

ELECTRIONIC BOOK

By Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami

Originally published by

GN Press Inc. USA

Every Day, Just Write

Volume 28

All You Need

is Krishna

July 17 - August 6, 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

July 17, 1998, Midnight

Sri Krishna teaches us from within as the Supersoul. The spiritual master is also His representative. Dear Lord, please teach me in every way and be my *Siksa-guru*. I'm trying hard to hear from You. May Srila Prabhupada also teach me. He said my ability to hear him would depend on my purity. Please help me focus my intelligence "my God-given intelligence "on You.

There are a couple of sentences in the purport to Cc. *Adi* 1.47 that I don't understand. Perhaps I'll write my Godbrother and ask him to explain them to me. I do understand the gist of the verse and purport: we shouldn't discriminate between the shelter-giving Supreme Personality of Godhead and the initiating and instructing spiritual masters. Both the Lord and the gurus teach and engage us in devotional service, and both are from Krishna.

Okay, we need guru. I have one. I also serve as guru for others. And my father used to smoke Dutch Masters cigars. Sometimes we'd buy him some as a birthday or Christmas gift. Sometimes he'd have a whole box of them on his bureau. I didn't smoke in the house, cigars or cigarettes. Only my dad smoked.

Hey, are you trying to create a smoke screen "bluish "by bringing that up here? Why, because you can't understand the intricacies of guru, or because you don't know how to tangle with the challenge that a Prabhupada disciple can have *Siksa-gurus* outside his movement?

No, I'm secure. I just have shortcomings both as guru and disciple.

Anyway, let me keep breathing.

One could say it's all right to be an imperfect disciple but not an imperfect guru. Yeah, but my father smoked Dutch Masters cigars. There was a picture on the box, perhaps a copy of a Rembrandt, of many "masters" sitting for a portrait.

Anyway, not much profit in this discussion. Or the other one we were trying not to have. I am trying my best, my crippled best. I'm like an old, crippled horse who, like most horses, will run faster in the homestretch, I hope.

We are fortunate because we are not running a race in which only one horse wins. We are not even competing. Each of us is racing against ourselves and trying to defeat our lower nature. We want the true self to outstrip the false selves and its *anarthas*.

As for my being a disciple, I have received both basic and advanced instructions, and I continue to do so. But instruction is not enough. Theory has to be realized by the practitioner. I'm still working at it, from "You're not this body" and "Krishna is God" to "I have an eternal relationship with Him. The highest relationship possible, according to the Gaudiya Vaisnava *siddhanta*, *isgopi-bhava*." I also try to understand the meanings of Prabhupada's instruction that we preach and save souls, and that we find our surrender to Krishna.

I have plenty of instructions and more to apply than I am obviously capable of applying. How can my gurus help me where I am right now on the path? I appeal to them for help. I can't ask for their help, then expect to race off to carry out their order to surrender. I'm not that qualified a disciple. I *wish* I were, but I'm not. But neither do I say, "I don't need gurus; I'm my own guru." And I don't say, "Thank you, gurus, I'm sure

you tried your best to help me, but I'm a hopeless case. This lame old dog can't learn anymore from you."

Still, I ask *how* they will help me further. What more *can* I do?

The headache syndrome is something pivotal in my life. I mean, it takes up gallons of energy to think about and handle. If I didn't have to think about headaches, I often think I might be free for more concentrated *bhajana*. The headaches seem to shape and limit me "a conditioned soul hampered by disease. I feel I have to serve guru and Krishna on these terms.

More on this later as we read how guru and Krishna teach an aspiring soul. I'm just leaving a note here, this midnight hour, on July 17, at the lotus feet of all my gurus, headed by Srila Prabhupada and Lord Krishna.

* * *

I dreamt that people were throwing stones at President Clinton. After that incident, he surrounded himself with bodyguards, and everyone had to be searched before they could be allowed near him. I went to see him, but was afraid the bodyguards would be prejudiced against my *dhoti*. I decided to leave, but got lost trying to find my way home.

I have this type of dream so often, especially the getting lost part, that I can't help but think of it as being lost in *samsara*. Trying to see the president was a useless entanglement, but when I tried to get free "leave the material world "I didn't seem able to find my way "home."

* * *

4:27 a.m.

Madhu got in at 1:00 a.m. rainy and windy out, but my Gore-tex rain gear will take care of that. M. may have brought me a book of myths to look at. Do I think I can write some of my own? What, and resort to symbolism? Yes, sometimes it's a way to go deeper into one's own life.

Hearing the last prayers of *Prarthana*. It's so rich, so exalted "I can't take it all in. Another disciple just wrote that he's going to Vrndavana for Karttika. How do they manage it? Why don't I go?

O myth of the guarded honey by the bear who traversed . . . O myth of the *laddu* and the sleepy eyes "may you all be blessed with long life. May you think of Krishna at the end. May you keep going, gung-ho. May your eyes be freshened with water, and may Narottama dasa Thakura's songs strike you as sublime, as yours to embrace and to learn from, "as good as Vedic evidence."

Jaya Gaurasundara and Sacinandana and
heavens to Betsy.

Trust the deeper wells of meaning.

Trust Krishna conscious *sastras* and your
spiritual master.

Trust "the process."

Harry

Hare.

He said he's going to Vrndavana, and that while he's there, he writes a letter every day to Radha-Syama. Another says Krishna-Balarama are her favorite Deities, so she had marble Deities carved for herself. I'm having a *Srngasana* made for Radha-Govinda. Will the government of India allow this to go on? We are not Americans but Vaisnavas. We are not CIA agents. We have no particular opinion about the nuclear bombs, except that they should not be used. Srila Prabhupada, however, compared it to having so many cars in the city of Berkeley. How can they *not* be used?

Now let me wait for Krishna to come through me. What will M. say? Where *was* he all day? Making music?

No myths, please.

On Sunday, I'll speak on *Saranam* and say we each ought to both surrender and recognize that we are already doing it.

He thinks he's a good-looking sailor. Got a face treatment from the barber to remove pimples caused by greasy Navy food and the ship's climate, but he has no one to look nice for, so what's the use?

Read the small print in Celine and became nasty-minded. Stayed far from God while consorting with poets and speculators. So far away from the spiritual world. No notion even . . .

When, oh when, will that day be mine? He had no myths or piths or ilks or kin. He made no porcelain or baked ceramics "neither jugs nor faces. Didn't even feel like drawing. Opened the day with a big yawn and looked forward to sleeping and dreaming and keeping track. Trying to keep the day clear of pain.

* * *

5:23 a.m.

This is about as cold and dark as it gets at this time of day in mid-July. Limping ache with left ankle. The cows, pacific, draw near one another for warmth and companionship, and the weeds and ferns bob their heads along the roadside. These sweet, sweet days for morning walks. Back for breakfast. I've been following this routine for years now. It's my "writing retreat" mode, but we don't even use that term anymore. Because now I live on one big retreat. And anyway, I don't like to think in terms of retreat but of going forward "at my own pace. I haven't disengaged from the world, as many people may think; this is simply my way to engage with it.

* * *

Rainy Day, Not Uncheerful
& rainy day bright lamplight
Don't complain you're not a slug
or cow or a blade
of grass. You are a human
in Ireland
in boots in the Swami's
army. You taste a
little bodily misery

and you learn. That's
all.

* * *

Now be a rivet a
River-run soul who
loves holy *sastra* a
brook running through the
Wicklow hills.

