

ELECTRONIC BOOK

By Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami

Originally published by

GN Press Inc. USA

Every Day, Just Write

Volume 18

Getting Through

December 23, 1997 - January 13, 1998

Also by Satsvarupa dasa Goswami

Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita

Handbook for Krishna Consciousness

Readings in Vedic Literature: The Tradition Speaks for Itself

Your Ever Well-Wisher

Prabhupada Nectar v. 1-5

Japa Reform Notebook

Qualities of Sri Krishna

Vaisnava Behavior/ The Twenty-Six Qualities of a Devotee

Japa Walks/Japa Talks

Japa Transformations

December 23, 1997, 1:47 a.m., Jackson Heights  
Down By The riverside  
& Well down by the side  
River  
we're going down  
by riverside

\* \* \*

oh joy  
oh boy

\* \* \*

me and Mo  
oh boy  
the joy  
of Man-  
hattan crap

\* \* \*

this man a  
siphon  
pours out ink and  
blood and headache  
pain

\* \* \*

Crap "  
damn  
oh man  
oh man  
Bee Flight 42  
and black folks in  
Trinidad and Guyana  
all be  
hind me.

\* \* \*

We're going into  
a new year and

this is the way  
I died  
in Frankfurt

\* \* \*

He said  
Adolph  
a reneged artist  
a played-out  
60-year-old  
eating Fudgesicles in  
his sick bed.

\* \* \*

Riverside no sick  
sic  
no sex  
celi bate  
sell a bite

\* \* \*

I am smart  
enuf  
got my Guru  
deva  
(not you).

\* \* \*

Oh, sob  
Down by the  
Riverside we're  
goin' I wish  
you could  
understand  
He's so good I just  
wanna say  
He's that way  
He's our man  
He's got the blues . . . "

\* \* \*

11:57 a.m.

I don't know if I'll be able to keep up the diary spirit I had in Guyana. Maybe I was able to write so much there because I felt so intensely "nervous about racial unrest, wanting to get out of the country "and I felt the weight of the tropics. Here, I may be too relaxed. Here, I also have more business to accomplish. As a matter of fact, there are so many things to do I can't maintain my quiet, inner train of thought. It almost seems as if EJW is an expendable indulgence right now. I know it's important, but other demands feel more pressing.

\* \* \*

Jackson Heights  
& My heart and sweater  
skinny  
M.'s out there and  
I love his approach  
buy a short  
winter jacket at Macy's  
and go out busking  
with his melodeon "a  
Paddy in New York City.

\* \* \*

Bless dear friends  
preserve their skulls  
and lungs  
and the one I know  
who survived  
a car accident.

\* \* \*

Didja hear?  
He said my book was  
too slow, too  
white-boy-  
waiting but  
I'm a universal  
soul neither black  
nor white.

\* \* \*

It's like this  
God is *sastra*

and I speak it "tell  
you there is nothing  
but free spirit  
that Krishna is God and  
that's all.

\* \* \*

Then come home on  
time, be careful  
of subway  
graf  
rapes  
and take care  
'cause tomorrow we're going  
in car safe to PA  
over highway I'll  
be listening  
to muse and  
Krishna will come out of me  
the only way I know it. "

\* \* \*

3:20 p.m.

M. will be going soon to 26 Second Avenue to set up for his evening performance. I'll wait here, of course. If anyone asks for me, Madhu, just say I'm waiting pale-faced back at the house, reveling in the fortune of a pain-free day.

Tannenbaum lit up ""Christmas in Trinidad" song. Good-bye, and give the police your money. It's a different story for some "the homeless with no cheer. Others hold desperate parties or go to church. We Krishnaites always try to think up something appropriate to say.

\* \* \*

5:30 p.m.

What is my art, my religion, my readiness for death? What have I achieved? I lack hope that ISKCON can fulfill a person's needs "ISKCON the institution. Don't feel so optimistic that we are about to save the world. I just can't feel the desire to give Krishna consciousness, as it is presented by the institution, to others. I speak to disciples and a few who are interested, but spend most of my time alone. I have come to live on an inward trail, but try to understand what it means.

\* \* \*

6:09 p.m.

City sounds distant "sirens, airplanes landing at JFK or La Guardia "and lights. I feel safe in this neighborhood in this city.

Get ready for rest and rise.

O man

you ought to

get a rise out of

improvisation

and soul.

December 24

Dreamt my generation of devotees were killed by invaders. A few of us survived by cooperating with the new order. One brother passed me on the street, but he was now a humble donkey driver for the conquerors. I wondered what service *I* would have to perform. They told me to take a boat across the water to the last outpost. It would be a daring adventure.

The dream reminds me of surviving falldown. It reminds me that devotees have already sacrificed their lives in Prabhupada's movement, that we should try to survive honorably. We will die in the end. We need to face the daring adventure now.

\* \* \*

2:01 a.m.

An Answer to Tomas Kobes

1

& O Tomas you

are your own man

so

get with it

in Krishna

Cons.

\* \* \*

Swing low

beyond those trees those

dreams

of old Christmases with

mom and dad.

\* \* \*

And me? Sledding down

Samson Ave. I  
disappeared  
in Art  
and foam  
lost myself and I  
cry with self-pity  
to recall it  
although  
the theme of salvation  
is real.

\* \* \*

2  
O Tomas, folks, disciples,  
devotees  
follow the path.  
*What* path  
you ask? O Tomas  
you tried to see it but  
now you are not clear and  
anyway, you think you're too ill  
to find it.

\* \* \*

I say be light of heart  
and head,  
friend, and know  
that we need each  
other  
the scripture and  
sleep  
despite  
the lack of privacy.

\* \* \*

11 a.m., Madhava's house, Gita-Nagari area

Who am I? I am a fellow who just spoke to beloved disciples. I told them something about John Coltrane as an artist and implied that I was an artist who may go further and further out on a limb (so, be prepared).

But that's not so. I am, after all, after the uneventful. I said that too. They asked "all of them in a bunch ""Are you writing poems?"

No, not really, but I'm singing improvisations and writing them down. I told them of my fear in Guyana and was glad to get it out.

"Sir, I don't understand why you don't write and talk the way a guru is supposed to. You don't say the right stuff."

No, this is the right stuff, if you learn to listen. I wanted him to pay attention, that man who doubted me, but a ten-year-old girl got bored and walked out. I showed them the books, the

nooks.

Now that they are gone I can

notice birds at the winter feeder "the old variety of titmice, yellow goldfinches "

and I could understand that I was back

at Gita-Nagari.

A stream runs through the field across the road. I asked if there was a place I could take walks, but I was told that it was hunting season and I might get shot. Of course, I wear saffron. That would protect me. But perhaps people around here won't like to see a man in a skirt, even if it *is* orange, walking around outside. So many hillbillies in passing trucks.

Coltrane? They wondered what I meant. What about respect? They agreed to be respectful. Now preparing for the siege of meetings and letters.

\* \* \*

Did You

& Are you happy?

Yes.

Can you live forever in  
overalls?

No.

\* \* \*

Will you go back to Godhead?

Yes, eventually.

Will Mr. Nair?

Charlie?

\* \* \*

Will you hide the facts?

Will you play kazoo?

Will the chickadee

eat seed and

freeze?

\* \* \*

Will you

get a headache?



Tell that truth?  
Oh, don't embarrass with  
enormous  
superb  
wild  
Krishna consciousness.  
Just  
be  
true.

\* \* \*

Will Krishna and Monk  
and Prabhupada criss-  
cross at death? Will  
I mistakenly press  
the wrong button?

\* \* \*

Eighth chapter *Gita*  
trills and  
trumps  
and I remember  
that guidebook to Vrndavana where  
the author says  
I thank my guru and I wanted to know  
for what?

\* \* \*

No crisscross fear but  
end in  
Vrndavana  
living with basics  
with  
Radha-Govinda  
in temporal  
Ireland "ah let  
me live and die there  
thinking of Vrndavana Krishna  
and going nowhere. "

\* \* \*

December 25, 2 a.m.

Messages to the Guru for a Week:

"Thank you for blessing our home."

"I need you."

"You are my eternal guru."

No mice in sight, but various creaking sounds in this trailer home, perched like a matchbox on the side of a macadam-covered country road (covered so that the dairy farmers have smooth access to transport their products).

Tortured products.

Assimilated saint.

The creaking is the heating system turning on. Yes, I need heat.

Where's *my* guru in *my* life? I'll get back to him, but I feel a little too busy to think about it right now. Can't do all the work I have. At this rate, this volume is gonna simply skim the top of busy weeks. M. suggested we could go back to Ireland early if I want. Go back and face the blank? Soul-making.

\* \* \*

Christmas Tonight  
& Tonight there'll be fun  
no doubt and someone  
will fall  
in love  
'cause that's what they do  
tonight.

\* \* \*

But me? Let it rain.  
Creak, house, while  
I walk in the galoshes  
of my mind

\* \* \*

a rubber band  
a curling worm  
in my intestine  
and yours

\* \* \*

Hernia "Madhu's "  
and tonight

Padgett and I  
will play  
ball.

\* \* \*

Krishna in Vrndavana I said  
for me is here in  
Port royal  
not  
Pearl  
Street  
Mott Street  
Staten Island  
where our car passed  
through  
last night.

\* \* \*

Christmas night is over  
the presents are  
wrapped

\* \* \*

tonight is about love of God  
His son is  
born  
in a manger.

\* \* \*

We want permission to  
go back to Godhead  
but joke and  
go to Radha-kunda  
on Christmas  
Eve  
green scum on  
surface, turtles,  
us afraid  
but turning to the Source  
for comfort.

\* \* \*

Please, Christ,  
please let me  
call Your father's name  
with a drop of  
*your* sincerity. "

\* \* \*

12:15 noon

Talked to a few devotees about surrender to the Word of God. Kierkegaard said that scripture is like a love letter from the Beloved, and only a surrendered devotee can learn how to decipher it. After that, Madhu played his bouzouki, and I remained without a headache. We will have lunch together and think of other ways to spend our Christmas.

Touchy point "we can't invite all devotees to today's gathering. Don't want to hurt feelings. Trying to please.

Am I writing poems? Yes.

Horace Silver says he has an insatiable desire to write (songs) even though he knows there's a limit to how many he can record in a lifetime. I'm on a long roll too.

But we're devotees, right?

Hole worn through *japa* glove finger.

Bala with ripped tendons on hand and a hernia. Me okay. M. playing fiery Irish tune on bouzouki. Dream stories "I have stuff to proofread. Give me more of my own time tomorrow.

\* \* \*

3:35 p.m.

Cow out there in the pasture. Muddy ground not frozen? Go out and see for yourself. No, stay indoors. The Spruce Hill Lunch is closed today. We decided on a quiet afternoon. What shall we do?

I made a narration for a slide show. Anyway, I don't have to tell you all the details. I don't know *what* the hell to say. It's Christmas and we have no tree, no Christmas cards, no wife or children or church to attend. I'm alone, and that is perfect. I have obedient, respectful disciples who want to carry out my will. What do I want, then? I want to write better, to be more Krishna conscious, to chant my rounds with devotion. To make a beautiful day's compassionate drawing painting smamoza, that's what.

The black and white cow is sitting there, haunches on the ground, chewing cud. Her owner is a cruel slaughterer. A big telescope in the corner, but it doesn't work.

Small talk over lunch "talk of hernias, truck driving ""I am working very, very hard. You can earn money in America, but you have to sell your soul."

"And what are you doing? Are you staying in Ireland?"

"Yes," I said, "although I just returned from the Caribbean."

"But aside from that, do you live in Ireland?"

"Yes."

One devotee said he has to give up chanting and following the four rules if he wants to make money. He said he is being forced to work too hard.

Then the Christmas tree fell over and caught fire. Twelve fire engines raced out, and my father was driving each one. The numbers 9 and 108 were on the sides: Hook and Ladder Company 108.

\* \* \*

Zany  
& No man in  
*pince-nez*  
pinstripe  
suit

\* \* \*

bowled over  
bowled over  
bowler hat  
Baladeva  
comic  
there's no way know of  
course  
no way.  
Footfalls eventually  
to interrupt  
but  
small wonder O  
Krishna, Krishna  
occurs so rarely in  
the pantheon  
of sob and squeak.

\* \* \*

Krishna is the all-in-  
all  
O Krishna You  
crack  
the ice.  
I'll tell you  
when I'm in love and  
when I don't mind  
if Krishna demands more. "

\* \* \*

5:05 p.m.

Tired. Looked through a book on Bombay. Why is it here in this house? Look around.  
Chant a round. Apple juice. rest period after my Caribbean tour. What war? Inward?  
There's the hollow sound  
the man alone "  
how would it sound?

\* \* \*

To the crowd  
I mean the group  
of disciples  
they'd flip  
out  
they laugh

\* \* \*

alone alone there's  
the man on the street  
lower  
depths  
suffering  
those Bombay  
movie stars.

\* \* \*

Please leave me alone.  
The dog is put out "  
don't pet him.  
The cat is gone  
Don't refrain or  
interrupt  
they're talking and  
displaying a fierce  
determination.

\* \* \*

They leave me alone to  
Roam  
in a schoolroom with chalk  
boards to myself  
to practice  
on Danish

radio  
a truck driver says  
"What the hell is that?"

\* \* \*

Hare Krishna is not popular  
a mouse screams  
Hare Krishna is one of  
many even in a Mumbai  
*Back to Godhead* magazine.

\* \* \*

Anyway we get  
our  
quota  
small or large.  
And this is it  
scream  
descend  
it's over.

December 26  
Playing Alone  
& Playing alone out there in the night and  
I don't know who I am in  
this sweater  
but I'm indoors and I've got friends.

\* \* \*

Here's the truth "a man in a subway played alone  
no support but this  
man me is  
soul  
from Krishna.

\* \* \*

I feel for that devotee who is working so hard and mourning, "I'm working real, real  
hard, real, real, long and  
hard . . . "  
What to say?  
He shocked our easy conviviality and I wondered

why not get out of it if it's so hard  
but he would say I've got it easy  
no woman or family needing my care  
and I can spend the whole day  
on devotional pursuits.

\* \* \*

And I do "this improvised tune  
the mental cold  
of a subway station  
needing a break or  
a little appreciation and  
I've practiced thirty years  
to get it this way.

\* \* \*

O my soul our  
life has been tough  
those dead layers  
of spirit that neither  
wake to our despair  
nor pay attention  
to *nama*.

\* \* \*

Is that the longest note  
we'll have to sound? This  
blues squeaking? "

\* \* \*

4:35 a.m.

Now man, if you're gonna complain, I don't know *what* to tell you. You had better stop.

Yeah, I know.

Here sooth, a persona flaps his wings and takes off, out of Port royal, wearing a baseball cap that says, "Herring's Produce, Seafood, and Poultry" on it. He works in a lumberyard making sawdust, which gets wet and freezes up. He doesn't know what they do with it, but he's a devotee, and he keeps coming back to that.

O devotee, then why don't you live in Vrndavana? Tell the truth of the story.

He says he can fail anywhere "or succeed "according to Krishna's mercy. And he ain't no drummer. See?

He's also a devotee *as soul*, in the absolute sense.



Yes, and subjective.

But perhaps we shouldn't talk too much about that.

Henry Higgins, when you die, think of Krishna and it will be nice.

This is the day after Christmas, and the Lionel train set is already broken. So is the marriage and the friendship and the promises we made to follow our vows. So I have heard. This is the day after Christmas, and the carols are tired. The TV produces nauseating images of canned happiness "so canned they hurt the eyes. Don't worry though, we've got health insurance. It's an absurd world.

Read lots of bumper stickers on my way here: "Only a village idiot will believe in the Clintons!!"

"Pray the rosary."

"I am a child, not a choice."

If I had a sticker, what would mine say? "I am a cultist and afraid of it"? "I am a member of the good cult, Hare Krishna"? It would say, "Don't eat animals," and, "Free Food-for-Life hideouts." It would say, "I chanted my rounds today. Did you chant yours?"

But who would understand *that*? You have to say something that nondevotees can understand. "God is always right," or, "God wrote the book," or, "God said the flowers are doing all right, but how about you, Man?"

"Erin Go Braugh."

Now *that's* a *bhajana*, and Henry is going to *kirtana* tonight. Those are some of his favorite sayings to think over while he gathers in the harvest. It's a shooting match against hate and another EkadaSi breakfast. Someone said, "You are always away from me, but I am always praying for you."

This is ridiculous. This is all I have working out right now. I'll come back later and do better. Maybe I'll chant my rounds in an airtight mind, praying, "God, God, God, I love You."

\* \* \*

Sad To recall  
& He's sad such a good  
creative man died  
suddenly "noble  
and loving  
but no headache  
and no remorse.

\* \* \*

O spiritual master  
great souls . . .  
you were so great that an institution  
formed around you  
and we have had to learn  
to forgive one another our

\* \* \*

bodies strewn. Prabhupada, you  
taught the soul eternal  
and Krishna as Supreme  
and it has been worth  
the price  
we are paying  
with our lives  
many times  
over.

\* \* \*

O Prabhupada, I miss you  
with all my  
watery heart. "

\* \* \*

11:15 a.m.

Almost time for my haircut. Vegavati is cooking lunch today. Gave her a copy of *Discovering Our Voices*. Took an Esgic at 10:30 a.m., and the pain went away. Using my time well.

A simple devotee fixed on Krishna dies in Vrndavana surrounded by devotees. I'm a complex combination; I joined ISKCON when I was already twenty-six years old. This life-identity is in a fragile container (tottering like a drop of water on a lotus leaf) and is soon over. Then the whole history is dissolved. What you record and publish in writing is also subject to destruction sometime before the end of the *kalpa*. You think Matsya is going to lift up your little old Gita-Nagari Press editions?

\* \* \*

2:15 p.m.

Better now. Spoke with Vegavati about Vrndavana and how I'm not qualified to enter the higher *rasa* except as Srila Prabhupada admits me.

Now leave your snowshoes  
and jokes, and tell us genuine,  
son, what's in the garden?

Nothing. This is North America where the gardens are waiting for spring. In Ireland it may be different.

I'm preparing a grave and  
a lecture  
Get me a kazoo and I'll  
compose,  
get me a free pass and

I'll enter Vaikuntha  
rabbit (*SaSi*) in the  
moon  
get me Buddha drops  
Krishna droplets  
force  
pretend, pose.

Get me pencils and crayons

I gave out pics of my Radha-Govinda to establish that They are mine. Little boy at  
Christmas party "snowballs, Christmas tree balls, mustache . . . I am not seeing right, but  
can if you let me.

\* \* \*

I Just Met

(Now wait a minute old man, don't start romancing. Transform.)

& I just met a girl  
named . . . he said  
Romeo and Charlie and

\* \* \*

we are not marching  
soldiers "yes we  
are.

\* \* \*

We met and then danced

\* \* \*

by the light of the moon  
and suddenly "  
he met his guru "another  
Romance.

\* \* \*

I just met a girl it was  
Radha bringing him  
*prasadam*.

\* \* \*

I just entered a woods

and got Dante lost

\* \* \*

a woods wherein  
Krishna dwells.

\* \* \*

This is the non-bipartite  
where we just meet and improvise  
another romance  
but an inch opens  
and I see daylight  
even when I face  
the wall. "

\* \* \*

5:15 p.m.

