years I still follow  
why I do it is my decision  
surely it's His mercy on me.

\* \* \*

### A Dream: Visiting myself in the hospital bed

I went to the hospital and saw myself lying on a bed. I began to talk to myself. A doctor entered and I thought he would notice that I was identical with the man on the bed, but he didn't even look at me. He treated a boil on my arm. While I was sitting there, a few sailors came in. It turned out that I was a sailor and they were buddies of mine coming to see how I was. I sat and listened to the sailors talk.

\* \* \*

I want to think more about that dream where I was talking to myself lying on a hospital bed. Obviously, I wanted to talk with myself about something. On re-entering the dream, I ask the self who is lying on the bed, "What do you really want? Do you want sex?"

"No," he says. "I don't want sex."

"Good. What do you want then? Do you want to be Krishna conscious? Would you like me to get you out of the hospital?"

"I can't get out of the hospital because I have a problem."

"You mean the hospital is a symbol for being in the material world?"

"Yeah, you could say that."

I'd like to help him to get him out of the hospital, but he seems entangled, as if he's the property of the doctors. The coarse Navy fellows aren't helping much either.

No solution. This man wasn't very communicative; I had to do most of the talking.

\* \* \*

sankirtana Devotees  
*sankirtana* devotees are the book  
distributors  
and other kinds of preachers  
doesn't matter *how* they preach  
as long as they sing for

Krishna together and work  
in harmony.

\* \* \*

Lord Caitanya's devotees move in  
ecstasy and rhythm  
veering off into the blue I  
mean the skies of Mayapur.  
Gone are material troubles  
the *sankirtana* devotees are free  
and I bow down  
to them, ask their forgiveness  
for not loving as I should.

\* \* \*

Memories  
Memories come, some of when  
I was in *maya*.  
Does every memory have to be  
authorized? But they  
come and go, I  
choose them or  
they choose me.  
Which memory will give  
me pause and which  
will I consecrate  
by writing it down  
preaching to it, letting it  
Reach out to me?  
I am what I was and  
Remember when I cried "  
those good days.

\* \* \*

8:40 a.m.

I'm enjoying the rush of "alpha poems" while they last. An "alpha poem" is when you choose a phrase and then begin each line with a letter from that phrase in order. I know they're not great poetry, but they induce me to speak in a more Krishna conscious way.

Black Kerry cows grouped by shed "four of them. Is Draupadi among them? Maybe not, because as I walked down here, none of them bellowed, although they watched me curiously. Now we're in separate worlds again.

Heavy gray blanket clouds, but way up toward the top of the sky I see light blue. Only gradually is it becoming light enough for me to read.

\* \* \*

### Reading Books

Reading books, singing brooks  
each day less from my total.  
I'd like to see you with your  
nose in the scripture and  
damn it, awake and alert.  
And I want to be a fellow that  
writes what he reads.

\* \* \*

'Neath the oak the Swami stood  
and spoke  
no garland but all  
praise to him now.  
Beware the stinking body  
and read his books.  
O Maya, don't stop me:  
Krishna's giving *darSana*  
and I wanna go Home.

\* \* \*

### Vrndavana #1

Vraja, ramana finds His pleasure there.  
Extraordinary donkeys, no ordinary monkeys  
no plain folks,  
and not a place to go if you want to make money.  
I have no right to  
stay there, and my master tells me to  
"Keep moving" "  
preach in ISKCON.

\* \* \*

### Vrndavana #2

Vrndavana, Vraja, Vrnda,  
VrndavaneSvari.  
O Vrndavana  
be kind and let me stay at least  
nineteen days  
writing like a child  
in your lap,  
holding twigs from the *tulasi*,

dust on my head,  
writing day and night  
of Your glories.

\* \* \*

As I sit reading *Bhagavad-gita*, one of the cows is giving herself a good rub-down by scraping her body against the side of the shed. Yes, it's Draupadi, who's now bellowing and looking in my window.

Reading, reading, a little at a time. We are spirits and Krishna is the Supreme spirit. If you think you are apart from Krishna, that's the illusion of the material identity. The bona fide spiritual master teaches us that we are part and parcel of the Supreme Person, Krishna. Pink light through the white clouds, "indirect lighting." The blue heavy clouds pile in the sky. The fresh rain cloud is Krishna's hue.