* * *

I'm not cheerful? I run
this way in rain gear
singing for the life of me
knowing my master
will at least claim me as his own
slow son the one
he picked up
and shaved and dressed
who stays that way still
in recognition of that day. "

* * *

Listening For Krishna's Flute
& Slow and heavy hearts sigh
making music sweet lovers
loving spring while
insects chew leaves
in July and the leaves curl
wet and dank, chilly moss
covers tree bark in forests
so dark you look around
thinking for sure you'll see
a leprechaun around that waterfall.

* * *

But all you know is Hari
Hare Krishna's flute
playing slow
and heavy
to undo the *gopis'* hearts
and fill their minds

until mad with love
they rush out to join Him.

* * *

I do believe in Krishna's flute I've
heard it tastes His *amṛta* sweet
and because of that the *gopis* call the
flute a knotted thing for
tasting the nectar
that was meant for them. "

* * *

8:04 a.m.

I've been handed an e-mail from India, sent to someone in Wicklow, even though I told the devotees not to deliver them. It says, "From what I've heard, many of the Indian leaders . . . " and goes on to favor the *rtvik* system. ISKCON gurus, the author says, should prove that they are *maha-bhagavatas*. Not only that, everyone should agree with their assessment. Otherwise, they should step down. Only Srila Prabhupada should be initiating, etc.

Go ahead, stir it up "what the little ISKCON world thinks and stinks. Imagine going to Vrndavana for peace and to dream of spiritual fulfillment and then running into stuff like this. It's exactly what tends to happen to me. Then the GBC men arrive and try to wrestle those arguments down to size. They almost always want me to help them in some way, to get involved in the controversy. In the meantime, people are losing faith all over the place, and everyone is agitated. But that's institutional life. We will probably always have to be like this. It's gotten worse since e-mail was discovered by devotees.

M. brought me three books on myths. I realized when I looked at them that I am committed to improvisation. I don't write fairy tales unless they come out of me spontaneously, it seems. Fairy tales are too well planned for my taste. I mean, you have to decide ahead of time who will be the green giant and what he will symbolize, who is the blue toad, and what Mary and Ellen should think. As for Greek mythology, what point is there in reading them? Modern ones either. I'm a beebopper right down to my socks.

Shock waves. So what if ISKCON decides, "It's too much pressure from the devotees against abusive gurus and their worship. Let's declare that no one is guru." No problem. My life won't change much. I'll continue to write, and I don't have to publish everything. If anyone wants to, we can photocopy it. Or I can just shut up altogether and put my energy into chanting. Don't worry, I'll still stay away from the places where it's all hitting the fan and whirling out. I'll tend my garden, as *Candide* suggested. I simply have to know what my garden is about and how to weed it.

Hare Krishna.

But this is the army, Mr. Jones.

* * *

9:05 a.m.

How can I become more Krishna conscious? It doesn't seem possible. At least I can stop myself from decreasing.

Nip the lip. Some people around here have shotgun fever. We can be a quarreling, nibbling horde of rumor-mongering trolls if we work at it. There are those willing to sling it, hear it, issue reforms about it, books in favor of it "doesn't matter what it is, someone will support it while others detract "the *bhajana* people, the parikramers, the book distributors, and all those others.

Lecturers, poets, scapegoats, the ransomed, death will claim us all. Effervescence notwithstanding.

Gal.

Don't say gal, it's old-fashioned. Say woman. Say . . .

I am sick . . . tired.

You mean, as in the expression "fed up"?

Exactly. But I can't stop people from being dissatisfied; they have good cause. *They* are sick and tired of pompous gurus and guru abuse. They can't stand the shock of gurus falling down. They want a new ISKCON, one dedicated to only one guru, Srila Prabhupada. Why not, some wonder. Why the hell not? The Madhvacarya people do it . . .

* * *

10:36 a.m.

Sun and rain. White wisps of cloud. I don't always answer her letters. Mostly I do, but some I let go. Some are more of the same, and maybe she won't even notice that I skipped one.

No make-believe, please. Or if you do, return to what you know as real. The preacher-devotee was quick to say, "You mean the fake world," when the young person mentioned, "The real world" "the world where they don't follow the four rules and chant Hare Krishna. The real world is the spiritual world; the one where they don't do those things is the world of illusion.

Well, I don't live in the real world or the fake world; I live in the *practice* real world. I am definitely a realist, modestly but truthfully. I'm willing to admit to my own illusion and cruelties. But I have seen the truth.

* * *

Epic grand history. Why don't we get it straight? Everyone is making mistakes, *all* the personas.

What happened next, do you remember?

No, I don't.

I was going to tell someone about my headaches "relate the psychological theory and the game strategy, the roles of healing music, rest, anxiety, and why doctors can't be trusted. I'd tell each thing gradually and fill that person in. Then if that person were sympathetic, speaking to him or her would be like speaking to a medical journal.

The psychological theory: Chronic headache is a legitimate disease, but my headaches have served me well. They got me out of management, off the GBC, and now I'm getting good mileage in the sense that they keep me out of action. Therefore, the theory continues, I have made some inner, unconscious decision to maintain the headaches. After all, they provide such a good defense for the way I want to live.

Well, it's a too-simple theory. Still, it cannot be dismissed entirely. It is a challenge: Could I be myself and live the way I want to live without their support?

But this *is* a medical journal and I am my own confidant. So tell no fairy tales, and don't litter.

The answer is, yes, I think I could. I don't need the pain as an excuse.

* * *

I dreamt I was in a college library and found a handmade booklet by Allen Ginsberg called "One Hundred Happy Ideas." It began like this:

One of the editors of

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami's
books told me this:

"When the Swami wakes,
his eyelids are heavy with sleep
but he's already plenty dancing."

I was happy to find this affectionate reference to Srila Prabhupada and even considered stealing the booklet from the library (I couldn't borrow it because I wasn't a student). I left the library without the book, and the dream then took a turn for the worse with me getting lost, wandering without shoes, and trying to find a Hare Krishna center. No one I met would help. Finally I woke up.

Let me write down some happy ideas. Ginsberg's booklet would probably have contained obnoxious stuff, although he did have a section in the back called "For the Grandchildren," which contained games for kids. Anyway, I'm going to sprinkle some of my own happy ideas in my writing and see where they go.

Happy Idea #1

A dream told me to write a
book of "One Hundred Happy Ideas,"
but I can't think of even one.

I don't mean I'm unhappy,
but to be happy an idea "
wouldn't it need to include a program
for *everyone's* peace and prosperity?

* * *

How can I claim, "This is
happy?" Stick a glad-face
on your silent mug
Returning from the walk.

* * *

Happy Idea #2
Vidura asked Maitreya,
"What is happiness?"
A common question.

* * *

If I'm sensually happy,
is that happiness?

* * *

Happiness could be a wish "
"Let everyone become Krishna
conscious in California and
New York!"

* * *

"But if everyone in California became
Krishna conscious what about the
prisons? Would there be enough *mrdangas*?
Could the gays stay gay?
Could women
come as they are or do they
have to become Hindus?
Who would be in charge?
What if it turns into a disaster?"

* * *

As a dream it was simple:
an unread book with a nice
opening line about Prabhupada.
As a reality . . . I am willing to discuss
if you are . . . but just as ideas.

* * *

Happy Idea #3
It's a happy idea to live
forever in Vaikuntha,
to die peacefully and go to
Krishna and Radha.