Thinking more about John Coltrane and how he didn't compromise either his talent or his search for God through his art. He reached the limits of his popularity when he released "A Love Supreme." After that, he began to express more chaos in his music, something he identified as part of his spiritual search. He was searching through radical terrain. I too tend to look for radical terrain, but my process is more gradual.

Right now I'm simply looking forward to returning to Ireland and a simple life where I can read every day in Srila Prabhupada's books and follow my usual schedule. In the meantime, however, please bear with me through these days of meetings and more meetings. I have no room to invite chaos right now, not even in my drawings.

\* \* \*

Flute Song

(A child made up a simple tune with a flute and played it to her father . . . )

& Heard a child made a simple tune

played on a flute

for her father.

Well, I took that song and

complicated it added it

into my own life

\* \* \*

no smooth band  
but room for emotion  
anger and love and

for those who speak  
in their own way

\* \* \*

the horn a human voice  
Rioting and burning down  
smearing over

\* \* \*

or laughing as  
I go out in cold  
slippers to the bird feeder  
while Madhu  
is in the shed

\* \* \*

and the last days of gunshots  
over the field "one week left  
of deer season.

\* \* \*

I want to get it right "  
Krishna season "and this night  
will be my time to

\* \* \*

surrender.  
I'm not sure  
nervous  
shots "imagine those  
cows  
across the field.  
Do they look like deer in the dark?

\* \* \*

O Krishna, I have no secrets  
but I know bears rip through  
cabins, tear them  
completely apart  
looking for honey

and our fears  
will do the same.

\* \* \*

The girl's flute song  
pleased her dad who  
put it into a composition  
and I said  
we'll savor  
*Krishna* book  
when I go back  
to my sod  
I'll be simpler  
and learn  
to crawl natural. "

December 27

Better Get It In Your Soul (Mangala-arati Take)

(Well, sir, you want to rise early and jump and shout your God  
consciousness! *Kirtana mangala* is the perfect bliss.)

1

&Listen people gather  
come on have faith  
it's rollin' that  
good-time religion.

\* \* \*

I believe in sweet pain on  
emporium of temple O  
Jagannatha  
and  
Radha-Damodara  
it's so good to  
see  
no flies "  
brushed off with *camara*.  
No peacock  
feathers this cold  
morn.

\* \* \*

One leader sing the  
broadcast  
*harinama* "we'll follow in

our little cubicle  
of flesh and bone.

\* \* \*

Mad I can't get this  
pen to work as I'd like "  
we're going so fast  
how can this be religion?

\* \* \*

Soul bright as fire  
bright as defeat as  
death and ice.

\* \* \*

O Lord God I  
don't mock You.  
Deliver me this  
pre-dawn in dark temple  
with Deities dancing  
*tribanga*, O  
smashing Young Boy.

\* \* \*

2  
Swami allowed even the sax and the guy  
with Frank incense in strainer  
smoking up the Lower East Side sky  
under the tree "  
and drummers!  
Flutes!  
The come-and-hear-the-  
Swami-in-the-park  
drummers  
getting higher than on LSD  
those premature but  
unbustable  
chanters  
hoping things would clear.  
We don't ask, "Whatever happened?"  
because we're still hoping  
even on our last stretch. "

\* \* \*

5 a.m.

Little life in this house. Madhava dasa returns home from work at 11 p.m. each night. I see him in the morning around 4:30 a.m. when he drops in with some news or assignment, usually regarding tapes. He has been preparing the 6 a.m. breakfast. I have one room separated from the others by a curtain, so I can hear what anyone says in the next room. Admit it, I act as guru and they act as servants. Different people cook my meals. In return, I deliver lectures, lead at least a minimum life according to rules and regulations, and write books. Beyond that, I am supposed to perform the esoteric task of accepting their devotional service and delivering it to Krishna. Transparent via medium. We say they can't serve Krishna directly, can't even serve Prabhupada directly (although to some extent, of course, they can), but that everyone has to go through their own immediate link in the chain.

Then there is talk of *diksa*- and *Siksa-guru*. At any rate, I have a heavy task, and one wonders whether I'm really up to it, how pure I am, etc. I don't talk about these things much. Although I claim I'm writing honestly, I don't seem to write often about whether or not I'm a fraud.

I don't discuss it publicly because the anti-ISKCON writers are so extreme. They resort to yellow journalism, to distorting facts, and making scurrilous attacks. I don't want to feed their fire. They are especially vehement toward the original eleven gurus, of which I am one. I don't want to help them in their cause.

The fact is, however, that I don't think it's a fraud for one of Prabhupada's disciples (a disciple in general) to initiate devotees. He may not be as great or pure as Prabhupada, but he can function. When there are no trees, a castor tree is a tall tree, or at least it can function. Function, function. Maybe I will talk on functioning with disciples at the Baltimore meetings.

Hare Krishna. Finishing my reading of the second volume of PMrB. Our hero was at Saranagati, loading the wood stove and watching spring snows, wondering when the bears would wake up and commenting on *Bhagavatam* verses. When I'm done with that book, I'll return to the mail.

\* \* \*

10:10 a.m.

O Krishna, he says he's telling me the truth rather than choosing the easy way and making it sound like he likes me. Telling the truth, he says.

I apologize for mentioning that, but all these letters roll back and forth and they can each say what they like, but my time is almost up here. Don't worry, I'll answer that letter and thank him for it too. A man just drove here from a faraway city and expects to see me because he put himself out.

Untangle this, please, and give it coherent shape. Get your duties done and then tell us about the light snow. It didn't stick. When I noticed the bird feeders were empty, I mentioned it to Madhava. The tufted-head titmouse and chickadee and finch were



picking at what they could find on the ground. Madhava filled it up. While he was out there, the birds disappeared, but as soon as he left that tufted head was back.

I don't live here but am perched here for a few days "something like those birds. Please be kind to me and put the food out. Yes, and don't hurt my feelings. I'll try not to hurt yours either.

Hare Krishna, Krishnaloka keep calm. The apparatus is stained with blood. The African and the German artists both depict harsh social truths in religious, historical, and personal scenes. They imagine that the Church is fatherly. How do I see *our* Church? It's something I helped build, was part of, defended against critics, but now . . .

It's different. Wet snow falls and doesn't stick. The cold temple room, the women, the barbed wire fence, the cars that come and go "I can't speak about anything else.

\* \* \*

How I Feel (But God and Scripture Comes First)

& There's no way a guy can  
be a burn out in this movement  
and not go back to Godhead.

\* \* \*

I say stay in one place  
and listen to me  
I'm the one has to stay under  
control  
this is  
my day to  
tell you the music  
people don't understand.

\* \* \*

God in scripture comes first  
and then how *we* feel  
about it. I'm sorry I  
got stuck onto so many  
things  
but I'll never  
Run out of  
ink or steam. "

\* \* \*

11:55 a.m.

The chickadees have control over the feeder right now. The titmice can't get near it. Listen to the scriptures. Jammed in too many things to do today, although my life is still simple. I preach to people that they should read scripture every day.

Snow's all but melted. Corn stubble fields.

Subjective is truth, Kierkegaard tells us. But, "God is," comes first. Okay, God is, but what does that mean in *my* life? It means nothing to many believers.

The cost in terms of suffering inwardness is what counts. Drop it. Just tell us some *lila* or read quietly.

O holy night

The Trivikrama blues

the bicycle messenger

silly mix I want you to do better than this.

\* \* \*

Dumbo Becomes A Hare Krishna

& Listen to the love of

art

musicians

they

cry without

tearing

down

anyone.

\* \* \*

But when you do get down  
you become one sad herring, no  
happy clown  
wailing it all out what's  
coming down.

\* \* \*

We cry we're so sad  
so happy  
don't know  
whether we're drooling  
in *maya* or from the center  
of our  
home "O Krishna  
angel

with fat cheeks "  
I cry out  
to You.

\* \* \*

Do I sound like Dumbo  
on a bender  
Dumbo out to fracas  
lurch "that  
Dumbo of my starry  
boyhood in Queens  
Dumbo goes West  
becomes  
a Hare Krishna  
wears a *kaupina*  
a *dhoti*  
switches to a *sari*  
and braid "  
he doesn't blaspheme  
this Dumbo  
the mad elephant.

\* \* \*

We play "we Dumbos "and  
we hurt  
nobody  
even if we're so serious  
ex-GBC emeritus types "  
ah, that's the word "  
and we left holding the bag  
of old "*Sadhu-bhusanams*."

\* \* \*

O Krishna, a mantra "  
I'm game  
to revive my hopes with  
old friends if only  
they be  
indulgent. "

4:20 p.m.

Got the edge on others if you consider it competitively. We can range free within Krishna consciousness. Our art is infinite, yet disciplined. I want to find out how far I can go in the field, even though I'm old and infirm. Forty years later a musician plays with wisdom but not the *elan* of his early days. Will it be like that for us, or will we always be able to play with *elan* because Krishna consciousness requires nothing other than mental joys and liberty?

Naw, words are not everything. The whole body and spirit. If I am feeling tired I have to say I'm tired. It will come out anyway "whatever I am. If I think about my aching left ankle, it will come out in my writing. Like that old *mataji* who writes of her pains, that man, his. It's the same story in each body, and there is no hope of improvement as we age. Songs can become complaints if we're not careful. O Krishna, please give me the strength not to complain.

From here I see a white and black duck in the cold marsh. The duck isn't so different from those I saw in the canal at Mahacony. It's quieter here. The windows are sealed shut, no frogs at night. I don't feel like I'm in a country that could explode at any moment.

Voice: Could you please get back into a reading routine? Please excuse me for speaking in the midst of your literary creations. I'm an adolescent's mother who comes out to the field to call her son and embarrass him to no end, reminding him to put on his hat and scarf, which of course, she has brought with her. (Mother Yashoda acted like that sometimes.)

December 28

From a letter I wrote to a devotee who is constantly and bitterly complaining to me about how he has been mistreated by ISKCON authorities, and how the authorities are arrogantly unaccountable and unfit:

"You wrote, making reference to something I wrote in a book comparing ISKCON to a trek to the North Pole. Bodies are strewn all along the way. Picking up on the strewn bodies image, you compare ISKCON to America's disastrous and exploitative venture in Vietnam. I would like to give another analogy in an attempt to show you an alternative to your present consistently bitter and negative attitude toward ISKCON and its leaders' misadventures.

"Consider the position of the Afro-Americans. They were brought here as slaves and abused in many ways. In the twentieth century they gradually rose in anger, seeking justice. This climaxed in the 1960s with various protests by which the blacks gradually began to gain more rights. Still, many of them are very, very angry against *all* white people and cannot be appeased. And what can a white person really say in response? He can't just say, 'Why don't you simply forgive?' The blacks remain unforgiving because the injustices remain unforgivable.

"I find relief, however, and hope, whenever I see a black person express something more optimistic, even transcendental, to this constant 'skin disease' of negativity toward

all whites. I can think of two examples of persons in the secular world who spoke otherwise and how it can lighten the heart. One was the composer-musician Thelonius Monk, who was popular in the 1960s and '70s. He said that he would have written the same music even if he wasn't black. That is, that his music is not an expression of his race but of his heart. Then he said about himself that when he was a young man, he met other black men who schooled him in the understanding that he should hate whites. He said, 'I tried real hard to do what they said. For awhile it worked. But then some white person would come along who was very nice and it would ruin the whole thing.'

"Another black musician, Anthony Braxton, preached to his fellow blacks that they were indulging themselves in what he called 'black exoticism.' He said if blacks expected to take a mature place in the new millennium, they would have to stop blaming the white Europeans for each and every evil that has ever befallen them. This from a black person who acknowledged the atrocities the whites had committed against the blacks. His point, however, was that the blacks were choosing to remain undeveloped by constantly harping on the atrocities. Better they get together with their fellow human beings and really show themselves mature, advanced persons and take true leadership by seeing everyone as part of the mess of humanity. We need to try to make the best of it, despite all inclinations to do otherwise.

"Along these lines, I would advise you to try to see this alternative example rather than to be stuck on the one about the Vietnam war or other such examples that fuel your somewhat one-sided view, the view of 'all-wrong,' the view of the angry black who remembers all the lynchings, the insults, the cruel leaders, and unlike Monk, can't remember a single, decent, white man."

\* \* \*

The Promise

(Don't be outside Krishna consciousness "got to bring it in.)

& Listen, friends, I'm

here on

a ranch and say help!

We are not the same

sittin' in a row.

\* \* \*

We are dispersed

the ISKCON Diaspora "

many have gone back to

hell, some

to heaven or

there and back again.

\* \* \*

No back tow please

he wanted another guru  
a better break  
but we defended ISKCON  
the GBC  
as best we could,

\* \* \*

Then, then the master  
plan of the Supreme "  
did it reveal itself?  
Well, yes, *sort* of  
in bodies strewn  
and us  
Vietnam vets.

\* \* \*

The wall of names  
lists of those  
who died for the  
cause  
shot leaders  
we say they were probably bad  
and new kids initiated by  
hundreds "all  
splintered . . .

\* \* \*

He's writing his blues  
but sings an anthem  
unofficial. I told him he  
could be like a bright  
black man  
and forgive, doesn't  
blame *all* whites  
for his ills.

\* \* \*

He is too busy  
feeling misused  
and waiting  
for the return of The Master  
the self-effulgent

one  
the one and only  
best.

\* \* \*

And he walks a little jaunty  
nothing  
great "  
no decision to  
wake up and love.

\* \* \*

The promise  
is all we have to live on  
in ISKCON, that we can all go back  
all  
be saved.

\* \* \*

What an array of opinions I gathered! I decided to chant my prayers in private before  
Gaura-Nitai, but  
nothing happened,  
but I'm patient and  
I'll wait on God.

\* \* \*

O friends, I dissimulate no more.  
I keep my promises too  
and keep the faith  
live the science  
smile at  
my master's  
feet  
a holy toenail watcher.  
Forgive me my  
excess and offer  
*pinda* to my soul  
errant. "

\* \* \*

4:46 a.m.

I'm starting to read the eighteenth chapter of the First Canto in preparation for *Bhagavatam* lectures later this week. I heard they're up to verse 18 or so at the temple. Crusts of doubts, barriers of non-interest, influence of non-*Bhagavatam* ideas I've heard "but I read right over all that. After all, I'm a child of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*; I always expect to be allowed to return.

In the opening verses, the sages ask to hear more about Maharaja Pariksit. He's praised as a *narayana-para*, one unafraid of death. Srila Prabhupada says since the devotee is so fixed on the Supreme Lord, "For him nothing is as important as the Supreme Lord, and thus he gives equal importance to heaven and hell." (*Bhag.* 1.18.2, purport) In all conditions of life (including life in either heaven or hell), remembrance of Narayana is essential. "The devotee never goes against the will of the Lord; anything sent by God is a blessing for the devotee. Therefore Maharaja Pariksit was neither afraid or bewildered by such things."

See how essential *Srimad-Bhagavatam* topics are? Calling for strength to accept the "curse of the *brahmana*" "that may come to you. I seem to think if I keep writing and publishing, it will be a kind of insurance, something that will live after me. I am trying to pay my premiums now so I can stock up on treasure that no moths can eat.

Devotees are kind to print my books, my dividends. I thank the devotees for helping. King Pariksit is not a myth nor is he irrelevant to me. return to him and give him in my writing. I pray for the ability to read this book and to comprehend it, to hear with what consciousness Maharaja Pariksit received the curse.

\* \* \*

M. has sore throat, Madhava too. Must be contagious. I took an Esgic last night to subdue pain. I wanted to sleep so I could stay on my early morning schedule. I got up and chanted twelve rounds, then answered mail. A Bhakta Willie says he fervently desires to be initiated by me. He distributes books in the L.A. airport. All right, I said, come to the meetings in Baltimore. But how can I uphold someone's spiritual life if that's what they expect of me? (I'm not an Atlas to uphold them, or a fisherman to pull them out, a man with a stout rope to rescue others from their private wells. I'm not in that business; I'm in the business of pulling myself out. Don't expect so much. I prefer a more mature person as disciple. Explain that to them.) Yet how can I refuse his cry? *I could . . .* I could fake a deaf ear and go on hearing my own *japa*. O readers, gentle readers, please try to understand what I am saying.

\* \* \*

Maharaja Pariksit could leave everything, including his body, without attachment, because he was confident about the existence of the supreme abode, Goloka Vrndavana. He heard of it from Sukadeva Gosvami. I hear of it from Srila Prabhupada, a bona fide *acarya*. Although I may become fearful when I receive notice of my death, I will turn to this source of knowledge and security.



Can't say I'm confident I'll go there after *this* lifetime, but "unless one thoroughly understands this superior or eternal energy of the Lord, it is not possible to leave the material energy, however one may theoretically speculate on . . . the Absolute Truth." (*Bhag.* 1.18.3, purport)

It's easy to know Krishna by the mercy of His pure devotee but difficult to find Him by study of Vedic (or other) literature. Again, I have an advantage.

A devotee returned from Vrndavana and complained that ISKCON demands such strictness in their VIHE seminars that teachers can refer only to Srila Prabhupada's books and whatever books *he* refers to. I don't find that so hard to accept. For us, the main point is our connection with him. Have that *yasya deve para bhaktir* and it will bring revelation of Vedic secrets. Prabhupada has great conviction and realization of Krishna and can hand that over to us, just as a man can give us an apple hand to hand.

At the end of life, the power of remembrance is slackened, but the devotee who has been trained during his lifetime can remember the Lord's lotus feet without having to "run the risk of having misconceptions even at the last moment of their lives." (*Bhag.* 1.18.4)

I should be a submissive disciple. I'm spending energy to declare what I am rather than what I should be, but "should" is a valid concept. I should be a submissive disciple. I should read daily, should be one of those "who have dedicated their lives to the transcendental topics of the Personality of Godhead." That person remembers Krishna without difficulty.

After Maharaja Pariksit left the world, Kali entered. Srila Prabhupada states that Kali can be driven out by constant chanting of the Lord's names, qualities, etc. It can be done on the radio and by the *brhad-mrdanga* press. Let's use those sources of broadcast, art, and expression. Save ourselves and others. "Nothing is bad if properly used for the service of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 1.18.6, purport)

\* \* \*

5:50 a.m.

We're having a little breakfast club for the second day in a row here "me, Madhu, Madhava, and Baladeva.

\* \* \*

8:20 a.m.

The age of Kali has good features. For example, we receive credit for good acts even if they are only thought out, and we don't receive negative reactions for sins committed only in the mind. Beyond that, Kali-yuga is the age in which Lord Caitanya promulgated the chanting of God's names. All the disadvantages of this age (of which there are plenty) can be overcome by reading the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

\* \* \*

10 a.m.

Sitting on a plastic chair (like the white chairs in that backyard at Isola di Albarella, and like a similar white chair in Manu's room) on a sunny day at the end of the year. The ice is frozen in puddles, but the sky is a deep bright blue. When I'm not sitting, across this small bit of land we call the driveway, I walk back and forth. Sometimes I venture out to the macadam road. Out there this morning I saw a farmer in a red shirt. He saw me too. I retreated.

How can you write solidly and not thinly? I was just reading in EJW where I was deciding to worship Radha-Krishna. It seemed wishy-washy, as if the discussion had no lasting value. Wondered how to preserve myself in Krishna consciousness.

Madhava has a purple Geo, small and sleek. If you look at it long enough, it begins to look like a toy. I worry for him as he drives many miles back and forth over the winter roads.