\* \* \*

Writing, Writing  
Writing is hard work and tends to  
Ride off the Krishna conscious track.  
Instead I advise you to enter  
the truth of scripture.  
I accept it on faith, with trust in Vyasa  
and the self-effulgent knowledge.  
How is that? I can't completely know.  
Go on writing and discover what you can.

\* \* \*

Writing leads nowhere some-  
times, but I'm indifferent to that now  
and ride the swell waves as they come,  
grateful.

\* \* \*

Where is this uphill leading?  
I don't always know.  
To paradise? A peat bog?  
A cottage for more writing? To  
death?

\* \* \*

In trance, in blear, in simple  
humble prose we know

that nowhere "there's no such place in God's kingdom.

\* \* \*

2:20 p.m.

Christmas Eve afternoon. Nice lunch, no meat or alcohol or smokes or sex-life. Listening to Srila Prabhupada on morning walk tell how his father gave *ganja* to "*sadhus*," but Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura was very strict about "no intoxication."

Nice day so far for me "clear in head. Baladeva landed in Belfast with three or four big suitcases. KK's car is too small to carry them, so they're putting him on a bus. Sounds like Santa Claus is coming. Madhu and Aniruddha rehearsing Irish songs for tomorrow's show. rehearse isn't the word "they're putting it together from scratch in one meeting.

So mate, it is nice to have a soul mate. It is most fortunate to have taken the human form of life after wandering in so many lower species. *Uttistha* "get up! Don't sleep! Use this form of life for enlightenment in Krishna consciousness. Don't come back to this material world.

Peace on earth to men of goodwill.

December 25, 1996

Christmas morning, 3:30 a.m.

Christmas Stanzas

1

Tea-lights they are called "little white candles  
each burning on the altar as I chant  
and pray and mind-wander.  
and count the quota.

Christmas Day in Geaglum.

We'll sing and dance and a play  
will be put on by devotees before  
Radha-Govinda.

\* \* \*

2

When the body is dead  
the soul lives on.

Vee go the ducks flying.  
each keeps itself up in the air  
and the master leads  
the way.

Even when dead the soul

holds its head and goes  
flying under order to  
its destination on His will.  
You choose and He  
sends you. Dead ain't dead.

\* \* \*

May you have a merry one  
a holiday as you see on  
Recent morns the swans glide  
smoothly and it's warm "no snow "  
"Now peace be w' you"  
and may everyone accept *bhakti-yoga*,  
as blessed by Prahlada.

\* \* \*

2:45 p.m.

Waiting. Let my head pressure not build up. It's already up, but tolerable. Perhaps it will diffuse. One letter kept me awake last night. The devotee said that I don't remind him of Prabhupada. My Godbrothers, he said, are preaching all over the world, "fighting hard in ISKCON for ISKCON." I admit it hurt me. I responded with my feelings and felt some release from them.

Waiting. There will be a play and some music. Now less than a week left in the year and in my peaceful Geaglum stay.

December 26, 1996

12:35 a.m.

Last night after the show at the temple, Bala rowed us across to Geaglum. We could see by the light on in Manu's house "its beam was like a lighthouse beam across the water. We joked about capping the night with rum cake (I suggested an Aum cake instead) and I gave Baladeva and Madhu milk sweets and apple juice and had some myself. My head pressure had been bothersome but tolerable during the Nrsimha skit and the concert that followed, but I'm all right now.

9:50 a.m.

Day after Christmas. Lay down your burden.

Not yet.

Then carry your Cross.

Free-write your way home to America. Pick up your travel pen from January 1st on. And when you're afraid, remember Lord Hari's names. Don't be afraid: no one can hurt you, not even with words. You are protected by your spiritual master, although you still have a long way to go.

\* \* \*

### Day After Christmas

Day after Christmas "are we in  
a sorry state? No, we are with Krishna  
conscious society and on our own too.  
Girls singing "Krishna Carols"  
last night ""no false joy" they  
said.

I liked that. Yes, we are sober,  
don't fake it, we have controlled senses and  
for gravity's sake we don't hang  
*so* loose

although cider and apples and sweets were  
given out by me to men  
from my hallway.