* * *

It's a Platonic
ideal, an abstract idea.
"No, it's a survival theory,"
said the professor.
I'm not talking of
idears, Mac,
but facts.
Believe it or not it's a
happy idea.

* * *

To improve, to be happy,
to live, and to serve in this world
and the next, defeating the
enemies of the soul

* * *

it's the happy ideal and
necessity of this soul to please
guru and Krishna.
But I don't know
what to do
to achieve it before I am over.

* * *

12:04 p.m.

Slatters and ferries. He's coming out on the 30th and wants someone to pick him up at the airport, then someone to take him back to airport twenty-four hours later. That's the latest "someone coming and going. I just sit here and don't move.

But people send me things in the mail. Someone sent a note to tell Madhu it cost her fifty-five dollars to send me a box of colored inks, "but take the postage sticker off so he doesn't feel bad." Madhu never saw that note, and now I feel bad. I didn't ask her to spend fifty-five dollars, but I did say I liked colored inks. Do I really need anything? I should not ask for anything. I should shut my mouth. I should simply perform austerities. Or perhaps not. Anyway, she volunteered to render this service. Usually people send things I can't really use. This, however, was a useful gift. I'm just sorry she had to spend so much to send it.

This is just what we were talking about, say the critics. One devotee wrote me that he is proposing *sannyasi-gurus* should have no money except what they are given by temple authorities. Neither should they travel or do anything unless told to do so. Imagine that. Sounds like prison. Who would stay in such a movement? Would I?

Maybe I would try to find a friendly temple. It's always possible to get around the rules, I suppose.

When I read this later, it's liable to look to issue-oriented. Could I please write something more solid that will last through the ages, like those Irish stone walls? Please? Hmm.

Thinking back to Allan Shiffman.

Thinking to write here and now what comes to mind, although some people wouldn't want me writing about Allan Shiffman. It's not authorized by the temple authority.

Anyway, they don't know who Alan Shiffman is. Either I have to give a full portrait or drop it.

No. Saying "Allan Shiffman" is enough.

He had red hair. He became a philosophy professor at Brooklyn College. He was there the same years I was there, and he was the editor-in-chief of *Landscapes* magazine, although he himself wrote no articles. He once told me not to be so serious, and he punned on a solemn line written by Dylan Thomas. It came out, "Death deviled her eggs in the womb." He also thought my sideburns were too long.

When I wrote to him years later and he didn't reply, I mentioned it with some emotion to my friend, Steve Kowit, who said, "Why don't you phone him, and when he comes to the phone, you can cry?" That's what I remember "that witty, cruel remark by Kowit. It still seems inappropriate to deal with tender feelings in that way forty years later.

Death deviled her eggs in the womb. Allan Shiffman recommended I read "Shooting an Elephant" by George Orwell. I did and I liked it. He was not a radical beatnik like the rest of us, but like many of the intellectuals at Brooklyn College he was Jewish. He had been in the Navy before going to college; I went into the Navy after college. He had worked in the P.I.O. office on his ship, and that's where I would be stationed too. He read Henry Miller while he was on the ship, and I did too in my turn. I lamented my lot; I *hated* the idea of going into the Navy. He said I could learn from the experience and that when I went overseas, I shouldn't be afraid to get my hands dirty. He said there were sailors who went to museums or shot photos and stayed out of trouble (not many), but I shouldn't be one of them.

That's who Allan Shiffman was.

* * *

2:25 p.m.

Box arrived with two dozen Ecology legal pads in it. Saw newspaper stuffing "photos of "top producers" for realty firm. *Beaucoup de* bucks.

What's my angle? I want a "Best Cover of the Month" award. I want to be sure I am right. I'm tired of seeing myself on the cover. We want America. We want Krishna on the cover, or at least His house. We want a break, a vacation. I'm tired of that autobiographical mug. "See me," he said. See me. I'm just tired, you see, of this stuff.

Who is talking and who is worrying? A man said it's all right that the internal critic is always there judging and sizing things up; it shows at heart you want to get it right.

I mean, if you're performing devotional service, you want it to come out right, don't you? For example, when you're putting on Radha's earrings or tucking

Govinda's *dhoti* between His feet. That critical eye guides your hand and makes you refuse to settle for second-class service.

I say I don't like a critic on my back, but I'm always after my secretary, always ready to judge rather than love him. And I misjudge. I stepped into the kitchen and there was a big puddle of water on the floor. He was in the corner eating berries with his earphones on. I walked toward the sink, wondering why he lives with such filth. Then he said, "I spilled water but didn't have the energy to wipe it up. I'm eating something first." Who can answer that?

* * *

Mr. Clinton hit a stride
I was inside knitting mittens
left the Clintons to their fame
and power because all I got is You.

* * *

Used to read the *Bhagavatam*
with wampum still in spirit
then lost the nerve the
verve now I'm on meds.
Dependent only on taste now "
no other way.

* * *

3:17 p.m.

"Descriptions of the Lord are the right medicine for the conditioned soul undergoing repeated birth and death. Therefore who will cease hearing such glorification of the Lord except a butcher or one who is killing his own self?" (*Bhag.* 10.1.4) Famous verse. *Bhavausankirtanas* by his bedside. By hearing the *Bhagavatam* or *Bhagavad-gita*, we can be released from birth and death, but we must hear from someone completely free from material desires (*nivrtta-tarsair*). Don't hear from professional reciters.

You got to be an MB.
Well, maybe we can define MB
in such a way . . .
No, I "we "mean a *real*
MB.
You mean one who always sees
Krishna? Who assists Radha and Krishna
in the *kunjās* and comes down in order
to preach and who sees the
whole world as Vaikuntha?
You mean one who is fearless?

Yep, that's what I mean.

Only those who are killers of the self or killers of animals are unable to appreciate descriptions of pure *bhakti*.

But why do I not develop the resolute determination to please the Supreme Lord? Am I such a killer? Srila Prabhupada kindly describes his own disciples as *nivrtta-tarsair*: "They no longer read materialistic newspapers, magazines and so forth."

No longer.

Used to.

"They completely give up the bodily understanding of life." He says they are quite young, these men and women, and they are happily consumed by ISKCON's activities with Srila Prabhupada at the helm. He spoke and we heard. Somehow we have to continue that, because Prabhupada told us, "Since merely talking about Krishna is so pleasing, we can simply imagine how pleasing it is to render service to Krishna."

July 18, 12:00 a.m.

Hearing the tape of Bhurijana Prabhu lecturing on the last chapters of the First Canto, which describe Maharaja Pariksit's birth, life, and how he was cursed to die within seven days. This leads into the description of the advent of Kali-yuga. Now here in the Tenth Canto. He's able to think of Lord Krishna "by intimate connection" because Krishna was so close to his grandfather, Arjuna, and to all the Pandavas, and because the Lord saved him while he was in his mother's womb. We don't have that advantage, but we can still think of Krishna by our association with these great souls, so somehow or other we should do it. "This is the ideal result of Krishna consciousness: *ante narayana smrti*. If at the time of death one can remember Krishna, one's life is successful."

I seem to think I have time before I have to face death. I also say that whatever things I do that range a little outside the strict reading of *sastra* or whatever, is okay because I'm a preacher. When these things no longer have value to my service, I tell myself I will put them aside and forget them. risky? Better to be stripping myself down now, not waiting for the moment of death. Srila Prabhupada used to say, "Philosophy means to keep death in your front." But I can't be like a *babaji* and only chant and hear; I feel my lack of strong attraction.