Just as that car seems fragile, so everything seems fragile, even Madhu playing melodeon in the shed. He has some borrowed sophisticated recording equipment, and he said it exposes the fact that he doesn't play well "he can tell when he listens to the recordings.

\* \* \*

Burnt Orange  
& This happy day infectious  
happy birthday  
a lovin' man.

\* \* \*

This man "lonely  
thinks he's  
no good  
at art  
poetry  
or religion.

\* \* \*

A farmer in shocking orange  
and a gun "don't shoot me "  
drives a tractor.  
I thought he'd  
see me and wonder who I was  
in my pale orange.

\* \* \*

Burnt orange  
dawn peach  
saff-ron  
a member monk  
so  
mark him.

\* \* \*

O Lord, I  
want to return to You  
Lord in all things  
I couldn't find  
You in my ankle-ache  
or the cars on the road.  
Thought only that  
it might be nice here in summer  
violet crawlers creeping up the trees  
but while his wife and child wait at home  
while he goes off to work  
the dredge the  
drudge we  
each feel  
worthless and then suddenly  
a lift  
back into our working  
groove.

\* \* \*

My groove "I am the priest for  
a flock near here. They  
expect me to accept them  
to detect in them  
what is good  
to give them  
batteries of wisdom  
from Prabhupada. "

\* \* \*

10:35 a.m.

Reading. Sages addressing Suta. They say their bodies are turning black from the smoke of the sacrificial fire. Association of a pure devotee is rare. Thanks for speaking *Srimad-Bhagavatam* to us. You are speaking wonderfully about Krishna. "This is just like nectar for mortal beings like us." (*Bhag.* 1.18.13)

\* \* \*

11:55 a.m.

Big piece of *tilaka*. Yesterday I had sweets from Vrndavana, delivered by Mother Kaulini. Today I received mail from Baltimore. Twice (two years ago), Madhava dasa had to stay overnight in Harrisburg because of snowstorms. His company pays for a room.

A shout!

Someone gave me gifts of candles, candle holders, incense, but I gave them all back saying, "I'm an anti-air pollution man."

When will I be able to focus on that demanding letter from the Czech republic? The devotee who wrote it said he doesn't know his future, but hints that maybe it's not in Krishna consciousness. Try to anchor him, set the compass due north, focused on chanting and remembering Krishna. To fall back into a Krishna-less life "who could bear it? I want to assure him that although he was born in a certain country and joined a particular institution, devotional service is his God-given right. He can rise above anything to claim it. Yes, I will tell him *that*.

Priest ready for Mass, I mean, lunch "whatever they give. Car grinding to a halt outside, now backing up the driveway. Must be bringing something to add to my lunch.

Only a curtain separates me from the rest of the house. At any moment . . . Srila Prabhupada says even if you made \$500 a month and then increased to \$5 million a month, you could still eat only four *capatis*. The boys and girls laughed heartily when he said it (1969, New Vrndavana). Yes, four *capatis*. And you would sleep in a six-foot bed even if you owned the whole state of West Virginia, rural route mail boxes included.

\* \* \*

### *A Letter*

Now there's no way I can be without you, dear friend. I write from Czech republic.

Well, I want to go back to Ireland early, to get away from the controversy that swirls around here

back to that  
quiet routine.

Poems

a brother writes after India pilgrimage "but

I'm different "why go to India

if you have to come back?

And why lecture if you don't know yourself?

You squeak heart secrets

ways to aspire with

a Western mind above a

car horn.

Oh, leave me alone

he said,

I'm trying to be full of cheer in Krishna consciousness.

"Dear Guruji, please initiate me. You are the most sincere of the lot. No one else but you for me."

Gee whiz, he kicked sawdust with his toe  
and said  
Just leave me with  
my Radha-Govinda again.

\* \* \*

4:24 p.m.

Met with the breakfast club this morning and played with Madhava's baby son. Then went outside limping, sat on the white plastic chair, answered a letter from someone who said I said we can eat corn syrup on EkadaSi and that I've thoroughly researched it because my birthday falls on EkadaSi.

Back to *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Experts in relishing *rasa* don't tire of hearing topics of the Personality of Godhead. You need to hear from a qualified speaker, and you need to be a qualified hearer. A hearer is qualified by making submissive, keen inquiry and by being willing to render service. "We are anxious to receive such messages."

"Thus please narrate to us the narrations of the Unlimited, for they are purifying and supreme. They were spoken to Maharaja Pariksit, and they are very dear to the pure devotees, being full of *bhakti-yoga*." (*Bhag.* 1.18.17)

\* \* \*

Fooling Around  
& They are expecting a big snowstorm  
clouds on parade and serious  
Riotous fun.

\* \* \*

It's okay because we're so well practiced  
and as experienced as  
the back of the veined hand of that old  
*sadhu* who knows all the *lila* places.

\* \* \*

Watching for snowdrops  
and cider  
Nero  
book on Saint Paul  
love of Krishna.  
And this is the way this fellow spends an afternoon  
mooling around,  
then calling out to study *Bhagavatam*, the

students sitting in rows  
their tickets for going back to  
Ireland  
held firmly in hand.  
O Prabhupada, I say, "Your word is my command,"  
and that this music is true.  
The danger comes one day and we pass  
through despair, careening,  
and come out like a car  
washed clean or  
a kid running scared  
through an old house  
only to find  
Relief  
outside.

\* \* \*

Serious lectures.

\* \* \*

Now a coda:  
I promise to rise with  
hope to  
chant  
but O Lord, You don't let me  
You  
want tears or  
something  
but I won't give up  
I'll not.  
give up. "

December 29, 3:30 a.m.

Go back to Ireland and nurse "cultivate" your despair at not attaining Krishna consciousness. read scripture and chant on beads, but know that the endeavor itself is not enough. Come to that point.

It's difficult, however, not to fall into a pretense of despair or a mundane version of melancholy. A devotee should remain cheerful, hopeful, but simultaneously sound their own depths. Still, I can't help feeling sorrow that "I could not reach Mathura," and sorrow that the brilliant hope of a worldwide, glorious ISKCON seems to have disappeared in me. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura said that we should not try to reform others but concentrate on ourselves. I want to go back to Ireland and work on that from my simple life of reading and chanting. But I don't want to neglect preaching:

"Transcendental science, or the science of Krishna, has to be learned from the authorities, and when one preaches the science, he becomes still more qualified." (*Bhag.* 1.18.18, purport)

\* \* \*

Let's Go Alone

Hang on! I want Krishna consciousness!

O North Ireland and that little room which appears to hold my Radha-Govinda and no ghosts. O Lord, please help us!

I am in the moaning part of life, it seems,  
where you go guttural and pray and cry to Krishna for help.

\* \* \*

The truth is, I want to see Krishna "O Lord!

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati recommended tears "no dry eyes in the *bhakti* house.

St. Teresa of Avila mocked persons who squeezed a few tears

out of a prayer session. It cannot be imitated. We cry for love

and the lack of it.

This wrack "I cried at Doris's house

after a few days in the barracks. Cried all night on LSD in my Suffolk Street

apartment "my paradise was empty

and I had just

found out. But

\* \* \*

this new song

to cry of bitter hope

a soldier

marching on the *bhakti-marga*

lost, but wishing

to pick flowers for Radha

and Krishna. *That* cry

of despair.

\* \* \*

Voices

(Active Imagination, Episode #1)

"Ah, my many-colored day," said Dr. Seuss. "Fifty is forty and

how old are you?"

"I'm twenty," said the diapered baby.

"Dredge it up "your lack of Krishna consciousness, your dread and despair,"  
said the sincere religionist. "I'm living a life of poverty and renunciation. Money is a  
facility I care to avoid."

Another wrote, "I don't care to be your friend, but I'll answer your letters. "

Where is the cloud-borne snowstorm?

So many images ran through Rufus's head, but  
he just wanted to live a little longer.

\* \* \*

And then the Panther struck: "Just stay home with the devotees. We'll pay your salary  
and honor you, give you room and board, but you  
must work "design a curriculum  
and attend all these meetings (not really  
so many . . . )."  
He said, "I'm tired of it."

\* \* \*

This is an episode of caring and flute-gazing. This is a hill in Pennsylvania, a stubbled  
winter field behind the r.D. mailbox (silver)  
the red flag up to indicate  
to the indistinguishable mail truck  
that something needs  
to go.

A baby's swing and our missing teeth "I don't have to go to school anymore, nor do I  
have to meet  
anyone to discuss  
any issue.

Someone asks, "But are you pleasing Prabhupada? Did you renounce even the guru's  
order, or the guru himself (*guru-tyaga*)?"

Naw, I just buttoned up my coat for protection. Just writing and writing  
and listening to the thump-thump of my son's foot  
as he plays his music.

\* \* \*

The pre-designed dawn.

Bundles of hay, like huge pieces of shredded wheat, lying here and there in the field.  
Not many collected this year.

My master "the telephone silent over the wind chimes.

I asked my old friend if he had a phone. Then, "Do you read Srila Prabhupada's  
books?"



He said, "A little *Krishna* book in the evening." He also reads to prepare lectures, but, "Excessively I listen to his tapes. That's what has saved me all these years."

He'll write and tell me.

I agreed to read his letters and listen and reply at least, "You went through quite a time."

Look! A bird! Black or dark brown "the colors are almost the same. Correct me if I'm wrong.

You be the senior and I'll be the junior inquiring and pouring myself out. I don't know how you do it "answer all those letters.

Yeah, well I just want to get back to Ireland and my chance to bathe and dress my Deities. I live there.

"I must say," she said, "You really appeared to be at home [in Geaglum] whereas it has been a hard move for me and my family."

Surya and I decided we had much in common. She's respectful toward me.

Rejoice spirits.

Now, now it has been nice. More. A friend takes me a short distance in his car (father coughing from cigar smoking) and it's just another trip toward death.

Fix-it. Drink six to eight cups of water a day.

Strain to hear what's going on in the next room.

\* \* \*

Give me one more page of voices:

Brooklyn

memory

peace "don't take it easy, be

confidential. So-and-so Swami is in charge,

paid *brahmanas*, a sound like

gurgling water going

down the drain.

I have a friend! I have

a friend.

Well, admit that it's just a fad to say, "I don't despair my lack of love of God, but at least I think "

hmm, despair, tears,

maybe that's where it's at."

\* \* \*

2:50 p.m.

We moved to the cabin today. Peacocks, peahens "Baladeva shows me how the heat works, where I can paint, etc. Label on sign at creek's side: "Yamuna river." It hasn't always been. Will I go for a walk?

As I write, I see a man with a rifle walking on the opposite bank "a hunter.

Headline of the newspaper I saw in Bala's truck: "It's Not Over Yet" "something about Iraq and the secret weapons they might have.

\* \* \*

In Walked "  
& The snow didn't come down and  
we got no silence.  
There's just one freeway  
over there.  
They used to experiment with  
freedom  
and then decided there was  
no way . . .

\* \* \*

Krishna speaks out and  
the water has stopped in  
this pond. It was a symbol  
of creativity  
for me, of  
Nativity,  
the mix,  
of three wise men.

\* \* \*

This is what I want "  
a figure  
a Krishna conscious thing a segment  
with me forgiven and  
full of youthful strength  
catching a taxi to South Ferry,  
safe, going home  
on the train  
with a notebook out  
Ready to write.

\* \* \*

Those drunken nights when I didn't  
know where I was going "  
not that freedom. But to see  
what I was like  
before I met the Swami  
an unknown  
squirrel jumping from branches  
playing the best wavering

I could,  
but lost.

\* \* \*

My pen didn't flow  
so my blood was ebbing  
and that's how it must be  
why we sing  
the blues.

\* \* \*

Still, we will survive until  
we're dead.

\* \* \*

In the meantime, the most Krishna conscious  
thing I can do is to say,  
from my heart,  
"Please accept this fallen ""  
and then to go out for a walk anyway.  
Because even while I'm on my knees  
Krishna is the theme of all things  
and a Krishna conscious boy once told me  
that poor barefoot men  
prefer  
Krishna in their soup  
and prayer on  
their knees  
and that will  
save them. "

\* \* \*

3:30 p.m.

The much advertised snow hasn't come yet. Baladeva says the storm is the talk of the town, and the supermarkets are jammed with people trying to stock their shelves as if for a famine. The ground is hard, but there's little ice. Gun shots echo through the woods. Hope they don't shoot *me*. They're not supposed to hunt on our land, but they do anyway.

This is my old woods path where I used to want to pray. Am I different now? Taller? More cynical?

\* \* \*

6 p.m.

I feel militant in a private way about not taking part in the ISKCON shove or the hashing of bitter, anti-ISKCON feelings. I don't need to explain my attitude to others. I have to simply hoe my garden winter and spring. My garden is routine time savored day after day, week after week "the routine of reading, writing, praying, and hoping. Hare Krishna.

December 30, 1:20 a.m.

Chanted nine rounds. Everything is surface barely scratched. That's one reason we're returning to Ireland. When moving quickly from one place to another, it is difficult even to keep track of your pencil, what to speak of your life. I feel too scattered. Can't remember what it is I wanted to think about.

A brother mentioned yesterday that it was debatable whether Krishna is more pleased that senior devotees are doing introspective work, or that they cooperate to organize and push on ISKCON. I don't feel I have a choice right now between them. Leave me to go apart. I talk to myself all the time. I want to escape not only management and the social scene, but literary and religious poses. My writing is for sharing, and that is my preaching, my attempt to help push on the cause.

The day after tomorrow I will speak to Press workers about EJW. They can harvest other writings from time to time too. The newspaper that has been left here to start fires (dated November 17) says Clinton is entering his "lame-duck phase." Could a private *sadhaka* become a lame duck in his own life? Not if he practices *sadhana* in earnest.

\* \* \*

Scratches From The Surfaces

& Trying to get something done. A man is unhappy with his life because he's not a devotee. He has unique feelings to get out in art but people don't like it so much.

\* \* \*

He says he's an organized fellow 'cause he has an Executive Scanner to keep track of the days  
and he keeps it  
in a binder.

He is still crying, but  
the people want a tune they can hum  
one they can tap their foot to.  
Damn the people!

They say Nero himself might have started that six-day fire in Rome.

\* \* \*

Man says here at Gita-Nagari he may be discouraged by  
peacocks noises. It is a strange sight,  
that congregation of large birds  
that are supposed to remind you  
of Vrndavana.

I'm missing the wave. *The New Yorker* cartoons spoof artists and the  
human attempt "joke about abstract expression  
foolishness of various kinds.  
But the strength to sing out  
anyway. "

\* \* \*

3:30 a.m.

O Krishna, what did Suta Gosvami say? He will tell of how Maharaja Pariksit was  
touring and stopped for a drink of water at the hermitage of Samika Rsi. Then I will be  
expected to speak. I won't say, "Madhu said it was sad when he spoke on the phone to  
Samika Rsi's wife and told her that we decided not to visit their house this year." She's  
such a nice person. There are *so* many nice persons. You can't satisfy them all. Maharaja  
Pariksit's visit to the original Samika Rsi "that is different.

Instead of speaking about our Samika Rsi, I'll remember things Prabhupada taught on  
the *Bhagavatam* themes. Sometimes I think I have graduated from reading his books. I  
mean, I have read them so many times, so when I lecture, I should be able to speak from  
what I know. That's true, but it always seems fresher when I prepare for the lecture.  
Besides, it's a good trick to get me to spend more time reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. I  
am so dull that I don't realize my need for it, don't realize what it does to me when I stay  
away from it. And it's not that when I don't read the *Bhagavatam*, I don't read anything. I  
never stop reading.

Then let me look at the purport where Prabhupada praises the process of hearing  
about Lord Hari, leading up to his telling the narration of what happened when the king  
was touring.

The snowstorm finally arrived. I can inspect it. The snow is a friendly presence. It  
was a heavy fall "it's piled quite a few inches deep.

\* \* \*

5:30 a.m.

First signs of a headache. Rush for an Esgic. Counting all the things I'm supposed to  
do this week.

But I'm an invalid "almost.

O fate, let me through. Early on this morn when my right eye is signaling "

Oh yes, yes

ghosts are gone

dancers here are souls

who want me

to prepare their feast.

Well, who's gonna offer it to God?

\* \* \*

7:40 a.m.

About a foot of snow must have fallen overnight and it's still snowing wet, cold, lashing snow. The creek is still flowing, though, although I see ice floes in it. At this hour in the morning, the sky isn't giving much light. The world is almost a monochrome gray-brown. I don't feel any extra *elan*, but I don't expect it now that I'm older. I'm no puppy running breathless in the snow. rather, I can't forget that I'm running on Esgic this morning. Big lumps of snow hang on the topside of tree branches and on the side of the trunks where the wind blows.

I hear a steady sound, perhaps the sawmill whining. It's a pretty world, but alien. What used to be the *brahmacari* house is swathed in snow. If I could just see a little further, I'd see the old cows and oxen suffering in their muddy yard.

\* \* \*

Winter birds looking for something to eat at the feeders. Madhu is playing the melodeon, and the sound floats out into this white world where I'm trying to walk. I'm reluctant to go back inside. Even a dull old fellow . . . it must be good for my health to take deep breaths out here. The old Gita-Nagari past looms up, like the lonely cry of a bird. remember the Eastern pewee? If I can't feel ecstasy in this moment, at least let me write that down truthfully.

\* \* \*

Pannonica  
& A blue day I mean  
gray-white day, he painted his insides out.

\* \* \*

He horned his way in  
but failed  
because you have to be a true devotee  
to really compose  
a lecture to arouse  
the sentiments  
we've all heard about  
so many times.  
Love works that way.

\* \* \*

Hiding out at a PA farm  
snow-bound "there's  
no way I can find the buried  
treasure in the palm of  
my hand.  
The wind blows flakes  
of snow  
picks up that deep  
dark color of  
the Tuscarora  
the "Yamuna river" sign  
temporarily  
obscured.

\* \* \*

II  
The time of snow  
coming down on us  
before the epic  
*Ramayana*  
or *Mahabharata* was  
conceived.  
What?

\* \* \*

Yes, long ago when Krishna  
spoke to the sun-god  
when I had attention  
(which I intend to revive)  
you'd see snow  
you'd see clouds  
you'd see planes soaring overhead  
and "It's not over yet"  
still meant something.

\* \* \*

The morning power comes  
from God "see Him  
there and nowhere else  
in Yamuna  
at Govardhana.

That's right. That's right.

\* \* \*

### III

So we stopped to listen to  
the brook  
our ears alert  
alive even though we  
are a dead 58

\* \* \*

even though all is gone  
from Gita-Nagari's past  
and I am in an instant and  
Madhu plays "Pannonica"  
on his melodeon.

\* \* \*

O *Gita* verses I am  
as intent on you  
as he is on his music  
I thank Krishna for  
favoring us by  
finally taking away  
last illusions  
to leave us so small and  
naked and finally  
surrendered  
Yes, I look forward  
to that culmination  
as He wills. "

\* \* \*

### Noon

The snow has stopped, but the wind still picks up the drifts and hurls them here and there. Annapurna and Bhagavan Rsabha jointly cooked my lunch. They're heating it up in the other room. I won't show my face. Did about six "first drafts" on Bristol boards. Considering how to insert vital words into the semi-abstract drawings. Watched slide show of colored drawings with Madhu to time it. He saw it for the first time and didn't say a word after sixty-six slides. Even while watching it, the Irish tunes were going through his head, I know. His music has taken him into another world.