Each day left in calendar is to  
pick up your old kit bag  
Remember Lord Hari  
and go.

\* \* \*

Christmas "the meaning  
is holy "and we want holy  
*madhyama* tasks. Mine is to  
write and always respond. To  
chant the holy name.

\* \* \*

### Spare Me Lord

Spare me Lord, I pray but know  
peace has got to be earned or  
Rather it's up to You, inexplicable  
how You  
are handling each one of us.  
Rama too, Your brother, smiles.  
Each *bhakta* and *bhaktin* in Goloka  
must know by Yogamaya  
that You are their loved one.  
Each time I say it I make gains "  
Lord, spare me  
O Lord, I pray as aches visit  
me. Let me realize  
divine life is Your service and  
this body is  
not good

except for serving You.

\* \* \*

4 p.m.

In the foreword to *Court of Memory*, James McConkey tells how one night he "underwent a change so radical that it transformed my apprehension both of the world and of valid modes for writing about people." He was sitting in his basement study feeling anxiety about the Cold War going on at that time between the Soviet Union and the United States. As a writer, he felt dissatisfied with a story he had just written because "what did *that* story have to do with my present feelings? What did it have to say about a society which might destroy itself with nuclear missiles very soon?" Out of this anxiety, McConkey suddenly felt the value of simple things perceived in the moment "the snow-covered ground outside his house where he saw a bird's nest in a tree, and right beside him in his study, the moist nose of his German Shepherd. "The story I had written was unsatisfactory because it was 'made up,' a fiction, one devoid of the sacredness I saw everywhere about me. The only way open to me to communicate the strength of my feelings was through myself "through my intimate experiences, through memory, and personal observation."

McConkey began to write autobiographically at that moment, but instead of writing about things immediately at hand, such as the bird's nest or his dog's nose, he turned to a memory of a "botched up night stand I had built as a child for my mother." He says, "In re-reading that account, I realize that I was (as I still am) held by the old truths of literature, for my words turn into a statement of the momentary victory of the imagination not only over mortality but over those aspects of the real world I had wanted to celebrate. Whatever my wish I had not escaped fiction; I had simply made myself the central character of a story, finding in my own experiences and dreams a greater authenticity than I could in those of any character I might invent." That was the beginning of his writing several volumes of autobiography.

\* \* \*

I like what he says about writing of real life and its familiar objects and perceptions as being more true to the sacredness of existence than what is possible in fiction. It's also interesting, however, that even when a writer decides to speak his own unvarnished truth, he still turns to an active imagination with an inevitable persona, a form or selection that might even be called fictional. I find I am doing that in an attempt to make an artistic form of presenting Krishna consciousness. I write because of the personal satisfaction and the relief I get from it, and I write as a way to cope with life. I also write because I'm driven to do it. Fortunately, all these motives are dovetailed in presenting Krishna consciousness.

December 27, 1996

11:20 a.m.

I've run out of time to write this volume and I would like to explain why. The main factor is that Baladeva is here for a week and we're working on a project. So far I've only been able to work once a day with Baladeva because of my headaches, but now I've decided that even if I'm up all day, I'll meet with him twice. Those are the same times I would be out in the shed, from 8:30 - 9:30 and from 3 - 4 in the afternoon.

\* \* \*

(A letter to a friend, written in the mind):

Dear Prabhu, you and I have been discussing the technical differences between conditional devotional service and pure devotional service. You understand it more analytically than I do. You describe an early stage of devotional service where you offer the fruits. That is not pure devotion. You discuss another stage where you're detached from the fruits and do your work dutifully, but it's not yet spontaneous. You describe a stage of pure devotion, which involves emphasis on *Sravanam kirtanam*, but also doing only what Krishna wants you to do "even beyond one's psychophysical nature. What I want to express to you as a friend is a line of argument I'm compelled to take in answer to this request that you are making on Krishna's behalf that I do only what Krishna wants me to do if I want to attain pure devotion.

By way of replying I want to first tell you something I read years ago in Franz Kafka's diaries. He said something about the nature of Judaism. Although Kafka was not a religious man in the ordinary sense, in this one diary entry he spoke in praise of Judaism and said, "Now there's a real religion. It accepts the whole man." I don't know exactly what he was thinking, but it struck me. I thought in contrast of a stereotype that is given of renounced Christianity, which is that one surrenders in spirit and negatively renounces the flesh "perhaps Kafka was praising Judaism as one that accepts the human man in all his dimensions.