Maharaja Pariksit raises a number of questions. He inquires about the mystery of Balarama. He wants to know why Lord Krishna left His father Vasudeva's house and went to Vrndavana.

One of my Godbrothers is proposing to write a book on each of the Tenth Canto chapters dealing with Krishna in Vrndavana. He counted about thirty chapters that deal exclusively with Vrndavana. It occurred to me upon thinking about this that we each must find Vrndavana where we are.

Maharaja Pariksit also inquires about Krishna's life in Dvaraka. "O great sage, who know everything about Krishna, please describe in detail all the activities of which I have inquired and also those of which I have not, for I have full faith and I am very eager to hear of them." (*Bhag.* 10.1.12) Maharaja Pariksit has been fasting, not even drinking water, "yet because I am drinking the nectar of topics about Krishna, which is flowing from the lotus mouth of your lordship . . ." he doesn't feel hindered. I was

hindered yesterday "knocked right out of commission "by a headache. Wonder how I would have fared in the circle of sages at Naimisaranya?

Oh, this midnight hour is supposed to be for reading *Caitanya-caritamrta*. I forgot and turned to the *Bhagavatam* out of habit. Just as well, because I'm trying to make up for the time I lost yesterday. Both books are excellent. I'm reading the first chapter of *Caitanya-caritamrta* where Krishnadasa Kaviraja describes the spiritual masters. He quotes a verse from *Srimad-Bhagavatam* that transcendental poets and experts in spiritual science are greatly indebted to the Supreme Lord because He appears "externally as the *acarya* and internally as the Supersoul "to deliver the embodied living being by directing him how to come to You." Therefore Krishna in the heart is also guru. "To those who are constantly devoted and worship Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me." (Bg. 10.10)

In his *Caitanya-caritamrta* purport to this *Gita* verse, Srila Prabhupada describes the eligible devotee as constantly engaged in Krishna consciousness and convinced about the transcendental nature of the Personality of Godhead. "Such pure devotees [are] always merged in knowledge of Krishna." In his purport to this verse in the *Bhagavad-gita*, however, Srila Prabhupada mentions that Lord Krishna reveals Himself to a devotee who is not intelligent enough to understand Him from the spiritual master or the spiritual organization to which he belongs. It can be taken both ways: Krishna in the heart directly helps the slow but sincere student who wants to love Him, and He reveals Himself even further to one who is already in contact with Him. The pure devotees exchange their realizations like great scientists who discuss the results of their research. "Such exchanges of thought in regard to Lord Krishna give pleasure to the Lord, who therefore favors such devotees with all enlightenment."

* * *

4:29 a.m.

Very beautiful white with gold trim "my Radha and Govinda. Compact mercy and sweetness of male and female, worshipable Personality of Godhead and His *hladini-Sakti*. And Srila Prabhupada.

I don't know how I'll be able to keep going at this hour. Tired, sleepy eyes. No way to stimulate myself. Then just go. Be neither ashamed nor afraid.

Trying to stay on a devotional course. I am just a little fellow. Swarms of biting mosquitoes in the bathroom as I tried to listen to Srila Prabhupada on tape. I fought them off. Srila Prabhupada was explaining that life comes from life, *jagad-ahur aniSvaram* "from the sixteenth chapter of *Bhagavad-gita*. The *asuras* think the universe has no cause, no controller. Rather, it has come about by the combination of material elements. Only lust creates, they say. Srila Prabhupada was smashing their arguments with his own, by giving examples from the *acaryas* and by using Krishna's own words.

O Krishna, please let me pay attention to Your holy names: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. Let me give attention to every moment. Your golden flute. Me picking at my left thumbnail with my claws. Can an individual life spark stay fixed even when he or she is swept along? Yes, it's possible, if that life spark stays in touch with God and guru. Then his or her basic identity will remain intact. Hare Krishna.

Jagad ahur aniSvaram. Krishna.

"Be a good boy," I tell myself, and live in the present moment. I have to atone or be forgiven, purified "or punished for "crimes of which I'm not yet aware. Doing a good job covering my crimes. That's what I think, anyway.

I struggle from sentence to sentence and try to remain as Krishna conscious as possible. I am dedicated to whatever comes.

But don't make it mundane.

Make it Krishna conscious.

Stay chaste.

Better to drown in dryness than to walk off the path.

In refusing to take anything "my sister . . . Why think of her?

But I don't "think" "at least not here, now "and I don't summon. Still, she has come.

He said he'd write it up like a novel "the story of Krishna without so much intervening philosophical explanation.

I went out walking in green Wellington boots, just suitable to this climate. Some say we should "de-regulate" the gurus, give them severe restrictions, forbid bank accounts, cancel all the Vyasa-puja ceremonies, and have ISKCON offer no recommendations about their character to candidates for initiation. Let's chop them down.

But they can't do that to me. I'm another Theophan the recluse, living quietly without caring for public opinion. The people with whom I correspond won't change their attitude toward me as long as I supply inspired words from my practice of *sadhana*.

Krishna science. Maharaja

Pariksit. Walk and talk.

Forty thing he did. Drew a superman

a muscley man with *tilaka*

confronting another or an animal. He held his fist up and

danced. Is he the man

from Eldorado, reeking of sin and gold?

He's the *jagat ahur*.

* * *

5:35 a.m.

I am awake and right away don't care what comes out, because I'm ready to experiment with different forms. I use my own head and heart and lacy cuffs. I am not alone. I must pretend I am, though, although "No man is an island" rings in my brain. I am trying to be present.

Be present because Krishna is in the road, the walk, the weeds, the sky, the badgers "all these.

Oh, yes.

The Lord spoke to Arjuna in *Bhagavad-gita*, but in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* there are many speakers.

Let me finish this sonnet as clearly as I can. My mind and heart are meant to serve the Lord. Therefore, I'll lecture tomorrow on surrender and tell them, "Folks, you either

surrender to God with love or surrender involuntarily to His material nature. No one escapes surrender."

* * *

8:20 a.m.

Little life.

Scaffolding. In a dream I held someone's hand as we boarded a crowded train. Others had to be tested before they were allowed to board. We easily found a place to stand because we were senior and sly. Now up from a fitful nap, trying to pursue the morning. I ought to look at *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

But first a word of warning to parents: Keep your children out of busy roads, especially the ones raised in rural areas and who therefore have no street smarts. Let your children imitate your good habits, such as your bowing down to Krishna. Beware of your own bad habits. Life is short for all of us, including our children. Teach them right. Maharaja Pariksit was relatively young when he died, yet he still attained Krishna at the end. Not only that, he left behind an amazing legacy in the form of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. That is, he made the most valuable contribution that anyone has ever made in Kali-yuga.

* * *

Although fasting and sleeplessness are hard to bear, Maharaja Pariksit was sustained by the nectar of hearing from Sukadeva Gosvami

We are Brahman, and we need spiritual food to satisfy our hunger and thirst. People all over the world are generally ignorant of the value of *Krishna-katha*. Let us not be ignorant with them. We are supposed to know better.

But what happens when I turn to the *Bhagavatam* this morning? I recall how my disciple put down one of my Godbrothers and how I let it go. I didn't correct the disciple. rather, I consider that he was being loyal toward me. *But that's not the point!* I now feel implicated in that disciple's loyalist attitude, as if I myself criticized my brother.