Baladeva says the deer come close to his window "he leaves them food. After deer season he notices who in the family "mother, father, children "is missing. "It's a personal thing."

You get used to the snow as soon as it falls. We go through so much as if it were routine.

\* \* \*

3:45 p.m.

Still windy. I see big scarves of snow in some places. The snow is not so wet, so I fall through it as I walk. Where the plow has passed, the earth is muddy underneath. The thermometer barely reads freezing.

I've chosen six topics for the classes in Baltimore, and one for the temple here tomorrow on *Bhag.* 1.18.21. The Supreme Lord is declared as the one Lord even over the demigods. Someone may be coming to hear me, expecting something especially honest or personal or artsy, but I'll speak in the simple way Prabhupada did. Otherwise I'd be guilty of speculation. Many religions claim their God is the only one. I'll just say what Prabhupada said "how Krishna fits the bill for the description of Supreme Being. I'm never able to completely describe or explain why this conclusion is not sectarian "it's taken as sectarian by everyone else "but it's our science. "As far as we followers of the *Vedas* are concerned . . . since we are Gaudiya Vaisnavas . . . " That means we've heard all the various evidence and we've concluded that Krishna is supreme. We're not going to be dissuaded just because others don't accept it.

\* \* \*

### Active Imagination, Episode #2

John stepping out of his truck faintly reminds me of Tony (from the 1980s) who later left us and sued. This man looks friendlier. His truck has a snowplow attached. Does *dandavats* when he sees me. I bow low from waist, like a Chinese. Not going to soil *my dhoti* in the snow-mud. He says he doesn't want to disturb me, but offers obeisances and adds a "Hello."

From out of the winter air . . . Gray seeds piled on the snow. Many small birds, and others who don't usually come "cardinals, blue jays "their cries chasing away the competitors. A squirrel tries to run but keeps shimmering down into the snow, leaping forward, falling through, finally making it to the tree.

The dark, dark, shiny water. Baladeva says he has an important phone call to make, but the phone is so hot with incoming calls that he can't call out.

We talk about how to make tempera thicker. He's mixing saffron. M. stands by silently while I take off my boots.

"I don't see how this is an episode. Where are the unconscious images rising?"

Rising like steam from a kettle or  
heat from a wood stove

or Krishna from the pages of the manifest *Bhagavatam*.

One God, Krishna.

One God, one

hymn, one work,  
 one *sastra*,  
 one mantra "*Gita-mahatmya*.  
 "I don't see how this qualifies . . . "  
 Written on a Pukka pad  
 puck-a.  
 Shiny water reflecting columns of trees and light from the sky,  
 Rippling and blackish  
 water moving down stream.  
 "I don't see . . . "  
 This afternoon moving so swiftly, temp 30°. Forecast?  
 Told John I'd be at the temple in the morning (to repeat that there is one God,  
 Krishna).  
 My ankle. Tree loaded with snow.  
 Groaning,  
 freezing,  
 everyone has *dharma*.  
 I clowned, outdoors, miming Baladeva as he sat indoors at desk and phone.  
 The *sannyasi* makes fun, staggers off into the snow, thinking of that Himalayan path  
 leading north to the land of no return.  
 "I don't ""  
 Oh, you will, if you will just see what's already happening. The snow has fallen off  
 the "Yamuna river" sign and now you can read it.  
 "Does Krishna . . . "  
 "Is your Krishna here now?"  
 And then she died.  
 Think of words to insert into drawings like:  
 I wanted to remember Krishna.  
 Easy and hard sayings.  
 Six turnips in winter.  
 They are dirt-poor here "and I wanted to get away from it. I'll send you a flurry of  
 letters, I'll write a whole book in the form of letters to you, okay? Then sink me under.  
 Words you could insert:  
 Boy up a tree, angry ex-*gurukuli* at local tavern, girl at hospice, Krishna tramp a new  
 saint, nobody knows, *haribol*, *hari-nama*, Hare Krishna, ISKCON  
 and so on.  
 Now it's calm. This is a pause. Hold in for a moment this pale blue sky because very  
 soon it will fade into dusk, and the delicate branches up there will no longer be visible.  
 You will have missed them. You won't even know if it has begun to snow again.

\* \* \*

Bhaktin Donna Lee  
 &O Krishna, there's no way,  
 he said, but to be in love with the

Krishna conscious preacher.  
There's no way but to go  
with that preacher  
downtown and follow  
him as he gives out books  
or whatever it is he does.

\* \* \*

There's another thing "a cookie  
he gave  
he said work hard.  
Your art influences me,  
said Donna Lee.

\* \* \*

She said she couldn't go so fast  
so I shouldn't expect her to be  
in love with a Krishna conscious preacher  
Right way "as if attached  
to a *sadhu*.

\* \* \*

Then I ran around the  
bend. Snow fell so  
heavily I didn't know  
what was going to  
happen.

\* \* \*

Donna Lee, would you like  
to be a devotee despite  
what your parents say?  
Hide the Deities  
rent a flat  
move into temple.

\* \* \*

Donna Lee went to France.  
Okay, at least chant.

\* \* \*

But do *you*, *sadhu*?  
Yes, I do, yes, I do.

\* \* \*

I don't refrain  
from that sort of thing.  
I'm no madman  
moving too fast  
because spiritual life ought to  
be slower  
and not jumped into  
like a freezing cold creek.

\* \* \*

Anna Donna, may  
we call you Dina-bandu?  
May we arrange your  
marriage  
and carriage and *sari*?

\* \* \*

Dina, will you  
like it if we plan  
the whole thing for  
you "as if you were a real  
person?"

\* \* \*

## II

The old time revived  
He so loved that old  
master  
he imitated him.

\* \* \*

We imitate Prabhupada's  
sounds, walk with  
canes, wear his  
dress, speak  
tough English

but still  
can't make it.

\* \* \*

"Be a puppet," he said.

\* \* \*

Donna Lee agreed and became a new  
generation of disciple.  
She twirled her baton  
a last time  
and became transcendental.

\* \* \*

And times had changed.  
I am not the initiating guru of everyone  
in her state "no more of that. This is  
no longer the  
1980s. "

\* \* \*

6:21 p.m.

Fingers stained with crayons. "Please give me my clothes," I say to M. as a near-last thing each night. We preserve the rituals. Then I put my dentures in a plastic cup. I've had this cup about six years. I took it from the dinner tray of the Indian Airlines in-flight service, and it's still holding up.

"Did you enjoy the snow?"

Yes. I made a snowman family from it and married them off in ten minuets.

I am now a *sannyasi* again.

From the snow emitted a blue flame and a dragon. Then a man stepped out and asked, "Do you follow your guru?"

Yes, although I could do a lot better.

"Do you think your writing reflects the times in America?"

No, not exactly. It doesn't matter.

He was going to say something more, but he looked up and we realized that both of us were blathering; it had no meaning.

The snow in the dark is like a feeble light, and anyone attempting to out-power Krishna is like that.

But he didn't have any images, that man, so went his way.

December 31, 2 a.m.

"Wendell Berry is a Robert Bly with overalls and calluses," said Acarya dasa. Berry advocates that agricultural reform must come from the outsiders to the present agribusiness systems. He even compares it to a religious convention and the reformer who goes apart from it, practices intensely, and thus contributes to his tradition.

It's cold. The temple here has become shabbier, and there is little heat. The pillows upon which we sit are thin. But we each chant *japa* until the doors open, and I don't dare take notes in public. I'm too much of an outsider here now.

"Increase of LSD cases in hospitals," the newspapers reported during Swamiji's first winter in Manhattan. "Snowstorm sends hundreds to shelters." "Loitering," he said. Taking the bus downtown (counting his pennies) to call on Harvey Cohen, but he wasn't home. "Hopeless." He bought a few fruits in the Westend Superette each time.

O Krishna.

Prepare to see Radha-Damodara. Be open to Them. And may my Radha-Govinda know that I'm thinking of Them.

\* \* \*

Dream: Prabhupada is detained in Guyana and convicted of breaking the law. This has all been engineered by the government to catch him for traveling unauthorized to different parts of the country. Prabhupada listens to the charges with gravity. He accepts what is happening as Krishna's will. Then a government authority points to me to recognize me as Prabhupada's servant. I must go to jail with him. I am ready for that. I know I'm not sufficient to serve him in such a place, but I'm ready to try.

\* \* \*

4:55 a.m.

It was too dark in the temple room just before *mangala-arati* for me to take notes, so I chanted *japa*. This is a new Gita-Nagari for me "all new devotees and a different, but warm, atmosphere. New filmy white curtains on the windows. But as soon as I saw Radha-Damodara, I felt at home again and was able to sing with feeling. As the *arati* finished, I suddenly noticed that MandaleSvara was standing beside me. For a moment I thought of handing him the *karatalas* and asking him to sing the Nrsimha prayers, but I didn't. I regretted that I missed the opportunity. Anyway, I have now returned, walking over the frozen crusts.

\* \* \*

Pile of shoes in temple lobby "what story do they tell? I'm no haiku poet. I'm not even a pure devotee. I still skim the surface.

Open door "

baby Srivasa in Madhava's arms.

Vegavati smiles.

\* \* \*

Clown  
&Sure enough, this  
clown blundering.

\* \* \*

O pretty miss, the snow is  
quiet and I'm quiet because  
the medicine  
works.  
You want me to  
open up *my* heart?

\* \* \*

I'm not an insincere stalwart  
so tell your sister and your mama  
that this clown is louting.  
I love him too "he is  
after all  
a devotee.

\* \* \*

I heard you discoursed  
on *dhira*, so tell us more.  
Well it was like this "  
I was a clown indeed  
but *dhira*.  
Christ was tolerant even  
on the cross, and  
Lord Nityananda was  
"cross out the word, you  
made a mistake.

\* \* \*

He said the empty spaces  
indicate where they will  
build houses in the future.

\* \* \*

Can they see into my  
Room paintings of jest  
where I read a guru's newsletter  
and say, "All high persona"?  
Am I better  
prolonged fast  
this tat-tat-tat reprimand?

\* \* \*

"Thank you for coming you  
exalted Vaisnava" "I reply  
with a trombone solo  
and squeak. "

\* \* \*

3:10 p.m.

The afternoon is freezing up. Taking a walk on the ice with my weak ankle, looking for flat land. Hope nobody shows up to chat. All these days "we seem to forget most of them. Before I gave the *Bhagavatam* class this morning, the temple president introduced me and said that wherever you go in the world and mention you're from Gita-nagari, people say something about me. I was surprised to hear it. It seemed almost as if he were talking about someone else. Was I flattered? A little. But I knew, too, it meant nothing to my current life. After that, I got down to business and gave the lecture.

The devotees here are loving. Another devotee wrote me a letter saying how various disciples of mine in the Gita-Nagari area have helped her again and again through different situations "caring for her children and giving her food and other practical assistance when she needed it. She also said she reads my books. I made a formal reply, but only because sometimes I use the same words too many times.

The peacocks bunching in front of the cabin, not the least bit afraid when I walk through their midst. They hardly move out of the way.

\* \* \*

Dusk New Year's Eve  
&Dusk blue the  
columns sinking  
before my eyes  
but I don't forget  
it's God.

\* \* \*



Sun gone "white peahen, is she  
wounded? Crying?  
Peahen as white  
as snow flits to roof, lands  
on snow crust.

\* \* \*

Krishna, I heard *nama*  
while walking outdoors.

\* \* \*

II  
Krishna, Krishna, I call  
on You and the effort  
will be dusk-like,  
water in the creek, frozen.

\* \* \*

Stark white flakes "snowing  
again. Would like to go out and walk  
but I'm indoors reading the *Bhagavatam*.

\* \* \*

Look! Wind moving a  
ten-foot-tall evergreen  
thin  
branches  
shiver  
and snow drops.

\* \* \*

III  
It moves me not.  
A sheaf of colored drawings I  
enjoy the messages they contain.  
I explain to a friend how  
I painted them.

\* \* \*

Krishna, Krishna, and Narada "the words

laid on or pasted later  
Krishna  
wants devotion  
controlled senses  
worship.

\* \* \*

IV  
Right now in Vrndavana, some *sadhus*  
have very few clothes and only old  
Ripped burlap bags for bedclothes.  
I hear *their* sounds now in my mind.  
Sweet *bhava* "holy rocks  
dirt eternal. "

\* \* \*

5:45 p.m.

I'm kept up all day by the medicine I take at 10 a.m. I seem to be locked in a syndrome of early morning pain and then pain medication. I can't keep it up.

Twice now my Lord Nrsimhadeva picture has fallen off this desk. I'm not bowing down much to pictures here, not even looking into them, not offering my food to my photos of Prabhupada and Radha-Govinda. They bring the food in and say, "It's already offered." No separate plate on the altar, no prayers from me. I'd like to return to the other system where I make the prayers and see the little dish before Prabhupada and Radha-Govinda.

Twenty people are supposed to show up tomorrow for the Press meeting. Some of them are "Gita-Nagari Press workers for a day." It's a show for them, except for those core workers who actually do the work.

One brother wrote that he'll be going to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* for verses. We have to read carefully every day if we want Krishna to appear in our lives. I am one of the oldest devotees. I think that enjoyable privilege can last forever, but I am mistaken. I used to be "what I used to be. In another life I will receive another chance to move in on the ground floor while the building is going up. Am I proud to be part of ISKCON? Is this the movement I hoped it would be? If not, then what is it? What of you?

I have to hand it to my brother. He has recruited devotees, and they're a loving group. My followers may not be so loving. What do I have to give them to rally under? I have no farm, no cows, no city project "just my books, my solitary art pushed out for the welfare of humanity. If someone wants to work for that project, he or she is welcome. If my disciples have the faith that my books are worthwhile, then they may want to help in their distribution. So far, our distribution is not well organized. And because of the personal nature of it all, I don't want to push anyone to help. It is a worthy project, it is preaching, and I will defend it.

January 1, 1998, 3:15 a.m.

What you lectured yesterday (last year) to the devotees is meant for me too. That is, don't mess with sex desire. Protect yourself from that by following etiquette. Don't be alone with the opposite sex. What is pure can become polluted because the senses are like poisonous serpents. Be careful.

Good advice. ready to go to *mangala-arati*. Pray to Radha-Damodara. O Radha-Damodara, please allow me to be devoted to You in Your forms as Radha-Govinda. Let all my mind's attractions flow toward serving Them and no one else in this material world. I have passed through the years when physical lust was strongest by keeping myself in check by Prabhupada's grace and my *sannyasa* vow. I am now approaching sixty, praying that You will keep me unscathed until my death. Let me now give all my energy to You.

This first day of the year seems to mean nothing to us here. We didn't even mention yesterday that it was New Year's Eve. It's simply not on our minds. Now the numbers have changed from 1997 to 1998. This year, I doubt I will go to India, so I will have to practice seeking Vrndavana wherever I am. Vrndavana means loving Krishna. Hare Krishna.

One thing I want to say to the new year: I will welcome more poems this year, more published books, more creative writing, and especially more reading. Of course, I also should be prepared to welcome more physical pain and be prepared for whatever comes my way. I'm no saint, and I wouldn't mind this year being uneventful in terms of accidents and mishaps. But I may not be spared. Therefore, I can only pray to remember Krishna and to know that whatever comes to me is for my own good. That's a general New Year's Day hope: to use my time well and to keep my priority of chanting and hearing even while I mix art.

\* \* \*

Your Signature  
& He's got a signature "we  
each have a way  
that's all ours "an  
intro theme.

\* \* \*

Why is it quirky, mine?  
Krishna, I'm walking on an icy  
crust. You help me at  
each step, even those in which I fall  
and break a  
wrist, an arm, a head.  
You are never lazy or  
neglectful in our  
care.

\* \* \*

Now let me spend my time  
in Your service,  
and let me  
use my time  
well.

\* \* \*

I mean, let me not mess with  
women "don't let  
them lean on me  
or me on them  
or smell their fragrance  
even in my dreams.  
Krishna, You guide my steps  
and You are never neglectful  
of my  
care. "

\* \* \*

After The Clubhouse  
& You know my secret fun  
in the clubhouse, I said "  
Little Lulu and  
Tubby and  
your memories help us  
she said  
to throw away our own I  
thought well maybe we  
want to keep them just to feel  
the delight of letting go  
the Lulu balloon  
Rising over Fifth Avenue  
at ratha-yatra.

\* \* \*

Lohitaksa gone to  
next life "such a handsome  
talented guy, a credit  
to ISKCON. He and his wife  
broke the stereotype of  
cultists dull.

\* \* \*

Oh, save  
the black and white  
make-believe whales.

\* \* \*

What else, man, happened  
in your clubhouse when  
you gathered in your crowd?  
Oh, they said  
the fruit of this can be  
made into juice and jam  
anyone not present today  
can join later.

\* \* \*

A kid hit me from behind with  
his smart cart he was  
a Jew or black  
at least he wasn't  
a Hare Krishna "ouch!  
Didn't even say, "Sorry."  
Blues the mood piping along  
no one is loverly best  
the champ gets defeated  
you better read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and  
talk on *those* subjects not  
bubble gum,  
playing marbles  
'cause that won't get you  
(or anyone else)  
to heaven,  
you spirit soul.

\* \* \*

That sweet tune  
haven and laden with  
love the tune that  
gets you set up to  
say  
monk-in-cell prayers  
Gopala mantras, *kama-gayatri*

and Lord Caitanya  
ah  
um  
Krishna, Krishna, we love the  
Lord  
we underlings. "

\* \* \*

12:15 p.m.

*Srimad-Bhagavatam* verse for tomorrow is about Maharaja Pariksit and what happened. The whole scenario was arranged by Krishna to draw him back to Godhead as soon as possible. Lecture on Srila Prabhupada's life: *yasyaham* . . . and Queen Kunti on the four things that are drawbacks to a person's spiritual progress.

Can I claim I want Krishna to "draw me back to Godhead" as soon as possible? What will it cost? Whenever we finally surrender, we'll remember these teachings and see how true they are even in our own lives: Krishna pulls us out of our entanglement, especially the false notion that we can enjoy the self in the body. Learn the lessons.

Man, they praise you  
once a year like this?  
One who is complacent cannot  
call out holy names as one  
who is helpless.

\* \* \*

His preaching was effective, slick, intelligent. He was good.

"I didn't write you a letter, but here I am talking to you."

Okay.

"Please give me beads and tassels upon which to pray."

He said, "I am a rebel anti-Christian, so I can't take the suggestion to pray."

I told him to cool down; I can't pray either.

\* \* \*

3:20 p.m.

Walking through the snow in my medium-sized boots. Thinking of material things instead of Krishna, such as how we'll drive to New York and catch the plane. I plan to wear two pairs of socks under these boots. Yes, I'll wear boots on the plane because they're small enough to be stylish and they'll keep my feet warm and then I won't have to carry them in the suitcase.

I can hear water flowing by the creek. By the edges of the creek, the ice is thin. Think over the lecture about how Krishna takes away attachments and signals a devotee to come back to Godhead. You could say it's one of those difficult scriptural sayings, yet it's not something we have to learn to do. Krishna does it Himself. We just have to hang on while He moves us without losing faith. It takes seeing that the difficult things

happening in our lives are actually divine arrangements meant for our benefit. That's the difficult part: managing not to despair and never losing sight of Krishna. It is difficult to give up this material world and all the material conceptions to which we are attached. It is difficult to face the reality that life in this world is pure illusion.