I like to think this is what I'm doing in my own Krishna consciousness. Perhaps when I was younger and *appeared* to be more surrendered, I was partly pursuing that renounced version where one suppresses certain "impure" drives one has (and I don't mean sinful activities but personal natures) and does just what Krishna wants, according to the spiritual master's order. It appears that one is on the higher platform of devotional service, but actually, the "whole man" has not been eliminated; neither has he been fully engaged in Krishna's service.

I think now that I'm allowing myself to dovetail my creative nature in Krishna's service I am more surrendered than when I was completely submerging those desires. I know there's a thin line between self-indulgence and offering something to Krishna, but I try again and again to be honest about this, and the best I can come up with is that this is my surrendered offering to Krishna. In other words, it's not a matter of theological discussion but existential reality. The theoretical discussion can go on as perfect talks from the *vyasasana*, or talks between you and I about what Krishna is saying in the *Bhagavad-gita*. If I say I now know what pure devotion is: to do only what Krishna wants, then I have to ask, how do I follow it up? How do I know what Krishna wants? How do I attain it?

I don't really know what Krishna wants in my very specific, tiny life. I have to offer Him the best I can in terms of what I think He wants. Furthermore, even if I were to make a guess and say that Krishna doesn't want me to be, say, a writer, I wouldn't know for sure that that's what He wants, and how could I give it up?

I don't want to define myself on a lower rung of devotional service, but neither can I artificially do something beyond my realization. So I try to surrender fully (*atma-nivedanam*) in the sense of the impression I got from Kafka's line. I want to give the whole man and not just a renounced version of myself to Krishna. I want to give Him what I love. I want to also let it serve energetically in a preaching way to show others how they can give their whole selves to Krishna.

Here the words "whole selves" do not mean pure self; it means giving all aspects of our selves as we know them according to our conditional nature. Giving our money, giving our talents, and so on. Giving all the things we have. I expanded on this image while writing *Churning the Milk Ocean*. There I said that when I write I churn up things that are sometimes poison and sometimes nectar. We reject the poison and don't offer it to Krishna, but we can't deny that it gets churned up in the process.

I am writing this to you personally. I wouldn't advocate it at an ISKCON forum for social living or as support for Western psychology "inviting devotees to do their own thing for Krishna. I have to admit it's what I'm doing. I do restrict myself from expanding on inner desires I may have. But I'm going ahead as fully as possible to offer Krishna my nature, to do the best I can to respond to the perfection that Krishna desires "that we act only to please Him.

It may sound strange to say I don't know what Krishna really wants, so I have to agonize over it on my own. What do you think? Do you think you know in vital aspects "and that other devotees in ISKCON know in vital aspects "exactly what Krishna wants from them? rather, isn't this part of our free-will to struggle with this?

\* \* \*

6 p.m., Night Notes  
Night notes now it's running  
into very last days but I get  
a next life  
go to Vrndavana, go to Nilacala,  
go to pilgrimage chant and wait.  
Lord Hari will take away and  
give you "  
take away your dearmost  
idea maybe and teach you  
how to please Him.

\* \* \*

"No, not that!  
Oh, don't ask me to give up  
being a retired writer."

To please the Lord you must  
do whatever He wants  
so learn it,  
escape not,  
"Syamasundara rules this  
life" "let it be said of me.

\* \* \*

A dog barks and December 27 is gone. The end rushes in on us. Fog almost all day "I could hear men shouting on the lake but saw nothing. Finally the sun cleared it all and the afternoon brightened.

I spoke with Baladeva and told a story-length memoir of my days as a wallflower at high school dances. Now I'm tired and I'm finding it hard to write anything here at length. Telegraph messages only.

Alas, alack, am I going to ask for a sweater even when I don't need one? I already have a good warm scarf, a sweatshirt, and a coat. What more do I need?

No, I could use a warmer sweater.

All right, we won't let you freeze.

Well, I can live without it. I hate to take something I don't need because I'll have to pay for it later, right?

And what is this claim that you don't know what He wants of you?