Srila Prabhupada wrote these Tenth Canto purports during a time when he was hearing allegations of "brainwashing" being aimed at the Krishna consciousness movement. That was in 1977. Nowadays, few Americans believe that the Hare Krishna movement practices some kind of hocus-pocus mind control, and they consider that accusation the propaganda of angry "anti-cult" parents and their lawyers. But it was frightening in 1977 when professors, juries, judges, psychiatrists, and the common people believed we were illegally imprisoning people. I guess it's not such a threat these days because so few people move into the temples.

I wish my mind could be controlled. Fellow Americans and Europeans, rest assured. I have been practicing Krishna consciousness for thirty-three years but have yet to control my mind. It's not very washed either, although I often give it a cleansing and attempt to beat it into submission. I still have strong ties to your world, where I chew what has already been chewed.

Sukadeva Gosvami thanked the king for his questions. "Then he began to discourse on topics concerning Krishna, which are the remedy for all sufferings in this age of Kali." (*Bhag.* 10.1.14) Freedom from the pangs of material life.

* * *

10:07 a.m.

Tired. Can't seem to answer more mail. A mother decided she ought to send her son to the Mayapur *gurukula*, but she's so attached to the child. She wants me to say something to ease her feelings. I already wrote to her husband on the same subject. I don't know what those feelings are like. I am sympathetic, however. If they don't really want to send him . . . But they say there is no future for him if he stays in the West, no schooling. Will he clam up in Mayapur and be afraid to tell anyone what he's going through? Become alienated from mom and dad because they left him there unwilling? They say he's at least enthusiastic at the prospect of going. He seems pretty bored where he lives now.

So much energy expended in life. I know I often complain about that, but we have to do our duty, whatever it is. Still, there's only so much energy to go around. I have to wait until my energy wells up, then somehow do what I have to do "answer letters, read, chant, counsel devotees, lecture "and do it steadily, because if I put it off, it becomes even more pressing.

If we didn't have so many duties, we may not concentrate as fully on loving service to Krishna as we think we could. I have learned by personal experience that having nothing to do does not increase my meditation.

To face things like that, I thought of calling this volume, "No More Fairy tales," but perhaps that sounds too harsh. I don't think I am capable of blasting the fairy tales that fill my life once and for all. What I would like to face is how to tear myself away from anything unnecessary in my life "anything that is not direct service to Krishna "and to concentrate more simply on Krishna's pastimes.

Myths:

The autobiographical myth of myself as a quiet, loyal ISKCON man or peaceful *sannyasi*.

Me as a writer-artist,
as thoughtful about the end of life,
as . . . this and
that. There are so *many* myths.

I would like to learn to be truthful, only truthful.

Therefore the battle cry: "No more fairy tales!"

Myth of mellowness when I'm learning the names of headaches and trying to understand which kind I get. Myth of mellowness when facing pain, of patience. Myth that I have brought these headaches upon myself by some psychological wish to avoid something.

The myth of suitable (perfect) medication to get rid of pain.

The myth that naturopathic cleansing methods and relaxation can cure me.

The myth of me being a brave fellow who faces pain as inevitable and sent by God day after day, from morning till afternoon.

True: It was that heavy porridge that slowed me down this morning. I won't eat it tomorrow because I have to go to Dublin to speak on surrender. I hope the devotees will participate. I plan to go over each of the six items of surrender, starting with accepting what is favorable for devotional service. I'll ask them to present an example of a time they surrendered by accepting something favorable. Perhaps I can allude to something in their lives, how they live in homes near other devotees rather than other places that may be better materially, how they choose to educate their children in devotional schools. I hope we don't too quickly fall into generalities and back-patting. Stay specific.

They may not be willing to confess. Then I'll have to say something myself. At least I will try to explain the principle. Or should I get them to ask me questions?

The second point is to avoid what is unfavorable for *bhakti*. We should have built-in mechanisms so that when someone offers us something unfavorable, we automatically reject it. We should each have that much confidence.

Yeah, I simply need to feel confident that I can comment on each of these points. I can. No need to write a script beforehand; I'll do all right.

Want to mention, too, that as we surrender to Krishna, Krishna promises to take care of us. Gradually, we can stop ourselves from depending on others and give all our dependence to Krishna.

Neither should I be afraid to look at the implications or accusations that Krishna is cruel or egotistical. Let me face those ideas and defeat them. I mean, some people think He's asking too much. Why *should* we surrender? Is He a conqueror? Why doesn't He protect us regardless? Plenty to speak about there.

While I'm speaking, M. will be playing at the yearly Irish Traditional Music competition. He hopes to go to the all-Ireland finals.

The Piper Cub.

Things are often mostly in the mind. When we take our minds off them, we realize they aren't as urgent as we thought. Why is that?

Let's surrender. I took a Tums and plan to take the labels from a pack of "Quiet Please!" earplugs and an Esgic Plus bottle "those two frontline surrenders of mine " and paste them into a collage on the cover of today's EJW. That will feel good.

I have very little interest in soccer games. I don't care about much of anything, to be honest. I just don't want them to drop bombs. I don't belong to this world. I try to avoid thinking about things that are too painful in it. They advise you not to be self-absorbed "advise you to reach out to others "but the only way I can be helpful is to distribute Krishna consciousness. I want to reach out to devotees. I live for that. I'm no Christ giving myself for the sins of the world, but I say I will write of life. That's my surrender and all that seems required of me, at least in terms of outward preaching. I want the devotees to see that someone loves what he's doing so that they can be inspired to do something they love for Krishna. I *must* be getting Krishna's mercy by doing this "I feel that way "but who can figure all these things out? I've stopped trying to live up to someone else's estimation of how I should surrender and instead I try to get in touch with my own desires to serve. Maybe that's selfish. Maybe it's not enough. I don't know. I do know that anything else I have done has not carried much weight out there "the one-hour lecture, the touring. I think I can do more by staying here.

I don't have too many romantic expectations for EJW. I am going to go ahead with my little life and low-level mix constantly, each hour when possible, or at least each section of the day. I am qualified to talk of surrender to some degree, and especially the pain caused by a lack of it. I know what I have to do. I just hope they don't drop the bombs. And as for coming back next life to face the horrors of an advancing Kali-yuga, that's too painful to even think about. I just asked Krishna for clemency "for me, and yes, for everyone else too.

* * *

12:12 p.m.

Happy Idea #4

Happy is the man "what
does Canakya say? "

who doesn't have to leave home,
who is not in debt, whose
wife is chaste, his son
a devotee.

* * *

"Happiness is a warm puppy."

Charles Schulz said that and
there's plenty more where that came
from.

* * *

Our program for happiness should be
eternal or it's illusion.

* * *

What made *you* happy today?

Joanna Field experimented in her
diary "she found that odd moments brought
ecstasy. She became herself.

* * *

Devotional service is *susukham*,
but what if it's not?

We're happies, not hippies,
but what if we're glum sometimes?
That's real enough.

* * *

The ocean of tears is dried up,
the agonies are taken away,
Cupid's lusty trip conquered,
by the glance, the smile,
the raised eyebrows of the handsome young Lord.

* * *

Happy Idea #5
You get happy ideas in
the bathroom. Notice it.

* * *

Prahlada Maharaja said you get happiness
and distress without even trying,
so use life to attain
Krishna consciousness. It's the
one thing you're free to do.