\* \* \*

Easy and difficult. It seems easy to go through a day eating, sleeping, giving a lecture, a little writing, but difficult to be Krishna conscious, humble, a recipient of Krishna's special attention. His attention is rare and difficult to attain, but even more difficult is to face that we haven't attained love of God, difficult to do anything about it to improve.

\* \* \*

First Day Of The Year Blues  
& I have nothing special to say. "I'm a sad fellow,  
a sad case," wrote a disciple  
from a big town.  
My reply was cursory.  
I can't seem to take time.  
I say, "Ireland will be  
the place." I'll think of Vrndavana there  
but won't it be  
the same?

\* \* \*

Maybe the thing is I'm not the strongest  
man in the world  
not like some of *these* people.  
I can only sit on a seat  
and speak ideals and splice ropes  
with knots to present situations.

\* \* \*

Here is how I do it:  
you sit alone with scriptures  
and talk to Him  
with everyday talks

\* \* \*

O Krishna, Krishna, how silly  
I sound, I know,  
You who like our voices

to cry for ourselves but not only "  
we should cry for all.

\* \* \*

"I found Lord Nityananda's mercy this  
year in Mayapur" "I find it  
hard to believe my brothers  
find what I see no trace of.  
Sounds like they are talking of  
something  
nowhere.

\* \* \*

Where is your heart?  
In new gloves, new shoes, too much  
pampering ""A pair of boots  
for Gita-Nagari and a pair for  
travel," pies for dessert?  
So sad. Well, such  
music makes us merry  
at least. I'm saying this for  
your benefit:  
return to  
your Krishna. "

\* \* \*

5:15 p.m.

It has been a treat tonight watching the peacocks fly one at a time into the trees or onto the small roof. It's quite an operation. Each one takes off, a few minutes after the last. I thought of 747s taking off at the airport. I think they have to get into the trees before it gets too dark. They're not such agile flyers; they have to leap and flap. Baladeva says they have no natural enemies here.

\* \* \*

5:37 p.m.

Yellow pad page. Someone said they were benefiting from their silent mental chanting, but didn't want to mention it in case the good results would go away. Are there things like that I don't like to say?

January 2, 1:45 a.m.



Hope I hold up to give the class. Examine Srila Prabhupada's situation in seeing Krishna take away his business. He was meant to be a special preacher. We are meant for surrender to Krishna, which is special. If we accept the premise (fact) that Lord Krishna is guiding our life, then in the so-called material, or spiritual, reverse there is a lesson, a meaning "He wants us to take it in a Krishna conscious way.

\* \* \*

Kaliya-damana dasa joined us on the way to *mangala-arati* this morning. I reminded him of the time he was Bhakta Kent and we traveled around the United States together. Jolly talk "how he used to inquire about the American Indians, knew about sequoias, and knew the fastest bird alive.

Devotees from elsewhere have begun to arrive at Gita-Nagari. There was fast dancing at *mangala-arati* with old-timers like HaryaSva and Damodara present. My ankle, wrapped in a brace, prevented me from participating. MandaleSvara Prabhu stood beside me. The *pujari* had forgotten to give ViSakha her *camara* after the offering, so Ekavira Prabhu whispered through the door to Jaya Gaurasundara, who was doing the *arati*.

On my way out to the coat rack, I ran into Radha-Ramana dasa.

\* \* \*

Some time ago, a local psychic said I had completed only a third or a half of my work, that I would keep writing more but would be frustrated that it wasn't coming out as quickly as I wanted. Finally, after writing many volumes, I would reach a point of satiation. In other words, I would no longer be frustrated about my impotence; I would be satisfied that I had said what I wanted to say. After that, I would stop.

\* \* \*

A nap after breakfast and another death-related dream, this time of a tombstone. Several of us were waiting to be assigned numbers for our tombstones. Somebody gives me the number 30, but I didn't think it was the correct number. I asked an official to check on my number. He was polite and said he would check, but he assured me that I needn't be worried about it.

\* \* \*

10:20 a.m.

I took an Esgic at 8:30 a.m. while sitting on the *vyasasana* giving the lecture, but it was probably too late. The pain is still raging. Looking forward to returning to Ireland, and the ebb and flow of living with pain without pressure.

January 3

Resisting

&I was resisting it but

let me write, this  
last day at Gita-Nagari.  
I can separate pain  
from feeling it, he told me  
but  
I know only a few ways  
and then  
Prabhupada will be with me  
me flying on a breeze.

\* \* \*

I haven't even looked  
out at the sky or trees or  
anything this morning.  
The man in my soul  
is me and this  
will lead me  
all my days running until I  
travel down that same road  
of death.

\* \* \*

At death the piano won't play unless  
I recorded it ahead, and my  
unknown self will move on to another  
life where again it will be difficult  
to keep time straight.

\* \* \*

Pretty sky ugly toad  
and forbidden  
areas for celibate monks.  
The holidays are over for  
the nondevotees  
and a flu is going around.  
"Get a BMW: Stop  
Dreaming, Start Driving." They let you have it  
on "great  
lease terms"  
and don't cover up  
nothin'.  
The truth spoken the  
way they like. "

\* \* \*

8:15 a.m.

Feeling mentally nowhere, even sour. Can't seem to think of Krishna. Can't go to Prabhupada's books. Just some outer resistance. I'm scheduled to play Prabhupada tape excerpts for devotees at 3 p.m., if I'm up to it. Maybe that will help.

Warmer today "icicles melting, snow settling down wet. I need faith in all the main things of my life "faith in writing, faith in publishing, but first faith in writing even without publishing. Faith that my writing is a service acceptable to my spiritual master. Faith in my spiritual master and in Krishna. Good old *vaidhi-bhakti* recommends that we just go ahead and do our prescribed duties even if we don't feel like it. Once we get going, the feeling will arise.

\* \* \*

9:12 a.m.

The basic act of handwriting. I have to be willing. The cause of Vyasa's dissatisfaction may be mine right now "I didn't sufficiently glorify Krishna's pastimes and teachings.

A stick-on label on the *mrdanga*: "BBT "read Srila Prabhupada's Books." I noticed it yesterday while HaryaSva was playing the drum and I was leading "Jaya radha-Madhava." Good advice, but I'm sour on it. That's what my mind is feeding me right now.

How will I get back to regular reading? I really feel the need to go home. I will probably start again on the Sixth Canto and write as I read.

\* \* \*

I won't go to the temple anymore during this visit. When I see Radha-Damodara, I remember my Radha-Govinda. I know now what I want.

\* \* \*

A gift of kindling from Turiya. We don't use it though. Turiya says hard times are ahead, even if people don't know it. He is canning vegetables and fruits for survival. What can I say to that? Maybe he will live and I will die because he was so clever. Or . . .

Yes, I'm here in the cabin at last, but not really. I can't stay more than a few days before the pressure to attend temple programs will get too much. I can't take the pressure of having to perform. It causes me physical pain. Once again I'm shown that this cabin is no longer my home.

Kaliya-damana gave me some pages from *The Natural Way*, a magazine on migraine. They advise against painkillers. The more you take, they say, the more rebound headaches you'll get. Rather, they recommend a particular Chinese exercise to get your endorphins flowing. They also recommend sex or masturbation in order to increase the flow of endorphins. I found myself glad to read that nonsense because I was feeling a

need to criticize the natural remedies that never worked for me. Some of these people are just as righteous as the allopaths. Still, they are right "analgesics cause rebound headaches. Strenuous days ahead in Baltimore, ending with a Sunday initiation, a Sunday drive to New York City, and a Monday night flight to Dublin. Immediately after, I have to drive to Inis rath. May Krishna protect me.

\* \* \*

3:05 p.m.

Cars driving up to the cabin through the snow and mud. They think I'm going to speak, but Madhu will tell them I have canceled due to pain.

Still, I want to give access to those who love me, but let me go on giving the best I can to *anyone* who wants something. I used to say I spend time alone to make myself more fit as a devotee, but now I admit I crawl off just to remain sane. I crave peace and quiet. Being alone is the best life for a chronic sufferer, better than placing oneself in a target house at Gita-Nagari or somewhere else, where you announce that you will give an afternoon talk and then hear the guests arrive through a haze of pain.

These guests arriving can't see me through the curtains "I keep them closed except the ones facing the creek. This famous wonderful creek. It can no longer be mine.

It's almost black, but I see the reflected columns of trees on the creek bank. The spaces between the columns are still light and silvery. I could go out for a walk, but someone might see me and wonder why I cancelled the class. Still, this is my last chance to walk here.

\* \* \*

3:22 p.m.

Out for a walk. Red lines across some of the trees. Does that mean they're dead? Snow melting. I can hear the creek gurgling. I've been to the place now where quite a few ISKCON swamis and lecturers come "the community cabin. No haiku moment here, just what I see and hear. Water floating on top of what was once a frozen puddle. Stumbling words, aching ankle, pockmarks in the snow. Many tracks, probably from deer. The guns going off earlier. I think this may be the last day of the hunting season. The last day in the life of deer who have lived this long only to be shot today.

I received two urgent letters from Japan, both from devotees who have just completed the book distribution marathon. I told them I was on a marathon too. How surprising to see the flock of peacocks on the ground near the cabins. They're quite at home. Some wild bird is punctuating the air with its call "it's not a blue jay's call, but something warning, warning. Across the creek you can see all the neighbors' farm houses "the trees don't protect us in winter.

I haven't been out long, but I have to return. Too many aches. I'm determined to write this quiet flow without being ashamed of repetition and to find bit by bit the places where I want to go (in some cases, where I've already been), and be happy about my life.

Mud on snow. The car tracks form ruts as soon as evening comes and the temperature drops. It's funny being in a place like this after having spent a few weeks in the tropics. It makes you feel like you don't belong in either place, that you're always a visitor.

\* \* \*

4:30 p.m.

Went into Baladeva's house after my slushy walk. MandaleSvara and Madhurya-lila were there. Baladeva told many peacock stories. He also told of the geese, the deer hunters, and a bear who approached the window. As we spoke, the peacocks were looking through the window. I was surprised at the relish with which Baladeva told his stories. I wondered what MandaleSvara thought. But I had a headache and couldn't have spoken anything. Another few moments taken before death comes. Baladeva has a wonderful sense of humor and life. He is brash and outrageous.

Back to my room.

\* \* \*

Tonight  
&Tonight all that will be left is to  
get into a warmed bed with the hope  
that I can sleep.  
There will be nothing to cry for "  
Krishna is far away "  
and very near "  
but how little I know.

\* \* \*

This night a star "a bunch  
of them clear in the night  
and me under the peacock-covered  
Roof "their scratching feet.

\* \* \*

Snow wet melty world  
my inner dreams are not  
ecstatic, just a worried fellow  
but still I'm lucky,  
lucky,  
to be loved, cared for  
and to live  
under the shelter of the Supreme.

\* \* \*

O Krishna, I embrace You  
and knowledge of You.  
I heard in Osaka, Japan,

"We distributed  
one thousand *maha*-big books in  
the red Light district at Christmas time."

\* \* \*

O Krishna, You have  
clipped me back and I can't  
seem to do better, more than keeping time.  
I can do nothing but admit  
I'm simple. "

January 4, 12:10 a.m.

Less than three hours to travel today. Varuna will drive us and our assorted cardboard boxes and luggage to Baltimore in his van. Luggage always has a way of increasing "just look at what we have to carry back to Ireland! I don't want to become an ass carrying a useless burden from place to place "books I'll never read or need. How much land does a man need? Six feet.

Krishna, Krishna, Krishna "fourteen rounds so far. This is the ship's log.

Hare Krishna comes straight from Krishnaloka. "Beyond the self": I usually think of that phrase as impersonal, as if beyond supreme self, beyond any sense of individual ego, there is undifferentiated Brahman. No, the self and Krishna exist eternally. To go beyond my limited self is Krishna consciousness. Beyond preoccupation with the petty concerns that entangle me in this world. I have to go beyond *that* to the simple essence of myself as a needy, tiny spark seeking the shelter of the Supreme. Go beyond complicated discipleship to simplicity. It's possible.

Beyond, beyond, and yet come back to write. Ground the abstract. Smell the ink, hear the pen scratch, note that you are here with hands and feet and a poor head. Heart, a vague presence, ready to flutter or ache, then to finally cut out and die. Died of a heart attack. It started with an infection when he scratched his finger on a rose thorn. Snuffed out by a book review (unfavorable). revived by a Krishna conscious next life "beyond me now, the Lord and my fate.

In the meantime, I'm going to Baltimore to settle in peacefully, I hope, and after a few days, to hold three intense days of meetings. I plan to do the best I can.

\* \* \*

On Leaving Gita-Nagari  
& Music hath charms, they say. I tap  
a toe whenever I am sound in  
the head,  
my poor head "  
oh, you can't know  
the troubles he's seen.

\* \* \*

Please don't intrude now, not  
just now  
I have to create  
while heat cracks into this room  
I have to learn to create  
the original cry  
in a way I never did before.  
O music man of Gita-Nagari you will  
be gone from this fine community  
you're too hurt  
too lone  
too blue  
too new too  
few to be  
part of it again in *this* lifetime.

\* \* \*

I am going to my own campfire now, and the sound we make over there is  
cacophonous but sweet "not a sound you can raise in a group. Apart but  
a part.  
O community of souls,  
O one and many  
we all sound alike  
like sound coming  
out of the horn of a  
Charlie Parker or from under  
Gogol's overcoat,  
we  
Prabhupadanugas  
with our hard, strident interpretations of our  
master  
come down a street,  
the center aisle of Grand  
Cathedral, led by Bharata-natyam 16 -  
year-old girl, two hundred Indian and  
American Hare Krishnas, the old people half-turning  
in their seats to see.

\* \* \*

Laugh at it or cry "we know how  
to do both.  
Where is the heart  
of our Krishna consciousness?  
O Krishna, oh. "

\* \* \*

6:55 a.m.

Dripping eaves. B. Kevin tells me he's writing a heavy philosophical book and wants to know if *The Inner Form of reality* is a good title. Someone thinks they may come to Ireland instead of going to Vrndavana. I wonder about my own attempts. Now is not the time to vacate the guru's seat. rather, prepare for my annual U.S. performances before a packed basement room in insular Baltimore.

Baltinglass. Bounce around in back seats of cars. Guru or not, here we come. And don't forget your enemies. Mail, phone, e-mail "ready to get you. Same old thing you did. Dig it up?

Are you ready to travel, sir? Here are your shoes. Which pair will you wear? What's the weather like there? How about a quick *darSana* with . . . be careful with that tongue, zipper it like seal-tight bag. Preserve thy energies.

Relaxin' at Camarillo. I hereby bequeath he was serious, but no one is as qualified as saints of old, Ramananda Raya, Svarupa Damodara . . .

Think about it. Time for a ride.

\* \* \*

11:50 a.m.

We are at Jaya Gaurasundara's house. I found a battery-run typewriter in the closet and other things left here from last year's visit. A GBC man wants to talk to me. This country has its own dangers.

Bumper sticker: "We are proud of our Eagle Scout." Little radhika is a year older and quite talkative. Got my smiles ready. And my sincerity.

\* \* \*

3:19 p.m.

Sunday In A Closed room

&I want to be Krishna conscious but *free*. I'll get it right "that combination "don't worry. I will see Krishna one day.

"I don't understand how a fella like you can get away with this."

It's easy. Krishna gives and  
you recip-ro-cate by giving it back.

\* \* \*

Here is the home boy in  
two pairs of socks.

He's on the edge of a twinge in  
eye "high price tag for  
life.



\* \* \*

Pain isn't hurt, they say.  
Pain is a picture you remove it's a  
Sunday matinee. You can turn it off.  
At a feast I see a crowded room  
but wish well for devotees  
ethnics  
varied  
men  
and women.

\* \* \*

There is good and there is bad  
and there is also the  
familiar. I spoke at cabin on  
leaving, said God works  
to deliver His devotee  
from out-of-place by  
Removing the thorn.

\* \* \*

If on *parikrama* you get a  
thorn sit down  
at once and remove it with a pin  
or it'll drive in deeper  
with every step. We know  
what to do.

\* \* \*

Read *Bhagavad-gita*:  
the Lord said  
Arjuna heard  
and I partook.

\* \* \*

O Krishna, for You  
I want to free myself  
be myself  
and throw off tedium.

\* \* \*

I want to die in the arms of my Lord "  
that's the truth, isn't it? "

\* \* \*

4:46 p.m.

Reading Srila Prabhupada's 1966 journal. He was trying to start a Krishna consciousness movement before there anyone had even heard of Krishna. Now over thirty years later, the movement has spread around the world, has been deemed a cult, and has developed a decent-sized Indian following.

But so much has changed in those thirty-plus years. I was one of the ISKCON pioneers. Now I am somewhat disabled and disinclined to push on in what we have come to see as the regular way. There are others who have similar feelings. The main thing is that we each have to find what our real contribution is, and we have to see it in relation to ISKCON's need. By doing so, we will each help to offset the version of Krishna consciousness that we usually portray in photo moments like in *Hare Krishna World*, where a *sannyasi* poses with a government person and we don't see him doing anything but that. What *do* devotees do all day? We have to each live that out for ourselves. Whatever it is, we have to make it glorification of Krishna, and we have to be real people.

I hope to be able to do all six classes while I'm here. At the first class I'll speak from this 1966 journal. I have already chosen my favorite sections. I am also preparing a talk on "Krishna in our lives." Aside from those two classes, which require some preparation, the others are ready. *I'm* ready, as long as I can go on stage without pain.

I'll also do an initiation (a re-initiation) while I'm here, I think.

O Krishna, Your holy name comes straight from Krishnaloka. "Chant," I write, and Swamiji *was chanting*, going out to meet people so they too could chant, selling his books so they would *want* to chant, giving lectures so they would have an opportunity to chant with him.

\* \* \*

5 p.m.

I'm not at Gita-Nagari to see the peacocks flying up into their trees. Fragile scenes "all of what happened there. I don't want worship. I do want love. I am happy within my limits. Krishna is moving all things.

January 5, 2:04 a.m.

I just sat with *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* and read from the Introduction, the *Gita-mahatmya* verses, and a verse and purport from the fourth chapter (Lord Krishna speaks for Himself, which is pleasing to the devotees).

\* \* \*

3:41 a.m.

Napped and dreamt of college days. I was singing a ditty. Singing it with enthusiasm too. Woke up with it running through my mind. Will all these jingles and memories finally go away? At the Press meeting, Kalki said *Memories* helped her realize we have to "dump the garbage" from the past. But Madhava appreciated that I not only recall the memories but face and connect them to Krishna consciousness. O strange ditty, please fade away now and let me hear the Lord in His names.

\* \* \*

3:46 a.m.

Not allowing anyone to video my talks here. And no re-initiation. And please, no embarrassing challenges. And don't let in any *rtviks* or such types. What about . . .

Yes, they may ask questions. Eyeglasses magnify my eyes, and I have dentures and a thin face. Hey, I'm gaining weight "just weighed in at 128 pounds. Keep up, stay fat and alive, like a drop of water on a lotus.