I mean, as far as I can see He is pleased that I'm writing. He wants me to do this. But he wants much more too. I don't think He's *not* telling me, but what I'm hearing is "Go on writing." But how can I say I'm absolutely sure that's what I'm hearing? I can't say there's a huge gap in my surrender because I refuse to act for Krishna's pleasure even though I know what He wants of me. rather I surrender this way, and if Krishna wants, He will tell me otherwise.

December 28, 1996

12:45 a.m.

When I arose from bed this morning I made a few notes for the talk I have to give tomorrow morning at the disciples' meeting. I'm going to start out by saying that I'll be going to Vrndavana. I'll read references from Prabhupada's books. The first one will establish that Krishna in Vrndavana is the object of our worship. Vrndavana in India is a replica of the spiritual world. It's important for us just to go there. Then I'll read a quote that says if you can't go to Vrndavana, you should think of Vrndavana in your mind. This refers to *raganuga-bhakti*, but it can also be applied on our level of devotional service. That means we can practice chanting and hearing in a Vrndavana-like mood, or to put it more simply, in an attentive and serious way. Then just to assure us that we don't need to travel to India, I'll read a quote by Prabhupada where he says that we can think of Vrndavana wherever we are in the world.

But the real substance of my talk is to encourage devotees to establish a sacred space in their life for daily *sadhana*. One of the keys is regulation, then maintaining that

regulation. And being creative so that we find it interesting and we make gains by practicing it.

\* \* \*

The ongoing drama about the management of this temple goes on. Several of the key devotees met yesterday and the temple president expressed why he finds it difficult to continue here. His main difficulty seems to be with only one devotee. He wrote me a letter last night telling from his point of view why this devotee is troublesome, but yesterday I received a letter from the "troublesome" devotee and his point of view seemed just as reasonable. I wrote a note to Madhu that it's time for us to leave. Otherwise, we'll be dragged into this controversy that seems to be headed for a "no win" result.

\* \* \*

#### Instruction to kill a demon

I dreamt that a disciple had to fight a strong adversary who was coming to attack him in the temple. I encouraged him and helped him build an ax. When I gave him the ax I said, "If you have to, you can kill the demon when you knock him unconscious."

He said, "I prefer not to. I'll just knock him out."

Then we waited. Finally the demon came and my disciple was confident he could defeat him.

On waking I thought about this particular disciple and the actual adversary he appears to be facing in his life in the temple. Of course, his "adversary" is a devotee, not a demon, and my role in discussing the problem with my disciple is not to encourage him to focus on his so-called adversary, but to see the adversary in his own heart. That's the demon I want to teach him to kill. I wonder if I can write a note to this disciple based on the insights of this dream. Maybe not, because I wonder what he could possibly apply. reading and chanting helps overcome inner conflicts on the deepest level. At least I could say that.

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

#### 11 p.m.

I wanted to write farewell pages at midnight but I'm prevented by a headache. It was unusually sharp behind the right eye all night and it continues. At least I can offer this dream fragment.

\* \* \*

#### Prabhupada praises his *sannyasi* disciples: a dream

Prabhupada was in a place but wasn't giving classes or *darsanas*. Finally he gave *darsana* to a group of mostly *sannyasis*. He said that *sannyasa* was required and he

praised each devotee. He said Hrdayananda and another devotee from South America were learned. He called me Satsvarupa dasa Brahmachari and people smiled. He said I was his personal servant. Then he said something else about me that I couldn't catch. Jayatirtha turned and said, "He said you don't take even two minutes for Deity worship." He was praising me for following my schedule of *sadhana* so strictly. Prabhupada went on to praise others.

December 29, 1996

5 a.m.

My headache persists, so we've canceled the disciples' meeting I was supposed to hold this morning. I muttered seven poor, silent rounds before 3 a.m., and then instead of going into the bathroom, I went back to bed. I knew the headache was getting worse, and there's nothing but rest that can help it go away.

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

9 a.m.

Farewell, Volume Two. You've certainly been a friend "and will continue to be one.

Farewell to shed visits twice a day, view of the swans, walks in the damp woods, mud puddles, wet leaves, Tilaka trailing behind but independent.

The most significant thing about this volume of *Every Day, Just right* is that I passed over two crossroads where I could have quit. Both times I decided to stay with it. Therefore, this is my "survivor" volume, my search for the authentic self.