* * *

I smell the fragrant rose "
but happiness in this world
ends with gnashing of teeth.

* * *

Please be happy, I tell
myself, with whatever He
sends. And I come to the
Reading desk wishing I could
be happier with
Srimad-Bhagavatam.
(skip lines)
We'll go no more a rovin',
be happy in old age with
just a little peace.
Do more.
So many people are unhappy.
You should help.

* * *

Happy Idea #6

"Are you happy?" a Harvard student asked Prabhupada.

He replied, "If I say yes, will you believe me?"

"No," the student answered.

"Then why do you ask such a question?"

* * *

Another time in the Boston storefront he was asked the same thing and said, "I have many levels of happiness." He gave a simple example: "I used to have several sons in householder life, but now that I'm surrendered to Krishna as a *sannyasi* I have many sons and they are better than my other sons."

* * *

Are you happy, Prabhu?

"Yeah."

Sort of, you mean.

* * *

2:30 p.m.

"Srila Sukadeva Gosvami said: O your majesty, best of all saintly kings, because you are greatly attracted to topics of Vasudeva, it is certain that your intelligence is firmly fixed in spiritual understanding, which is the only true goal for humanity. Because that attraction is unceasing, it is certainly sublime." (*Bhag.* 10.1.15)

A disciple of mine who is too ill to be active spends time reading novels at home. I thought of asking him to write book reviews of each one and to send them to me, but perhaps that would make me an accomplice to his deviation. Why can't we have unceasing interests in *Krishna-katha*?

Vasudeva-katha purifies whoever speaks or hears it. Now Sukadeva will speak the words that also begin *Krishna* book: "Once when mother earth was overburdened . . . by military phalanxes of . . . demons . . . she approached Lord Brahma for relief." (*Bhag.* 10.1.17) Srila Prabhupada writes, "Nowadays, therefore, it appears that every state is busy manufacturing atomic weapons to prepare for a third world war. Such preparations are certainly unnecessary; they reflect the false pride of the heads of state."

So much for the Hindu Bomb. Srila Prabhupada doesn't liken it to a godly, necessary activity. The government should see to the people's happiness by arranging for Krishna consciousness in the *varnas* and *aSramas*. I find it hard to read much. It taxes my credulity. I don't like to admit. We can only take a little at a time. Weak as we are, come back again and again for more.

* * *

3:20 p.m.

Don't be captured by great writers "Berrymans, et al. Don't want to write like them, imagining I could do a long poem or story the way they do. Crafted stuff. My fate is to improvise.

I plan to join the Irish Migraine Society (a thousand members) and benefit from their newsletter. I could even attend a seminar or find a way to exchange with fellow sufferers if I wanted.

But I don't want to rewrite and rewrite and *rewrite* careful poems.

Then accept your fate.

Hare Krishna dasi did some planting today. The plants that were left here last week had fallen on their sides, but they have now been patted down into the earth where we hope they will grow. I came out and walked the wooden path. No one was in sight. Sixteenth round, seventeenth round . . . Chanting makes us want to be honest. I admitted earlier that I couldn't read much Tenth Canto before I began to doubt something "Lord Brahma, the ocean of milk, Bhumi in the form of a cow. On the other hand, when I read in small installments at peak times (three of those) in the day, I do believe, become reverent, even attentive, and find myself able to pray a little. So my experience bears out that in honesty, I must approach the *Bhagavatam*.

I have no one with whom I can talk about my literary aspirations. Probably just as well.

Bees, flies, cattle, wind in leaves, but no humans here right now. Is that a car coming up the lane? No. This bench is uncomfortable; let me go inside. I still have time to prove myself by being myself with Krishna. Nothing else I can do.

This bench somehow reminds me of Tompkins Square Park and the old Ukrainians who would sit bundled up in their overcoats, talking among themselves and watching the wild young Americans walk by.

* * *

4:02 p.m.

He keeps reading those nineteenth-century novels and blowing his nose. They keep wailing, O pain. Then suddenly there's relief in sight.

Just let the hand write its own breathy, hairy story.

Don't be afraid.

Calm down.

Alone. All these things going through my head. Is there someone out there who is fully Krishna conscious and not proud, wanting to collect worship and disciples? Can I tend my garden alone or with only a few and produce something nice to share?

Something Krishna conscious for everyone "biscuits and sweet rice with floating strawberries.

No, that would cause indigestion.

Everyone was trying to have a good time, she said, but she went to church to pray for sufferers, "even those in other religions, because it's nice to have someone upstairs looking after you."

I tell you, this is the Krishna conscious way.

Bird singing on a branch. There's nothing to be but Krishna conscious. How we have wasted time.

Recalcitrant.

Stubborn, but, "If God wants me to be a devotee, He'll . . . " "that syndrome doesn't work at all.

* * *

5:05 p.m.

Read some in *Krishna* book. It was nice "no strings attached. Didn't make notes or even count the pages toward fulfilling a reading quota. Stayed in a *lectio* spirit with Srila Prabhupada's opening remarks where he offers obeisances to his spiritual master and to Lord Caitanya, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I stopped after a while, though. It started feeling too familiar, too mechanical. At least I'm facing that more now, admitting my shortcomings when I read. I accept the blame for my poor state, but I refuse to hate myself for what I am. I can only keep trying.

* * *

5:56 p.m.

Magpies hop, hills swoop, earth green. Now I am upstairs, avoiding the urge to tell every little thing that is occurring. Instead, I filled the book bag I'll be carrying to Dublin tomorrow. On Saturday nights, the Irish party. Thank God for the quiet out here. I'm celebrating my third day in a row without a headache. But I feel within the quiet a sense of loss, of inability, the lack of intense Krishna consciousness. Nothing I can do about it.

An elderly *mataji* wrote to me from southern Europe to ask for reinitiation. Her GBC man approves and says, "The time is mature." He means, do it before she leaves this world. But I'm aware what it means: I'm simply a railroad man hitching one car to another "providing the couplings. I can't feel I'm taking on a disciple by my own independent strength. I'm willing to help her out by giving her the reinitiation through the mail, but for *my* sake, I'd like there to be a fire sacrifice. Otherwise, it seems like a non-event. I try to crank out a flowery letter and fail. What has happened to me? I want the initiation witnessed by the Vaisnavas, the fire, Srila Prabhupada, and Radha-Radha-Ramana.

July 19, Midnight

"The English maxim that God helps those who help themselves is also applicable in the transcendental realm." (Cc. *Adi* 1.50, purport) Because Lord Brahma worked hard to

execute *tapasya* as he was instructed to do, so Krishna taught him everything through the heart. He became self-realized. We can communicate with the Vaikuntha world if we please the Supreme Lord.

"Please hear attentively what I shall speak to you, for transcendental knowledge about me is not only scientific but also full of mysteries." The complete knowledge which Lord Krishna, acting as the supreme spiritual master, gave to Brahma is this: Everything is Krishna, yet Krishna, in His primeval personality, is the only existence. "The mystery of this knowledge culminates in personal attachment to the Lord . . . [and] detachment from anything 'non-Krishna.'" (Cc. *Adi*, 1.51, purport)

We can all receive this knowledge by reading *Caitanya-caritamṛta* with Srila Prabhupada's purports. Then we have to work (*tapasya*) to understand Krishna, starting with *Sravanam kirtanam*. I may ask Krishna, "Please reveal the mystery to me, as You did to Lord Brahma." But am I ready to act when I hear the syllables "*ta-pa*"? revelation means taking responsibility for the knowledge given and acting to carry it out. Can I carry it out in a quiet way in a little (but not petty-minded) life? I do want the revelation, but . . . I don't seem willing to pay the price. Please give me strength, *bala*. We need the strength given by Lord Balarama before we can become self-realized.