Construct bridges "here's a photo of devotees doing *harinama* on the Brooklyn Bridge; here's a photo of flowers on Srila Prabhupada's bed on his disappearance day this year; here's a picture of the Vrindavana *parikrama* you missed; here's a picture of the GBC education advocate and another leader who was on TV, and the one who appears in every issue of the newspaper with one big shot or another, who is helping to enlighten others with his smile and Srila Prabhupada's books.

Here's an ad for Satsvarupa's books. That guy doesn't stop writing, does he?

Madhu has to go out to the Social Security Office this morning to get a number. He's setting himself up to become a U.S. resident even while we plan to reside in Ireland. Don't let it worry me "he knows what he's doing.

As for me, I plan to avoid the tidal wave predicted to swamp Ireland. I trust that Clinton and the American dollar will remain high enough despite the East Asian financial crisis. I joke about Iraq having special weapons because I seem to think I am safe from them. Is this because I know Krishna is my all-powerful Father and will protect me? Or maybe it's because I am simply foolish when it comes to thinking about the danger of living in the material world.

A joke a minute. Don't waste paper or trees. Hare Krishna "chant.

We made a list of devotees who said they were coming to see me in Ireland. One by one we will ask them not to come.

Pampers diaper carton in this room, and sounds of the other bathroom. I want to be sure we get out for a walk before 6 a.m. Radha-Govinda worshiped in this house. I approached Them last night and imagined how Their intimate worshipers must feel. They're actually serving Radha-Govinda. The Lord is kind to appear in the *arca-vigraha* to the one who worships Him.

Krishna in our lives. I want to give us permission to think as if He is always present, which He is. See Him more and more "philosophically as fate, as that background person making all the moves, and more personally, as our best friend, our inner guide, our

protector. His *lila* is in the beyond what we can see in this world, but He is present nevertheless. How much can we open ourselves to Him?

These present moments, which could be filled with tear-filled emotions, I let slip, distracted by immediate concerns. Will I ever go deeper? See Him? How much more truth do I have to face?

\* \* \*

Special Permit

&I am here and would fall asleep if I tried to read *sastra* so I'm begging to  
stay awake in some form of Krishna conscious  
memory  
music  
yearning  
planning.

\* \* \*

Krishna said He started it all  
and Siva finishes it for Him. He said  
"I take My devotees to Me;  
devotees  
are My heart."

\* \* \*

Krishna is the word He  
gave genius to Bird  
and strict orders  
through guru to avoid nondevotees  
and those who care only  
to gratify their senses.

\* \* \*

I have a special permit  
special mission  
special price I have to pay "  
to recall my master from here  
gathering in what I can for  
Krishna  
without going to the weekend conference  
at New Vrndavana,  
without even *hearing* about it  
the Brooklyn Dodger  
O Krishna "will you be truly satisfied

with me?  
You are my life "in my life  
at every moment.

\* \* \*

I'm gonna read  
my way to heaven  
just watch if I don't!  
I won't disappoint my Swami  
but will sing a tune to please  
become a surrendered  
soul right from the shed  
while demanding the freedom  
that has already been given "

\* \* \*

9:33 a.m.

Sitting here with early warning flashing the target area. I can't read through it. Letting myself off until I get back to my room. This book is about getting through. But what links the Gita-Nagari and Baltimore scenes? Me trying to stay calm and cool while devotees wait for me to come out. I know this is important duty, and I have been planning it all year, so I should try to get as much intensity out of it as I can. But that's hard; I am mostly meditating on going back to my quiet routine in Ireland.

Sacinandana Swami wrote that he's teaching a seminar about "the other world." I suggested he balance it by also referring to this world "feet on the ground, the present moment "and how we can now only envision the other world from here. I gave that suggestion.

Confined. Venetian blinds close me off from the outside. The rest of this house is also off limits to me if I want my solitude. Radhika is a preschooler now, and she talks away all day in Gujarati. I don't know what she's saying, but it's obvious that she's the new boss of this family. I suppose all families of small children both love and live with that experience.

My main accomplishment earlier this morning was to write letters to my Godbrothers. Later, we took a walk in the senior citizens' park. It was still so dark at 6 a.m., however, that I had to walk behind M. and follow the flash of his light-colored sweat pants. He said I was like Saksi Gopala "he kept turning around to see if I was still there.

\* \* \*

Embrace What I Can of His Teachings

& There's no way a guy like me can be young again and the truth is head fog rolls in, even on a sunny day. I'm just happy to be able to write some daily lines and hang 'em out to dry in a backyard somewhere.

\* \* \*

When they swerve through  
traffic  
it's far too fast for me I  
sit back and feel my  
pulse.

\* \* \*

Hey, man, I pardon you  
and believe you  
swagger not "slow down  
for this man makin' his  
way through a day with no  
pills.

\* \* \*

He wrote an open letter to  
the Maestro which is the  
way we should do it provided  
he can lead us to freedom  
from death "simply believe.

\* \* \*

At this point embrace what  
you can of his teachings  
lean  
walk/ talk/ write  
a cry would be nice  
but it's got to come  
natural.

\* \* \*

Follow rules  
look at old memorabilia  
of '66, Swami moving to a loft,  
Mr. Paul irritated  
cautious  
Swamiji working on a typewriter.

\* \* \*

I excavate the past "oh! Moving fast  
again. I'm only going  
to a sylvan cave  
to face self  
and others  
to honor all  
saints  
stop *aparadhas*  
to preach.

\* \* \*

I'm sorry for all this limping  
crass- and cross-down shuffle.  
I'm really merry "just need  
a break. "

\* \* \*

12:23 p.m.

Krishna seeds. Narada came from insignificant parentage but gained perfection by association with *bhaktivedantas*. We can follow the same path.

Quiet Catonsville. It's a sunny day, warm for January, so I have opened the window. Perfection is to always think of Krishna as one's worshipable Lord and beloved, and to do whatever He wants. We must give up whatever desires we have that are unrelated to His service. That perfection is far from most of us, probably. rather, we tend to speak of realism and human admittance, and prefer not to make any more unrealistic, fanatical attempts. Still, perfection is the goal, the *param-gati*. Hear *Krishna-katha* and improve.

\* \* \*

5:02 p.m.

Started reading some of the improvisational poems I wrote some time back. Showed them to M. too. He said he liked some of the pieces with the mistakes, and that his own music often has mistakes. My poems have plenty of mistake-feeling to them, but that's how they taste real. I don't want to be reborn with a jazz lover's beat; I want to leave everything and go back to Krishna. O Krishna, please help me be what I am for You.

January 6, 2:15 a.m.

I just opened a beautiful new edition of *Light of the Bhagavata*. I think I'll try to read it again and look for the nectar in how Prabhupada said things. The art of preaching. I want *in*; I don't want to remain out. We live for a short while each lifetime, and move through many species of life. Austerity should be aimed at attaining eternity, bliss, and

knowledge. About the Chinese artist of *Light of the Bhagavata*, the publishers say the Gongbi style she uses is very intricate, and her work contains meticulous care and labor. "It is only after a lifetime of practice and experience that she has acquired such a skillful hand." She's now teaching students to preserve the tradition. Like any artist, I'm sure she can't worry about a perfect product every time she sits down to work; over time, her perfection at her art grows. I can learn from that.

\* \* \*

Dreamt that devotees were working with other compassionate people to save cows. In one scene, a cow became angry at her abusers, and the only thing people could do was beg forgiveness in hopes that the cow would return to her natural humility. Lots of emotional scenes in the dream, and the devotees and others were performing incredible austerities to protect the cows. I was left with an impression of the nobility of cows.

\* \* \*

5:08 a.m.  
Make Krishna Known My Way  
& Back from a walk a singer  
me toes his arch  
for Krishna his God.

\* \* \*

Complain: No one knows  
my God as God.  
Well you got to make  
it known.

\* \* \*

Your cultural shot  
your horn of plenty  
sharp and unique.  
A lone fellow in woods  
Room roamin' notes  
he picks and plays.

\* \* \*

He better first please the  
guru, then group "his own "  
and if they put him down  
I'm disappearing  
I'm telling you that.



\* \* \*

Sorry I couldn't do  
more but trampoline  
in Sastric garland  
umbilical  
chord.

\* \* \*

They think I'd  
better get on  
line  
e-mail  
preferred.  
you betcha. "

\* \* \*

11:52 a.m.

Been busy with clerical functions, which I like to do. Labeled a carton for someone who is going to India, a carton for Gita-Nagari, a carton for New York City, and one for my use on the plane. Then I sorted carry-on luggage. It's a pleasant sort of puttering that takes my mind off other things. Sorting and categorizing feels like solving the world's problems with everything fitting neatly.

11:57 "this writing is too clerical a job to sort thoughts and priorities. No sign of the wild Bohemian artist nor the fiery preacher fighting to establish faith in others. No issues in sight. No Vraja-bhava either.

We may be dissatisfied with our performance of Krishna consciousness, our lack of real loving service, but we shouldn't be superficially dissatisfied, thinking that the grass is greener in some other pasture. When I was an active GBC member, leader of many American temples, I longed to be a simple traveling preacher; when I attained that, I hankered to again be part of the GBC network of managers. Never satisfied. Hare Krishna "not satisfied with the quality of my *japa* either. Good. Then there's room for improvement.

\* \* \*

O Aer Lingus, carry us safely over the sea. Take us with documents intact to the place we want to go, where Madhu can sing and make his contacts, and where I can be alone and resume my schedule of reading and writing. Looking forward even to the wet, cold winter.

Swami I am by title  
well you never know what tests  
will come but I beg,  
O master of ISKCON swamis, for your protection.

I'm always your servant.

\* \* \*

Wail And Control

&The sky is gray and so  
warm I just hope there'll be no  
bad flashbacks and what to  
speak of . . .

\* \* \*

Please don't bug me about the  
entrance of a Krishna conscious theme. Here's  
the boy thinnish from the  
painting by Madame Heng of  
China she didn't know  
Krishna except what they told  
her and showed some prints "  
well organized.

\* \* \*

I am crowded on all sides by  
Repercussions and censors and what  
seems right. Cages,  
boundary walls "they help  
to keep out dacoits.

\* \* \*

I don't know what's the  
best thing. I wrestle with God  
who could kill me in a moment.  
This themeless seamless  
desire to play  
I mean,  
to pray?  
He's the sound in ether "  
something that subtle  
and He occupies time and space  
when He likes.

\* \* \*

And although I sit silently I can't

say much at all about Him.  
I'm just a clerk after all  
moving from cubby to cubby  
and sorting paper clips from  
Rubber bands, taking off a sweater  
opening a window then  
closing it again. The wail will  
finally come. I know it will.

\* \* \*

Spoke to one brother, honest  
talk "our doubts confidential,  
faced even blasphemy  
and both said,  
"I *want* love of guru  
and Krishna  
but how can one like me . . . "

\* \* \*

Faced displeasure with the  
institution in letters back  
and forth. We're peaceful but  
what honest man is *without* the  
wail of confusion? Who has  
the power to keep it in control  
forever?

\* \* \*

Doubt and disappointment "demons  
who move through you and push you  
to do an honest investigation  
or inventory  
of who you are  
and why.  
Why am I so quiet? What's under  
the cover of a man  
who washes mud off his  
boots, keeps identical pairs  
of shoes in a closet, and tries to go as  
far as he can  
without disturbing  
himself? "

\* \* \*

3:42 p.m.

The baby on the Pampers box has its thumb in its mouth. Paul Metheny. Words float by. May Sarton reads of passionate swans "she wants passionate love. Oh my, a little too much for me "we're not this body, so have a laugh at the passionate attempt to make love out of lust. It's just not possible. Narada teaches Vyasa (First Canto) about *karma-yoga*, but he doesn't include illicit sex in the formula. Sexual passion can be controlled in marriage by begetting children. Bhurijana Prabhu says that *karma-yoga* is not exactly *bhakti*, not *prema*; it is the unripe mango. He's right. The residents of Vrndavana love Krishna in *prema*; their love is ripe. Go to Vrndavana and try to touch it if you can.

"Why do you stay here so briefly?" Surabhi dasi gently reprimanded.

"I have to go because it's too much pressure."

"No, we will not bother you," she said. But she doesn't seem to understand, and adds the burden of guilt that I should be living more with my disciples in this area. Same themes.

Needlework. Give us more dimensions, more splashed colors. Give him a painting if he wants one. "Give me a self-portrait," he said.

"Do you have a safe place to keep it on a wall you can call your own?"

Devotees are always moving, selling their houses, vacating their rooms, long before the tempera fades and the dance is over.

\* \* \*

Thinking of The Longest retreat  
& Krishna consciousness that brandishes  
memory. She wants it to come out  
that way. I do too. I want  
to tell something  
not for novelty  
but what comes  
a faded rose.  
"No hurricane here," he said.  
It happened only in England and  
Ireland is cool.

\* \* \*

So I am welcome to go there  
to land safe  
in the safe land  
touch down and Ani will greet us  
with two hard apples, an old banana  
and probably no scones.

\* \* \*

Small car, I'll ride in back  
happy, tired, jet-lagged, but heading  
for the longest retreat ever  
don't need no koan to  
explode this satori  
just go with the invisible  
*acintya*

Lord Krishna  
that inconceivable  
Lord to pure souls  
and even to hopeful ones. "  
January 7, 2:39 a.m.

Hello, new day. A dull but certain twinge behind my right eye (my Achilles' heel) this morning while chanting *japa*. I gave it a rest. Sat by the open window and did *pranayama* instead, because someone advised me that an increase of oxygen can completely stop a headache. Could have rested, but my mind was churning with creative projects. Instead I dictated a letter to Jayadvaita Swami.

Last night I received a letter from a friend who is a writing disciple of journal therapist, Kay Adams. This friend presented me with an idea on how I can continue writing my Active Imagination episodes. That's what was on my mind and prevented me from sleeping. Here is something from that letter:

I am within a few pages of the end of *Churning the Milk Ocean*. In that book and elsewhere you have spoken about the difficult days in ISKCON, and you have written, about yourself, that something got lost along the way.

So many times I think, as I am reading, what I would say to you, about those subjects. I'm always so interested when you say something like that . . . something was lost.

I wonder what would happen if you got into that feeling, whatever it feels like to you "that feeling that something is lost, and *let that feeling lead you* to a character who has the same feeling. What would that character turn out to be? Where is he? What's happening?

\* \* \*

8:54 a.m.

Slower day today, just trying to avoid pain and to be on tap for tomorrow's meetings. This specimen will enter the basement hall at 8 a.m., propped up as necessary with an Esgic, then *voila!* Here he is (no videos, please), the Guru.

Krishna, Krishna . . .

I'll get through this day by Krishna's grace. Misty outside and unseasonably warm.

Krishna, Krishna . . .

I feel like I'm standing at the stern of a ship, watching the ship's wake as if it were my own life passing.

\* \* \*

Open Letter to Boss  
&I'm not feelin' so good  
Boss  
but still I gotta  
work. right?

\* \* \*

I'm feelin' blue  
not so Krishna conscious "  
that's the main thing "

\* \* \*

not feeling so much because  
I play it safe  
I'm getting old  
not feeling for people  
'cause I'm selfish

\* \* \*

my sound is my own  
I know the idiom of it  
and have learned how to  
innovate.

\* \* \*

Boss, I'm not feelin'  
the love you told me I'd feel  
but trying to serve  
and serve.

\* \* \*

I'm your servant but  
gee, after thirty-one  
years in the business, I want  
to shake out my own  
love and reach for it and

\* \* \*

make a suitable contribution  
to your movement  
that moves

\* \* \*

moves past being a society  
of rules and big shots  
and opposition parties  
and powerful  
apathy.

\* \* \*

Boss, Lord, your *cela* is  
wagging, lagging  
his mind  
sons of his  
own daughters,  
granddaughters "  
can I tell them  
who I really  
am?

\* \* \*

And why, boss, do  
I lag so in central  
Krishna consciousness?  
Why?  
Is it that I don't work enough?!

\* \* \*

"He wants more!"  
said St. Francis, and  
naive Brother Leo asked,  
"Why, haven't you  
done enough?" "No, not enough. He wants me  
to go to my cell and  
He'll tell me next  
what more."

\* \* \*

Not enough have I done. Boss,

push me through just when  
I'm begging you to  
give me a break, some  
peace, space, my own room,  
no demands.  
I know I'm a sad case,  
but your memory and your picture  
what you suffered to bring us  
to Krishna, helpless  
you seemed  
as you  
endured  
His love. "

\* \* \*

12:03 p.m.

Don't perform austerity for temporary gain "that's #4 in *Light of the Bhagavata*. Material happiness may resemble real happiness, just as the greenery is lush after the rains, but despite the hard work that went into achieving it, such happiness fades with the next season. What kind of a gain is that? We should work only to gain eternity, bliss, and knowledge. This is all the transcendentalist desires because his intelligence is clear.

I think of the jazz men who were looking for ultimate freedom. Lionel Hampton and his group "they're all dead. Did they go back to Godhead just because they found the freedom of playing happy, free music? If not, what was that music's value?

I remember reading a statement by saxophonist Bud Freeman. Bud said he would play music all his life and then be buried with his "ax." He was a happy worker compared to others who held stupid jobs they hated. He was happy up until his death. Then what? Most people seem to be atheists at heart, or if they believe in God, their understanding is simplistic. They don't have a burning drive to return to Him. Sense gratification comes first in their minds, and God is seen only as the one who provides material pleasure. Srila Prabhupada exposed all this clearly, and I can never forget it.

Devotees first learn to dovetail, as Narada told Vyasa to do. Bhurijana Prabhu said that in that First Canto chapter, it appears that *karma-yoga* is the all in all, but it's not. There's more to it than that. We work for Krishna as we are inclined, but a higher stage is to simply think of pleasing Krishna and to provide Him with whatever He wants. Our happiness comes not from our work but from our service to Him. We have no other inclination "no career, no poetry that needs writing "nothing except what Krishna wants us to do. We have sometimes seen this in surrendered disciples, although often we see how hard it is for them to keep that "do the needful" approach up in later life. Still, we seem to have to start with *karma-yoga*; it's a doorway to *prema-bhakti*. We have to focus on the goal and follow what we are capable of doing. I don't think there is any other way.

\* \* \*



12:26 p.m.

I was not able to listen to Prabhupada this morning. The lecture I had chosen was given in Vrndavana, and the sound system made him sound harsh. I could hear the Vrndavana birds chirping in the background. I was on the verge of pain and felt I needed a soft, warm vibration or silence. I turned off the tape recorder. Maybe I should listen at lunch, but that's when I usually listen to Bhurijana speaking on *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

Srila Prabhupada, I have so much to learn from you. You were speaking on the early part of the Sixth Canto: "You take different medicine according to the disease." Then, "Headache is an insignificant disease compared to cancer. An Anacin tablet won't help you if you have cancer. There are different kinds of atonement for different diseases." The next step will be *kecit kevalaya bhakta*. He was proceeding like that. All sins can be wiped out by *bhakti*; there is no other way.

Always we return to the efficacy of *bhakti*, which is completely superior to any other path. Perform *bhakti* under the spiritual master's supervision.

Someone wrote me that I am very much a loving follower of Prabhupada and so they respect me. Is it true? They like to think I am. I made formal and humble expressions in my reply. I said I was not such a strong disciple, but I know Prabhupada is my only shelter "something like that. We are so practiced, we ISKCON devotees, at saying suitably humble things. We can even say them without meaning them. Therefore, it's very important to speak the truth even if it's embarrassing. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna.