Epilogue

December 30, 1996

Baladeva Vidyabhusana dasa suggested that we skip Jagannatha Puri and go only to Vrndavana "or not go to India at all" when he observed me with all-day headaches. But we are going. We've planned it. We've calculated the risks. We want to go. Nine of us are meeting in Puri for two weeks. Then on to Vrndavana for eighteen days. It's an adventure and I want to appreciate it as such. We discussed some of the realities of Puri last night "arguments with rickshaw *wallas*, diseases lurking, sellers on the beach, the general attitude of "*brahmanas*" and priests toward white-bodied devotees . . . But I also recall the sound of the ocean surf heard from the hotel room while I chant *japa* early in the morning, and the fact that despite Kali-yuga's covering, Puri is the *dhama* where Lord Caitanya spent eighteen years of His life on earth. I hope to read *Caitanya-caritamrta* there to the devotees. And to write and draw. My conditioned self "I'll drag it there, not to indulge it, and not expecting to rise above physical and mental affliction, but to preach and to tell my story of struggling to be a devotee of my spiritual master.

End of Year

End of year what does it matter?

No one cares. I mean it's just a  
calendar notation and New Year's eve  
drunks and a chance for brave devotees to  
chant in city streets at midnight.

\* \* \*

Of years this was the Centennial,  
ways to count and to be inspired to  
preach, praise Prabhupada "  
year-end, year beginning and  
we are fortunate to move to  
India's *dhamas* at start of 1997.

\* \* \*

I asked my Lord and my spiritual master,  
to please let me read their books,  
every chance I get as I did  
this morning  
Remembering that Krishna is present in  
every atom of the material worlds and  
as He told the *gopis*,  
"You are always with Me and there is  
no cause for lamentation."

Radha-Govinda of Inis rath  
Radha-Govinda, I did not visit You  
as often as I planned.  
On Christmas night I was in Your  
temple but You were covered by a curtain  
while the devotees performed their  
skits and songs.

\* \* \*

Radha-Govinda, You are beautiful,  
a lame remark, I cannot say it  
well. Please help me. I went to  
see You. I hoped  
devotees would keep You warm.  
You are not different from Krishna Himself and  
Krishna's dearmost devotee eternally.

\* \* \*

Have mercy on the devotees of  
Inis rath, this island that is Your  
setting. May they persevere,  
Remain dedicated to You.

\* \* \*

As You desire, I too may return  
to encourage them. We are all  
Your puppets "although we  
sometimes imagine we are self-willed.

\* \* \*

God and His dearmost consort,  
She blesses us, sometimes hold *tulasi* or  
a garland for Him.  
O black treasure, and fair-  
hued Radha, sublime Lady  
and the King of men and universes,  
votives, votive praises  
to You!  
I bring Your picture as I travel,  
never leave us day and night.

#### Appendix Bulletin board

The following items gathered on my bulletin board during the two weeks that I wrote Volume Two of *Every Day, Just Write*:

Pretentious: Making claims, explicit or implicit, to some distinction, importance, dignity or excellence. Affectionately grand; ostentatious.

Avoid it, write (draw) without trying to show off, make claims of saintliness, art "just be."

Spend all now. Poems, etc. You can put them in this EJW diary and take them out later as you like "flashes" "memory poems"

Raw dreams

don't worry regarding literary or neatness. Put it in rather than leave it out.

Inis rath temple phone number

Syamananda 21512

Write to find out where you are going. It's not for reading in a book.

Tell many fiction stories "even just a few lines."

Your prose is one poem after another in paragraphs.

Write more and trust that the process will lead you to good things. Present writing is harbinger for future projects, even if you don't know it.

More time on it helps. You'll know conclusively when a project arrives.

Make *Every Day, Just Write* all inclusive  
dreams, poems,  
drawings, f.w.,  
write on Srila Prabhupada's books  
memories,  
prayers  
little life data, etc.  
Free-write  
don't forget to draw with colors.

I just reread *Castlegregory*. Good mood. Remember where it came from? Those many legal pads of writing *Forgetting the Audience*. In a similar way, I should write plenty here and then gather from it some excellent sentences and moods and Krishna conscious teachings to share.