"By My causeless mercy, be enlightened in truth about My personality, manifestations, qualities and pastimes." (Cc. *Adi*, 1.52) Brahma learned the truth of Krishna's mysteries. How is it possible that a young, humanlike person could be the source of everything and could dance with *gopis*, expand Himself, etc.? This is a mystery: *sa rahasya*. The knowledge comes to us in disciplic succession, the descending process. "We cannot discover the mysteries of the Lord by our mundane endeavors; they are only revealed, by His grace, to the proper devotees." revelation comes according to our service attitude.

Dear Lord, I thank You in advance for letting me go into Dublin this morning to speak on the six items of surrender. If I end up not being able to go, I thank You for that too, and for all the times You have allowed me to lecture and do something that is acceptable to You. May I not be envious or find fault with devotees, especially with my spiritual master but even with those devotees who appear to be the least. May I also not find fault with nondevotees or even the nonhuman creatures. No matter what they do, it is not my duty to dislike them. I should share Krishna consciousness with them, if possible, but at the least, I should wish them well. Good things can come from me if I am good "that is, strong in faith and devotion "and when good things are coming from me, my ability to give Krishna consciousness to others will increase. So Srila Prabhupada has taught us.

I'm not going to read all the *catur-Sloki*s and their purports as they are presented in *Caitanya-caritamṛta*, although certainly they are important. They remind me that Krishna consciousness is not voidism or about formlessness. The mystery does not remain entirely untransmittable and unknowable. The Absolute Truth is the Supreme Person, Krishna, and we can know Him to some extent. He is the sole and ultimate reality existing before creation, during the manifestation of all existence, and after annihilation; He is eternal truth and life. He is free of *maya*, the material energy, which bewilders all conditioned souls. Never think of Him as encased in matter. rather, understand that all matter emanates from Him. A devotee sees Him in all things and

knows that all things rest in Him. "His existence can be realized by one who has the single qualification of submissiveness and who thereby becomes a surrendered soul. The development of submissiveness is the cause of proportionate spiritual realization, by which one can ultimately meet the Supreme Lord in person, as a man meets another man face to face." (Cc. *Adi* 1.55, purport) Devotees engage each of their senses in loving service to Krishna. They become bound to Him by a tie of spontaneous love. "To achieve this love should be the goal of life for every living being."

Chanting Hare Krishna with repeated acts of attention, with submission, is the core act of prayer and action for Lord Caitanya's followers. I'm glad to know it, although I can't yet chant offenselessly "not yet."

* * *

4:28 a.m.

Red *cadars* for radha-Krishna and a heavy brown one for Srila Prabhupada. We are all snug and warm in this room now, even though the heater is broken. But alas, still no structure, no plot, and the same rotation.

Red and gold "bright! Are They comfortable living here in Ireland-Vrindavana? Prabhupada argues that there must be an origin. Only the animals don't concern themselves with it. Human life is meant for realizing Krishna.

The pasturing ground as vast as the ocean. Nanda points it out to his son: "Look, Your pasturing ground, extending from Govardhana Hill to Kaliya lake . . . " Krishna sees and appreciates it, but He asks His parents, who have now accompanied Him a long way into the forest, to please return to their palace. He wants to go on alone with the cows and cowherd boys. Yashoda reminds her son to come home for lunch before it gets cold.

That's all. That's all. Shut the door. The ink is drying. rain-streaked window, face reflected. Get up and go. I repeatedly think, "I am supposed to leave for Dublin at 7:45. I hope I'll be all right so I can go." But it's not up to me. It's Krishna's decision. It's hard on Sundays to make my twenty-page quota. I can't write while hurtling down the road in Uddhava's car. Maybe I could manage to scrawl something, but I don't even have the presence of mind. I usually let it go and lie down in the back seat to kill the hour-long journey. I blank out and hope to be fresh and refreshed when I arrive. Not in pain.

Krishna, Krishna. "Why not quit?" someone wrote to me, but everything will be all right.

It's *mangala-arati* time. I also wrote a reply to a man in Midwest America who asked how he could serve Krishna without fear. He said he's afraid he'll be punished by material nature if he doesn't serve the Supreme Lord, but he doesn't like to be motivated only by that. I tried to explain it. I fall asleep and see myself petting my dear dog. He turns into an old dog with an especially thin face, and I feel pity and affection for him.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

Walking in the rain. Streams flowing down both sides of the road. Chanting aloud, just me in this gray kingdom of low-lying clouds. Can't help but think over what I just wrote in letters, what I will soon say in Dublin. Hare Krishna preacher. Moralizer.

* * *

5:37 a.m.

Still raining. Me and Krishna and all the other devotees in the spiritual world. My lecture on "otherworldliness" "remember that? Someone told me he liked my talk but sometimes thinks the other world too good to be true. It's so easy to believe that this world is all there is. Some people deal with that by saying eternity is this moment and nowhere else, and eternity is all the bliss there is. We don't agree. I aspire for the real place.

Rainy lane, rain spattering my glasses. That's what's happening now. And that Madhu is suffering from hay fever. Me too, but my symptoms are not as bad as his. Isn't the rain supposed to beat down the pollen? Hope we don't skid on the road today. "Hope I don't crash and burn and ruin my weekend," a migraineur wrote in. Yes, we all hope we can do that one thing we cherish. Well, it's not always possible.

Oh, Henry Higgins, he who
hesitates is lost. Cross the
rapids one step at a time
on slippery rocks, foot well
placed. Don't stop or turn back
rain on pack on
stack of books and in a
warm, dry room, in two seconds
he'll fall flat asleep.
Dream of Krishna?

* * *

The secularist takes His energy and uses it for sense gratification "whatever feels good. Whereas I, I am a preacher-devotee "or I'd like to be "detached and dedicated to His cause. I plot out my course, then lay it out, don't know (who does?) exactly what will come next, and call it improvisation in Krishna's service.

Bad,
bad means good in
jazz language.
Vedic *smṛti* and
Sruti
and *Sruta-kirti*
tutti-frutti
atma-tattva
and I'm going to speak more openly I've
promised
myself
without naming names but bicing vices
and concerns
and little perks. I thought that would be fitting for no-fairy tale.

* * *

7:35 a.m.

A little tired, but I'll get out there in the rain to Dublin. Surrender and speak of surrender. Spin words.

* * *

8:47 a.m., Bhadra's house

They always leave out a small bottle of Evian drinking water for me whenever I come, and I always take it with me. I feel for those who think they've heard it all before. We all feel that to some degree. We're not getting any younger, and we haven't yet witnessed the Grand Transformation in ourselves. It "Krishna consciousness as promised" doesn't seem any closer or any more real. I am the first to admit that. No need for any youngsters to say of me, "Hey! That emperor has no clothes!" Or worse, "That guru has no *ruci*." Let's talk about the lack together and discover our bedrock commitment to Krishna consciousness.

Today I want to improvise more when I speak. I mean, speak more freely. Don't just rattle off a script while keeping a close eye on the clock.

I'm feeling okay.

Billboards en route and smashed animal corpses on the road "red hash and fur. In this room, Irish lilacs and other flowers in a vase. Try to be down to earth yet faithful to the spiritual message of transcendence.