The truth is I am *not* so good. The truth is, I keep coming back to my primary purpose: I want to be a devotee. I admit I have a long way to go.

"Hare Krishna is straight from Krishnaloka," sings the *kavi*. Day and night I work in this dark world without making the connection: Hare Krishna comes straight from Krishnaloka.

\* \* \*

Getting through. The baby is crying, protesting, full of outrage. Hurts my ears.  
Getting through.

This present moment is important "I shouldn't skip ahead to where I am going until I am actually going there.

Guru he is "

is he hiding out then

coming out for a public appearance, like a Frank Sinatra?

Guru doesn't renounce his own guru's order.

Insular.

Pages I write (in America, with an insular voice). Telling a record. Poems here too.  
Saw a snowfall. Don't wish your life away by wishing this was already next week.

\* \* \*

My Tong  
& Alone sitting reaching out  
wanting my master  
but then finding I

have to go to him.

\* \* \*

I can't go elsewhere  
and say I'd like to be  
a pure devotee.  
Not with crows.

\* \* \*

Straight up and up means  
Reading *sastra* "same  
old format reveals  
Krishna in the casing.

\* \* \*

What's in you, "Is there  
a sound like TONG!?"  
the guy asked. Srila  
Prabhupada said, "Yes, it's  
Hare Krishna" the piano tong!  
AUM "Radha  
Krishna  
*jiva*

\* \* \*

me struggling to wail  
but tomorrow I'll hold high  
note, blue note. No will  
know I'm not perfectly  
straight "tong!"

\* \* \*

My TONG! is to simply  
Repeat and tell of the Swami's  
early days, including when  
he initiated Satya-svarupa  
and Steve gave hundreds  
he was a washed-  
out skinny dude  
(locks on window grates).

\* \* \*

Swami had a phone gave  
it up, "Always disturbed"  
disciples phoning him at midnight:  
*Swamiji how are you?*  
*Is this the time to ask?*  
*Oh, I'm sorry.*

\* \* \*

I'm sorry, regret I didn't  
send you the *murtis* and  
hundreds of thousands  
to buy a temple in Manhattan  
A laughing stock hopeless.  
"I am not  
satisfied."

\* \* \*

Paul Mr. Paul Steve  
Don't play the horn or  
bass anymore unless you  
can join in *kirtana* and  
don't disturb.

\* \* \*

*Kirtana* is main thing  
chanting holy names some  
crazy guy at the door "don't  
let him in  
no! Eliot! He feints a  
punch but doesn't deliver, only leaves "  
and I was glad.

\* \* \*

O master, I want you  
you who drew me  
to the storefront  
days, nights, as if "  
No it *was* and *is* true I'm  
made of my memoir  
the music doesn't stop

with time. Made of  
wishing to perform  
transcendental loving service with  
him from New York to  
Boston with all else left behind.

\* \* \*

That's my spirit "left out at  
26 Second Avenue with the  
evolution of Krishna consciousness  
from Hayagriva to ISKCON Communications  
and back I'm evolving and  
that one master will take me  
BTG. "

\* \* \*

3:42 p.m.

The age of Kali is like the rainy season when the sky is dark. The only light comes from fireflies. Srila Prabhupada wrote this for Japan's World religions' conference. How could he expect Buddhists and others to accept the Gaudiya Vaisnava version? He was convinced that Krishna is the God of all, so he spoke from the Vedic context, of which they were probably unfamiliar. He used Sanskrit, which they probably didn't know, and hoped they would accept it as the teachings of spiritual India. He knew they would benefit. He thought Krishna consciousness could be accepted as a world religion, and so it finally has been. Krishna consciousness didn't grow as an ethnic church. Even with Indians we have to fight for them to accept Lord Caitanya and Lord Krishna. Prabhupada taught about fireflies and covered people, and how they need the light of *Bhagavad-gita*, where Krishna teaches that He is the goal of the *Vedas*.

I saw light in the *Vedas*. I saw light in the *Bhagavatam*. The Personality of Godhead is the meaning of religion. religion without God, he wrote, is not real religion. It's like the fireflies at night.

Are you wondering how you came to accept this? Are you reconsidering? Doubting? Don't continue with doubt up until the end of life. Try to establish deep faith through experience and practice. Dear Lord, please give me a small taste so that I can become a stalwart. Perhaps You want me to face the doubts people of this age face so I can become a cutting edge of faith for them, and so I can empathize with why they don't accept Krishna consciousness. "Yes, brother, I know it sounds far-fetched "it sounds that way to me too "but the Swami convinced me, and you too ought to be convinced that the *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* is teaching truth." Maybe the Lord wants me to take that position and to sacrifice my own certainty in the dogma of *brahma-Sabda*.

Do my brothers accept all this? *How* do they accept it? Do they simply accept the conclusion of the *gosvamis* and the *acaryas* without question? Srila Prabhupada says, "What kind of a God is He if He can be restrained by you when you say, 'God can't come here.' Or when you say, 'If there is a God, then I want to see Him,' although you can't

even see Indira Gandhi because you lack the qualification." We don't doubt Krishna's existence, and we repeat what Prabhupada says to bolster any flagging convictions we may have.

When listening to Prabhupada, it's important not to worry about the perfection of the examples, but to go with their images. He says, "Whoever comes to this material world can be considered sinful, just as everyone in prison must be some kind of criminal." Go with that image.

Can the spiritual master have doubts? Of course not, Srila Prabhupada would say, or what kind of a spiritual master is he? Then what if he bluffs and says he has no doubts, but he doesn't even know his own heart? Well, that happens sometimes. I say, "Let's tell the truth. Let's admit our shortcomings."

But then how will our disciples accept us, and how will we collect money?

We hope they respect our honesty.

"Yes," he said, "but I prefer to be quiet if I have doubts or material desires. Better not to show them. It is a burden of silence that we must bear when we take such responsibility. I have become a guru" "remember that line of defense and who said it?

Yes, no more will I take on the line decided by popular vote. Neither will I join the apostates and those who attack our ISKCON. ISKCON is the living fabric within and without the temples. I have a right to define it in my own way, although I know there is an official definition which only the GBC can control and govern. That official definition is not so relevant to me.

Krishna name sliding out. O epic poet, tell us what is that feeling that something got lost along the way. Make a character who personifies that feeling. Where is he?

\* \* \*

Irreversible Commitment  
& Listen, friend, before it gets  
too dark to see the chimney.  
I'm a little boy, lost, but the  
baby was playing *karatalas*  
in the other room and I  
was . . .

\* \* \*

in here resting lazy couldn't  
move said just relax for  
tomorrow's big day.

\* \* \*

Krishna consciousness is like that  
where you go at it in the  
best fashion. You and your  
friends. You get together and

admit stuff that may be  
scary or vulnerable.

\* \* \*

Like how come I don't  
love to hear my guru  
like I used to how  
come the temples are  
so empty or filled with  
a sound I can't bear?

\* \* \*

Where's the . . . nature of man and  
pudding? Krishna is in all things even  
dogma, and we are in a background  
of secret confidential

\* \* \*

but irreversible once we took to  
Krishna consciousness and made that kind of promise  
not to allow the dogs to bark  
not even any ravi Shankar  
anymore.

\* \* \*

O beautiful-faced guru "  
Ridiculous! Let us take  
a video of Your Divine Grace,  
*please*, for our family's  
sake, before the dark closes over roof and  
chimney.

\* \* \*

This improvisation  
is helping me to understand  
there's no truth in the  
driveway. He parks the  
car nice. Over-warm  
winter morn walking in  
mist dark pre-dawn where  
newspaper was thrown on

senior servant property.

\* \* \*

This stuff *is* Krishna conscious  
because the whole world  
is. My one-hour talk is just  
a certain direct way but  
ink flies all over and then  
coherency and vocab  
shrink.

\* \* \*

Krishna baby plays *karatalas*  
for *sundara-arati*.  
O Radha-Govinda, mine,  
I am waiting to come to You  
come home  
to Ireland  
the land of irreversible  
direct Krishna consciousness  
where I'm never better nor worse  
than I am. "

January 8, 3:42 a.m.

I could start talking about love. What do we mean when we say *love*? Not skin love, that's certain. What kind of love can be exchanged between the spiritual master and the disciples? A love that can't be forced. That exchange is most wonderful when it occurs and both feel the steady presence of the other. Therefore, let's not demean duty, loyalty, and the use of intelligence, all of which lead to love if they are aimed in the right direction. (*Sraddha* is another foundation. In the early stage of faith, the love is dormant and is evoked only when we continue past the entrance of faith.)

But what kind of exchange can we expect to have? I can tell you about Srila Prabhupada and Lord Krishna and be your best friend. I hope to say something to inspire you in your practices of Krishna consciousness. These are not meetings on the material (physical or mental) plane, not *dharma-artha-kama* talks. We want to discuss *bhakti* "and not theoretical *bhakti*, but applied. A mouthful. We will speak of Prabhupada, the source of our *bhakti*, the ambassador of *bhakti-yoga*, by reading from *The Beginning*.

So far my head is holding up. I have had an exceptionally good week so far, four days in a row of no pain. I could worry about that; it's likely the pendulum will swing the other way now and I will get headaches every day or something. But since I haven't taken any pills this week, I'm prepared to take two a day to get me through the three days of meeting.

"You don't indulge in word play as much as you used to."

Yes, 'cause I'm Cosby caused used to it. I got gats and gators in me still, but figure flugelhorn sound better than a mere "Oh no."

Yes, folks, it's a great night for a fight here at the Polo Grounds. And we have a big surprise: Sats weighs in at 130 pounds! His opponent has scaled down to a mere 200.

Krishna consciousness will prevail in his spoken voice. The voice is a good transmitter. I intend to come here next year too. You can purchase my books in the lobby. Today is EkadaSi. From faith comes . . .

Now, now, I mean no harm, just want to recall our leader in his first days in New York City.

Where was I in those days? Listening to *Ascension*, living on dangerous ground. Was I out of work? No, I was back at the job on East Fifth Street. My heels had already mended. I was perfectly situated just a few blocks from where the Swami would arrive, when Mike Grant found the place advertised in *The Village Voice*.

"Too young to go steady." Gibberish floating through my mind this morning even as I think of those days. Did I think I'd become a pure devotee, the leader of a flock, so easily? This is the reality. Still, it's wonderful, my life, my fortune.

Scheduled to take a walk at 5 a.m. today in the total dark (except for the leftover Christmas decorations on lawns and houses). The earth is bound to be wet in this thaw. Back by 6 for breakfast.

\* \* \*

5:59 a.m.

Sweaty from walk. Told story of St. Francis and God telling him, "Not enough!" M. missed the turn for the walking track because his mind was on a recording machine and getting a jacket for busking. I was wearing a sleeveless jacket and a sweatshirt. Walked and walked until my ankle ached. The ground was wet, as I suspected it would be.

Back at house, heard little radhika demanding, "Ma! Ma!"

\* \* \*

10:56 a.m.

Morning meeting went all right. Read from and spoke on Srila Prabhupada's 1966 journal. "Hopeless," he wrote one day. He was alone with Krishna and his "T.r." (tape recorder). A very attractive person he was. Glad to share it with them, the old days. read of the donations I gave, and the day I was initiated, September 22, 1966. Yeah, I actually was initiated, it's noted in his journal.

No pill yet, although I have one in my breast pocket just in case. I probably won't get much chance to write during the next few days, not even poems. I'll be saving energy for the meetings and the mail I will receive. Hare Krishna. It's getting closer to the day I can go back to Ireland.

A GBC man wrote me that we (GBCs, gurus, *sannyasis*) should go out of our way to extend care and love to the devotees. "Yes," I said in my reply letter, "I agree." Spread the love around. If you have it.



Another letter was in a much different mood. It was from someone who said that most ISKCON leaders are cheaters. He says he is determined to follow the truth and to speak out against infamy "whether I like it or not.

\* \* \*

11:59 a.m.

This afternoon I'll remind them of the importance of my books in our relationship. reading my books is almost the only way to be with me. It's also the best way. I'll continue to come here for yearly meetings just to let them know I'm still alive, but the real thing is in my books.

Books about to be published: *Spiritualized Dictionary*, *Breaking the Silence*, etc. AF, BAF, GNP. And my own private editions. Tell them how I write a booklet each day and make an illustration for the cover. EJW as continuation of PMrB: I'll talk about that too.

\* \* \*

Praying With A Friend

& "Alone, alone," he said in his lecture reading, and reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

\* \* \*

And he is. With a friend. The friend said he was trying to express the sound holy he hears in his head and of which he dreams sometimes.

\* \* \*

And me? The flashing images on the slide show became tedious, but it was a Krishna conscious trip for sure.

\* \* \*

The ladies approve. Men  
too. In the palm of my hand I  
look serious  
and blow my horn to a pre-sold audience.  
It's a *milieu* and they recognize it.

\* \* \*

That man, that creature  
those swirls the  
joy I can't express in words,  
yet he *says* things we all know "that abstract  
man. I am alone, sacrificing for the *Bhagavatam*,  
but when I finally looked up I saw a deer

loud and soft and contrary blues  
but faking it  
not.

\* \* \*

"Will you gather us in one place  
when the earth changes take place?"  
No, no, I know nothing about it "have no info.  
Better they pray to Krishna  
learn to turn to Him  
and I do it myself whenever  
we are afraid.

\* \* \*

He said the earth changes . . .  
we needn't . . .  
The siren  
the rough, bluff.

\* \* \*

Got their names mixed up  
Caitanya-daya, Caitanya-roop and  
Syama-gopa-roopa "  
"You're under pressure"  
holy climb to Everest  
Meru, Brahmaloaka  
following the guidebook's  
ascent.

\* \* \*

Fighting me, I said "I'm weak, let me go for now." To alone  
Room filled with letters to  
answer, sweating, glad I  
made it through day one  
day *one*  
I'll pray the Lord is great  
Krishna in our lives  
and remember that serene tough  
of a church man who bows  
down and praises Uttama-Sloka  
peace in God reigneth  
Krishna dances

and Gauranga protects His  
nice devotees O devotees  
in India, excuse me as I  
seek Krishna on back trail of  
Wicklow and other secret places  
and send you pictures  
from an album  
of my heart  
with mantras  
and Krishna cleaning us  
our hearts. O  
Swami I pray in my  
way  
with a friend as *he*  
prays  
we're under the  
crescent full moon lotus  
feet of Syama  
Radhe-Syama. "

\* \* \*

5:59 p.m.

I'm wide awake, frazzled, but no headache "a bit dazed from the two classes I have given so far. So many disciples interacting, their letters, etc. Can't do anything else.

Hurry, hurry,  
Rama, rama.

I had to talk too much. Now tired of talking.

Krishna, Krishna. Sound of shower running in the other bathroom. Tomorrow morning we meet again for "Krishna in our lives."

"Can we get together and hold hands? Will you build a big community where we can all live? Will you arrange for our incomes, marriages, service, preaching, psychological counseling, and creative work? What about food and all that?"

No, none of it. I can't provide any of it. Best we all find a place, if we can, in ISKCON, or live outside.

Krishna, Krishna.

I read something yesterday that made a young kid in the audience laugh. I showed my teeth in the dark.

"It's so good to see you."

"You too." It sticks in my throat after awhile. Were they able to hear the words I read? They pass by quickly, duly recorded. Then the show is over. I hand out EkadaSi sweets and exit after giving away the garlands.

I said I'd try to be honest, that that was my contribution. I want them to approve of it. Same old. Now exhausted. Fresh drawings in color "look at the swirling, honest hues. I

did them casually, whatever came. "Beauty and sadness," someone said. Did you hear what I said?

Yes, I think I did. You said you are publishing a lot of books and that we should read them. Your latest project is *Every Day, Just Write*. You said something about *aprakata* books. I didn't catch that. What about the crisis that's coming? Several Swamis predicted it. What should we do?

Get down and pray. We used to prepare like that for the atom bomb. When you see the flash, dive into the curb or under a desk. After awhile, some of the students at Brooklyn College refused to cooperate with the air raid drill. I chickened out because I thought my academic career might be damaged. Little did I know . . .

*How do you turn to Krishna in distress?*

Uh . . . Go on as if things are okay. Prabhupada sankirtana will continue, don't be negative.

"Make a wish list. I'm going to Vrndavana and can get anything you want."

Whatever I need I have to find myself. Otherwise, I have enough stuff.

January 9, 3:28 a.m.

Couldn't sleep last night; over-stimulated by the sensations of interacting with so many people. Plus, radhika was screaming until ten o'clock. She sounded angry. Maybe she was also over-stimulated and knocked off her schedule by all the guests in the house during the day. I finally slept and didn't get up until 2:15 a.m. I'm behind in my *japa* schedule and running like a squirrel. Another two shows today at the Paramount Basement theater. Hare Krishna. What do you mean by "Krishna in our lives"? It's like this, see . . .

\* \* \*

During the slide show yesterday I was in the very back of the room and could see the backs of everyone's heads as they watched the colored images "a new slide every ten seconds. I enjoyed it. I had the feeling that I was witnessing something revolutionary. I don't know if showing abstract doodles combined with reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and talking about *wanting* to read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* has ever been done in ISKCON. I took my disciples through a trip, one I hope that can be liberating. I can't exactly spell out the benefits, but I think of words like "loosen" and think of freeing up our conceptions of what it means to be Krishna conscious. What I liked about the show was that there was no explanation of and no apology for the paintings. The way the paintings connected to the reading was arbitrary. I know I'm not being so clear here, but I know what I felt at the time.

\* \* \*

6:27 a.m.

Rest now, fighter. You ate your tapioca. Put this delicate carcass back into bed and rest. I don't know what your head will do. I'm prepared and yet not prepared to speak of how Krishna is present in our lives. He was with me when I was born, when my father

threatened my life, when I grew up, squandered, feared, denied Him, couldn't find Him. He was always with me. Even if I don't feel His presence I am going to assert this reality of God in our lives. I will invite all of us to be with Him and surrender to His protection.

\* \* \*

7:47 a.m.

Head a bit foggy, but waiting for more of it before I take pill. Picked out some devotional poems to round out my class. Chose "The Hound of Heaven," excerpts only, and something from Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Hopkins, St. John of the Cross, Herrick, etc. The poet sees God in his own life and in his own language. I give myself and others permission to see God in our lives. We can certainly see our lives, so we should be able to see God *in* it since He is so much there. All we have to do, then, is to notice Him and turn to Him. I'll avoid too much technical discussion even if they try to drag me into it. That will only diffuse the main message.

Down to the basement where they are submissive, where  
they are demanding.

Lead kindly, Esgic.

This delicate frame will get through it.

Yesterday I saw Yadu-priya fanning her face down there. It gets close. Two fire exits? If there was a catastrophe, who would I take care of first? ready your references.

\* \* \*

10:08 a.m.

"Krishna in our lives" went well. Afterwards, I gave Titiksa a garland and said, "Yesterday you wore a *hari-nama cadar*, and today you're wearing a *sari*. You're like a new girl." Who is this charming fellow? Get them to smile, to admit God into their lives. Some devotees came worried, asking me to pray for one of their family members who has been diagnosed with a serious disease. It depends on Krishna. What else can I say? They want me to petition Krishna to make him well. There seemed to be no telling them of another kind of prayer.

After class my head ached, and I lay down. Sweet Spirit, comfort me. Feeling a little better now. Meetings building up; more letters coming in.

Saffron sweater from Lord & Taylor. I'll wear it instead of the magenta one. rising morning sun of *sannyasa*. "The world is charged with the grandeur of God."

"You read poems rhyming."

O Krishna, I encouraged everyone to re-focus themselves on You in their lives. I meant they should turn to You. Not to Paramatma, but You, Lord.

"I find it hard not to think I have power to do something and that I have to depend on Krishna," said a youthful devotee. When you grow older, my dear, you'll know more about limited power. All glories to youth. Now use your apparently unlimited powers in Krishna's service.

\* \* \*

Noon

Took a second Esgic for vise pressure. It brings temporary relief.

A storm arose, dark clouds, wind blowing in trees, branches falling off, a little rain, and then it stopped. Now sunny and warm. Pain down, but it will rise again.

\* \* \*

2:17 p.m.

Build a fence around a house. reclusive Chinese poets of old, retired civil servants. Thatched gate. Theophan the recluse in his room translating the *Philokalia* and bringing the Jesus prayer from the mind to heart, standing always before God in fear (in love, we say).

This house is not peaceful. Noisy. The grandchild screams.

But I'm grateful. Getting through and not skipping anything, savoring the meetings.

\* \* \*

Swami controls senses

must answer questions in

whichever way he can, said, "We joined ISKCON and lived heavily every after."

\* \* \*

6:15 p.m.

Wise One, Dear To Krishna

&Wise one, spiritual master, and like

you Narada and other *bhakti*

masters following Lord

Caitanya . . .

\* \* \*

your qualities are transcendental

*audarya* . . .

please teach me and accept

my child-like offering, you who

gave me *prasadam* "

that memory I'll always

treasure.

\* \* \*

Serene, you are,

like white clouds or

clear ponds,  
your words lyric music  
universal, and  
Krishna comes through you  
from the spiritual dimension.

\* \* \*

Let it get cold,  
let me  
breathe in deeply  
on a winter walk. I'll  
be sheltered by the warmth  
of your protection.

\* \* \*

Wise one, dear to Krishna,  
you are a lover of God.  
Please include me in  
your embrace of all  
creatures.

\* \* \*

Take me to you. The Lord  
as Caitanya prays that "even  
if You make me broken-  
hearted I'll be Yours,"  
the way is paved and  
strewn with flowers.  
I know it's cruel and hard in  
this universe, but I am ready  
to take on what you send  
to find the mood of Bali Maharaja.

\* \* \*

I'm writing by lamp in a  
clear space "no pain.

\* \* \*

Ready to rest in your shelter  
once again  
at death and

after  
serene, wise one, let  
me be with you  
as serving. "

January 10, 12:10 a.m.

Big, last day push. Two bags of mail, brain strewn over (poor *japa*), poor head "let me get through this day. Take a nap and a walk if possible. Then go down to that room where they'll all bow down to you, and answer their questions as if you are God's representative.

\* \* \*

10:50 a.m.

Satisfied with meeting. Brother Leo's account of St. Francis, "Not enough!" really thrilled me. I loved it.

I told them not to follow me to "Europe." It's a stark message from a guru "you can see me only three days a year. Am I really so isolated? Do I really need it and want it? Is my health so bad? I need to be in a place where I don't have to perform. Yeah, that's it.

\* \* \*

12:02 noon

I think, "I'm really a good devotee, a senior devotee of Prabhupada." I swell with pride. This is the elation or euphoria that goes with being with disciples. Get ready to come down from it.

\* \* \*

2:41 p.m.

Spinning off, I wake after nap and don't like anything. Hear an Indian *matiji* scolding someone on and on. Children playing in a nearby room. Don't like anything. He brings in a new issue of "AF" "I don't like to see it. This dislike is surface stuff, and I'll perform despite it. I announced I wanted to be alone, that I need it. Now I'm going to depart after so many expressions of loyalty and love back and forth. Let them return safely from whence they came.

Today I will play excerpts from Srila Prabhupada's lectures and comment on why I like them, what they mean to me. They look at me, some of them, and it's hard to take. Such ambiguity. What's under the surface? I took a pill in front of them. Fifteen minutes now until I'm on. Hare Krishna. I can do it.

\* \* \*

5:09 p.m.



Off the *vyasasana*, I'm an ordinary person again. Boy or girl, we're all spirit souls. Gosh. So many faces coming up to get a cookie from me. Young Indian man of America whom I've never met, an earring in each ear. He bows down, stands up, and reaches for a cookie. Some I recognize . . . I'd like to sit and talk with them, but I just don't have the energy.

"Is it possible to become a Radha-kunda *babaji* as a Prabhupada follower?"

What else? Different disciples raise their hands and say something. I watch the clock, run out of time "over one-and-a-half hours this afternoon. Transfer the two bags of mail into one big shopping bag. I won't be able to answer them before I leave America.

Lord, Lord, the meetings  
are over.

January 11, 12:44 a.m.

My mind turning over whether the meetings were genuine, whether I am genuine, whether my disciples mean what they say. I think of disciples serving in nearby cities who made no effort to see me in Baltimore. Why should I make such an effort to go to them?

I assumed the position of some kind of seer or advisor in the things I said and wrote. Will Krishna back me up, underwrite me, or will my words prove false? It's for this reason also that I go alone, to be contrite over what I dared to do and say, my basic act of serving as guru to these persons.

\* \* \*

8:10 a.m.

From back seat of van: in New York now, passing through Staten Island. I can see Hylan Blvd., Richmond road "I don't recognize anything. Verrazano Bridge ahead (I also see Geaglum in my mind's eye). It's too bumpy to write back here.

Sign for South Beach. I remember that as a place where the tough kids hung out. I was always afraid to go there. When I was assigned my job at the Parks Department one summer, they said I would be sent to South Beach. I reapplied and asked for Great Kills Beach.

Going over the Verrazano Bridge, I looked over my shoulder as if I could see Staten Island Community College and my professors there. Just a list of names now. Into New York City playground of the errant muse: "Welcome to Brooklyn." To drive in the HOV lane you need an EZ pass. There are the World Trade buildings in Manhattan. I used to look at them from uptown while sitting on my lonely park bench in Central Park. My religion was to write. I still haven't given that up, but now it's Krishna conscious.

My head fogging. I don't know what's ahead today. If I could stay well, I would answer the letters I'm carrying with me. Krishna is kind in any case. The fast lane is marked, "Medallion taxis with passengers only." "Empire State Building" congested tenement streets. Bare trees; not a single leaf to be seen. Walls with ornate but deadly rolls of barbed wire on top. School yards with chunky graffiti. If I had to come back here, I would be afraid. Even the lives of devotees, fortunate as they may be, are filled

with suffering and abuse. Therefore the *Vedas* urge us to leave this miserable world behind and go to the eternal spiritual world.

In Brooklyn: driving by the water with a clear view of the Empire State Building and other buildings and bridges spanning the narrow way. I see a park with an American flag on the tallest pole. On either side and somewhat below fly the flags of New York State and the green leaf that represents the Parks Department. The iron fire escapes on the tenements are another kind of American flag.

January 12, 3:32 a.m., Jackson Heights, New York

On arriving at Rasaraja's, I knew I ought to take an Esgic if I wanted to avoid a building headache. It was a perfect time to do it "my headache was still in the vise stage (not yet behind the right eye), and I felt that kind of physical nervousness that often precedes full-blown pain. But I was heroic, thought to avoid more medication, hoping it might go away by itself. I busied myself with moving things around and talking to Madhu and Rasaraja. Within forty-five minutes, the pain moved to my right eye. Then I took the Esgic, but it was too late. A sharp pain rose and lasted for twelve hours. Those pills are effective only in the early stages.

\* \* \*

Was up at midnight to answer letters I received in Baltimore. Down to a small pile.

\* \* \*

Dream: Srila Prabhupada finds some small *murtis* of baby Krishna, Yashoda, Nanda, Balarama, and a cowherd boy. He carries them up a hill where I am washing dishes and sets them up under a tree. I run down the hill to cook porridge. I cook quickly. The porridge is for the devotees, but it will be offered to Krishna. I hope nothing will disturb the beautiful scene of Prabhupada spontaneously playing with the Deities, and that I can hurry up and cook in time for him to make the offering. I wonder if Prabhupada will want to take the Deities with him. If not, maybe I can have them.

When I awoke, I remembered that tonight we'll be going to Ireland. In the morning I will see my Radha-Govinda. May I worship them in the same spirit as in this dream. Prabhupada *murti* will be there too, so may he bless me.

\* \* \*

8:15 a.m.

Talking at the breakfast table with Rasaraja and Madhu about Towaco, about baby rasa, about buying a small water bottle, about what time to leave for the airport, about Dan Foose, uh . . . nothing directly Sastric such as, "Are we more afraid of the afterlife than we are of death?"

Heard of a Godsister suffering from a cancer that is eating at her bones. My disciple Yamuna dasi gone to be with her until "she leaves her body." The sufferer takes steroids and something else to ease pain, is in good consciousness, but wants to reduce the

medications. I said I can endure headache pain, but can't remain in a fine-tuned or active Krishna consciousness. Pain makes it difficult to chant, to read purports, and to write. What will I do when pain worsens? Those who suffer worse than we do are leading the way down a road almost all of us will travel. Who will be kind to them and who will be kind to us?

Someone wrote, "I didn't like your poems in *Songs of a Hare Krishna Man* because I never liked Allen Ginsberg or Jack Kerouac. I like Yeats and Dylan Thomas." High class.

I hear the planes landing at La Guardia. Idlewyld. Effort never lost. Will I break the silence and write a poem? Write with the feeling of a boy who has lost something? A fable: "What did you lose, sonny?" A tisket, a tasket . . . and on the way I lost it. "Somewhere along the way."

Hare Krishna.

Grip your teeth. I know a little Sanskrit. I told them my plan to remember Vrndavana from outside Vrndavana. Make an altar with Vrndavana Deities and objects. A tortoise on a lower shelf. "We think maybe you'll come to Vrndavana in spring, so please stop in Weisbaden." No, I won't be going.

"Tell your Guru Maharaja I'd like to spend three or four days with him and straighten him out."

Small babies are very observant "baby rasa is fascinated by the overhead lights, the patterns of color in a print of Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. He plays with a ball, grips your hand for a moment, then loses interest in you entirely. They entertain him until he goes back to sleep. Where will I go in my next life? Back into a body like this?

\* \* \*

Same Old Hope

&My own way is to remember the old days when I was not yet delivered.

\* \* \*

But now more serious "about next life. Don't want to return as a best drummer for anyone. Don't want to come back at all. rather be a *parisad*, and I don't mean prematurely thinking of *gopis* ""A good idea,"

but I have to wait  
until I'm fit. I *know* all that.

\* \* \*

While waiting,  
I'm not gonna blood  
shed I hope  
or lament over the  
lamentable sure-thing blues  
may it go well I pray  
God in my life.

\* \* \*

He read poems but did  
they listen to the message "  
God in our lives  
I'm not sure. Did I?

\* \* \*

Once a boy was growing up. He  
entered ISKCON "was fine, did  
duties for his master, then lost  
something along the way. He lost or  
was it the movement that lost? His guru lost  
him? No, he's lost and  
found by the master's grace  
*etti ket*  
don't blaspheme  
me or your brother.

\* \* \*

This is a story of what he  
lost: grip on pen, ability to sell God  
on the street to  
stop someone with  
a BTG, although He  
is the ability  
in man.  
Can he find,  
go back to where he lost  
the car keys with a  
flashlight?

\* \* \*

Look through the past  
as it flashes by "  
is there a way we can find  
lost love, eternal soul  
the guts to serve Krishna  
as He wants?

\* \* \*

He found only diminishing power  
and cynic improved  
He found he wants to be  
alone not hurt  
by criticism.  
It *ain't* Kerouacian so  
you're wrong there but  
by cracky  
those guys too

\* \* \*

were inspiring in us love  
for the sounds of brothers  
improvising to turn sad into  
happy through art.

\* \* \*

Sparrows flit to  
the feeder and fly away when  
I loom too near the  
window

\* \* \*

old Manu dasa, here  
I come, you still got only  
that one dented gray car?  
Is it the same old  
with hope?

\* \* \*

Coming back to our own same old  
we don't have a new epic outlook  
aren't speaking more in *bhava*  
as natural supreme love  
from *japa*  
put our finger on wrong  
but same old yearn  
for writing free  
and even. "

\* \* \*

10:55 a.m.

Reality here now soft. Can become hard at any moment. Stay with Krishna. Turn to Him always "that lesson. I'm not reading right now. Saving my eyes. Time going by. Just a few hours more in this quiet neighborhood where the planes are constantly heard roaring in the sky and the sparrows chirp on a small roof just outside my window. Someone had to be born in a sparrow's body. Not me or Satyaraja. We are authors and wear long coats or sweatshirts and eyeglasses and shoes. We percolate with humor and can easily become chagrined. Mugged Manhattanites are not happy about that. But at least they're not birds. "That's for the birds," they say.

"Slipped into dementia and died in a Scientology church" "news item.

"He had a Vrndavana profile" "said of an ISKCON young man.

Yeah, well, I was raised in Queens and liked Al Smith. My father smoked Dutch Masters "I would buy them for him for his birthday. Lady-mother-disciple says she'd like to write to me about my mother if I want. I didn't reply to that. I already know what I want.

"A few felonies are ahead," said the lawyer, looking for business. Call the guru and ask what he thinks. No, he doesn't want to be like Lord Caitanya disturbed by people who came to Him about Gopinatha Pattanayaka.

Even though he was raised onto the *canga*.

*Canga* reminds me of conga, and I become suddenly aware of the Latin brass band booming over the radio in the car next to us. Port Authority. New York. Van Wyck Expressway is often blocked, so expect delays tonight. "We'll still get there in plenty of time." Okay, I trust you.

Go to the bathroom and wash again. Put on the clothes you'll wear. Too warm, too cold, silly fastidious decision. The real thing "love of God "he misses. He chants, however, and hopes and hopes.

\* \* \*

11:45 a.m.

Early lunch and supposed to rest until we leave at 4:15 p.m. Merry, but with an undertow of precaution. Merry because we're traveling to Ireland with my Lord, the *maha-mantra*, and as a servant of my master. Yamunacarya prays, "When will I serve such a perfect master?" He wants to serve Lord Krishna in the spiritual world, where all are dasa or dasi. He's a person, the Supreme.

\* \* \*

Sit in rocker by the open window "sunny and warm for mid-January in New York. reading opening of the Sixth Canto, whose topic is *posana*, the Lord's protection. Faces from the Baltimore meetings one after another arise as I read. remembering that one teenager with his punk ornaments and hair style "whose son was he? When I can settle back in Ireland, I intend to read the Sixth Canto, and my reading today is to show my intention. Devotional service overcomes all sinful reactions in the most effective way.

Hear his writing voice. Ajamila called out, "Narayana!" His chanting was offenseless, so he was saved from the Yamadutas. Maharaja Pariksit wanted to know how sinners could be liberated. I mostly ask how I can save myself.

\* \* \*

4:55 p.m., JFK Airport

We're at our gate two hours early. Last passengers to Dusseldorf boarding at same gate. I like to be early because I knew we would have to fight traffic to get here and I didn't want to risk being late. We got through it quicker than I expected, though. I was nervous at the Aer Lingus queue too. I'm not sure why I am in such a hurry to wait. What will I do to pass time now? I ought to meditate or pray. We're under bright lights and surrounded by airline workers and announcements. Breathe easy and think of your deeper purpose "yes, deeper even than the immediate overnight travel to Dublin. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna.

\* \* \*

"Unauthorized Persons Prohibited Beyond This Door." M. murmuring *japa*. I try chanting silently, within. Think of flight ahead "the lights, the movie. I have an eye mask. People around here seem friendly. Machinations behind the scenes. The man at the Aer Lingus desk was burly with hairy arms, and he seemed to be from the Middle East or somewhere like that. He was frustrated because the computer wasn't working. He gave it a slam, but was friendly with us.

"Gate 18 leaving for Frankfurt." The baby in the vibrating carriage back in Jackson Heights. We left them. They'll be there for thirty years, they said, paying it off. We're welcome to stay with them whenever we come in and out of the country.

\* \* \*

5:35 p.m.

Looked at my pocket-sized *Bhagavad-gita* but couldn't concentrate. Madhu told me devotees were denied entrance to this year's St. Patrick's Day parade in Dublin, although they're appealing the case. Krishna says whoever thinks of Him at the end of life attains Him: "Of this there is no doubt."

The green-dressed Aer Lingus stewardesses trooping through the door toward the plane "a dozen of them at least. We're waiting.

January 13, 4:12 a.m., Dublin time onboard Aer Lingus "air bus"

I can see a little blue in the sky, and puffs of clouds. Don't want to look at the angry sexy movie. When you get to North Ireland, there will be more letters and faces of people, lives, issues, problems, but not as many as I have met elsewhere. I don't expect much. Why do I seek to be free of it? So I can ride with my headaches. So I can look within (cliched but true), to see who I am and what I want when not pushed by others. The Baltimore meetings became too much for me. Here, something may develop in my

art and in my practices of Krishna consciousness. At least I'll reinstate my *Bhagavatam* reading program. I also hope to be able to write more free of pose. Don't try for profile.

This flight has been routine. So far, no headache. Always something to be grateful for.

How long how long how long  
don't ask just write your  
best and follow that lady  
who said she wants rhymes  
and romance like Yeats  
a cracker I never ate.

\* \* \*

No more Beat what's  
your Totten-tots  
have no place in a lady's  
heart. Old yes old  
man staggers down aisle  
in jet bus to toilet  
*toilette* to piss and wash  
his face not pretty  
to young Irish pugs  
nor he to me  
but I'm glad to be  
alive a little longer for  
my master.

\* \* \*

Don't look up at that damn movie. Finger your beads.

\* \* \*

Coming down into Dublin. Light rain. Pretty girl, old woman, wanton words, wanting Krishna sounds of jewel. What?

I can't explain it.

Little kid with pink toy luggage. Smile and be nice if you can. Mind your business.

"We're landing." Flashing light. His thumb holds the page. Well, Godbrothers, I tried. I am grateful to those who encourage me. Leave through the door. You're lucky if you've got someone waiting for you. See all those men carrying Diana's coffin? Be on guard, chant Hare Krishna. rounds overnight were silent so as not to disturb the woman a few feet ahead of me.

\* \* \*



4:50 p.m., Manu's house

Too many items to sort out, but it's getting done. Most important book, *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, Sixth Canto propped up for tomorrow. Most important tape: mellow version of Srila Prabhupada chanting *japa*. It's important, too, to begin writing tomorrow, facing myself in this place. I wanted peace and quiet and escape from interaction. The first letter awaiting here is from a disciple, an explosion of his helpless distress "he feels choked by his financial and marital duties as a young *grhastha*, but how can he prematurely renounce it for "fresh perspectives"? And how can I get into the nitty-gritty and tell him to "stand and fight" in terms of specific details with business and wife? He entangles me, and right away my brain starts working on a compassionate yet diplomatic reply.

\* \* \*

5:35 a.m.

Feeling mentally exhausted, probably the jet lag. Irritated. But I got a lot done today in terms of moving in. I'll be satisfied with that. I got through.