They have two boys, these people who live in this house. One's name is Ajamila and the other Nimai. Ages about four and two. As I passed them on my way to this room, I asked their father, somewhat rhetorically, "Good boys?"

"Fairly good."

* * *

9:22 a.m.

Looks like another small gathering: no extra cars outside. Surrender? How? What does it mean? I could say that it means to think of Krishna as our protector, maintainer, etc., but that still doesn't tell us how to believe it. But I want *them* to say it "to describe how they are already successful sometimes, and how they feel they can improve. That will give us some indication of how to increase our own surrender. Be a teacher-facilitator. I am not here mainly to announce my own lack of surrender. Neither am I here to boast of my Krishna conscious successes. Let me be open to learn. Surprises always come out. Of course, there's nothing new we can say. It's already all there in Prabhupada's books.

About eight more minutes before I go down to see my disciples, my Irish friends. We have known each other but not for so long; we're not overfamiliar.

* * *

Happy Idea #7
It's happy that I dreamt
Allen made a book of one hundred
poems beginning with a memory of Prabhupada
who woke up already
dancing in his *sankirtana* movement.
He slept on his mat and
we could see into his room,
while his holy form lay down,
and to remember it now . . . to

* * *

Recall his affectionate
care for us each
and the stories "raphael
promised to fix the door lock
but didn't, Steve gave
three hundred dollars and
got initiated on September 22, and
Don sent apples.

* * *

"Let someone go to Alaska,
someone to Moscow, let
there be chanting Hare Krishna in
every town and village!"

* * *

Swami's going to San Francisco in '67 January
didn't seem a good idea "but
when you are limited in vision
you don't know what's good.

* * *

Happy Idea #8
There is material and
Brahman happiness and above that,
bhakti. Even among *bhaktas*
there are upward varieties.
(skip)

"Is there happiness here in America?
Is there happiness in *vaidhi*?
Are only the topmost (*gopis*)
happy? Or are they sad?"

* * *

Death is
not happy unless you are going
to a spiritual, better next life and
you are pretty sure of it. Die
happy.

* * *

Happy Idea #9
Secret happiness "don't
tell anyone or it will go away.

* * *

Stay high forever
in Krishna consciousness.

* * *

"If it's good, why not
tell everyone?"

* * *

But there is still a secret,
subterranean
artesian
happiness:
Krishna is mine and
I am Krishna's.

* * *

I keep it to myself and
hint to others how
they can find it "
chanting, hearing, serving "
I can't quite convey
something so nice.

* * *

12:35 p.m.

Back to Wicklow in one piece. Fliver has rattles. Bathed, now awaiting lunch. It's EkadaSi. When I heard why so few people came to my talk (today, Inis rath is celebrating Radha-Govinda's birthday), I thought, "Why should I bother to come here every week? Do I come for myself or for the few who gather?" Yes, actually I do "I come here for myself and them, and to make a tape for distribution. But perhaps I don't have to come every week. Better I get deeper into the Wicklow quiet.

Because the striving is as important as the speaking. I'm trying to learn how to live without pretense. That takes practice. And to live with the ebb and flow of pain.

* * *

2:54 p.m.

Somehow exhausted by the day. Feel resolved not to go in next week.

Can't fish out words right now. Spirit too depleted, even though I am told I am eternal.

Surrender. I told them the six items overlap. I also told them there was no way any of them, me either, could surrender on the spot. Was it clear? In the last five minutes I admitted my own problems: (1) How do I know what Krishna wants me to do? (After Srila Prabhupada's disappearance, everyone has a ready opinion); and (2) Even if I knew what Krishna wanted me to do, would I be able to surrender to it? But I heard their examples both amazing and not amazing. Thank you. His tiny son fell asleep during the lecture, and his father pointed out that he was in the best position for surrender (full *dandavats*).

* * *

3:14 p.m.

Accepting those things that are favorable to Krishna conscious. I accepted a shed in the backyard. I accepted the reverses that have come in my life. Yes, that is the deep meaning of the words "to accept." It may mean going ahead and taking facility for service, then dovetailing it, or accepting that it is Krishna sending the difficulties in order to draw us closer to Him.

What is an example of rejecting something unfavorable?

"Every time I visit my mother, she offers me a television set. So far I haven't accepted it." Very good.

"I used to take intoxicants "drugs and alcohol "but now I reject them. Instead, I have become intoxicated by *Krishna-prasadam*."

What can I add to that? I said, "Surrender is not only refraining from things but accepting the better things Krishna gives us when we leave behind the lower taste. Because after all, we live on the pleasure principle."

The next item: to see Krishna as our only protector. Who has an example?

"Krishna gave me money when I had none. He came through with a few bucks."

I said, "We can't approach Krishna in a fruitive way."

"No," he said, "we can't, because actually, it doesn't always work." Everyone laughed, as if he were saying that surrender means we expect Krishna to give us money every day. We have to endeavor for things like money, and avoid *ugra-karma*.

She asked, "If earlier in *Bhagavad-gita* Krishna tells us to do our duty, and in the end He says to give it up in favor of surrender . . . " I knew what was coming because I know something about her life. She has a tendency to think surrender means the complete renunciation of things she later feels she needs to do. "Not naive or simplistic," I said. "Try to keep a balance. But if we're going to be a little unbalanced, better to be unbalanced on the side of surrender to Krishna than on the side of worldly duties. As Narada said, if you perfectly execute all the duties in *varnaSrama* but don't develop love of God, then at the end of life, our activities will prove useless. On the other hand, if we take to Krishna consciousness and neglect our duties "even if we don't make it all the way in spiritual life "we haven't lost anything."

Krishna is my maintainer; we don't keep our interests separate from Krishna's. That means we become meek and humble.

On the way home, he was driving fast enough that the billboards passed in a blur. I did see one that said, "Godzilla Now raging Over Ireland." Was it talking about that old-time movie? I also saw an ad for Coors beer. It had a picture of a dog with a buried bone and another with a buried bottle of beer. Get it? Passers by have two seconds to figure out the ads' humor. I didn't get all of them.

* * *

3:40 p.m.

Henceforward, he says, he'll take the next two weeks off from Dublin. He'll stay and dig for his Coors bone, his buried treasure, right in his own backyard of love of God.

But the high pollen count is driving me crazy. I had better stay inside while I dig. M. says he's glad to see that I am also suffering from hay fever, so he knows he's not imagining it. Oh no, no one ever said he was. Who would conjure up the symptoms of a hay fever attack? M. can't breathe, and his eyes and nose and throat itch constantly. This body is a scratchy, ill-fitting coat, and it fits less well as it grows older. It gets so ill-fitting that it doesn't even cover you when you wear it. Therefore we urge ourselves to surrender to Krishna.

We have to be helpless. Maybe I could have summed it up by saying, "Actually, we don't really know what it is to surrender, do we?" Instead, I said we could see we *can* surrender, if we work for it in small increments. Just by becoming steady, we can gradually go back to Godhead. Follow the basics. We may sometimes have to do something we'd prefer not to do.

Geez, I said enough I think, but still that romantic loving surrender escapes us.

Can I return to where I left off here in my lone wanderings and probings? Yes, I remember now. I was just two days into this volume and toying with the idea of calling it *No Fairy Tales*. But I couldn't surrender to that. On the other hand, it seemed a stark profession, as if I were capable of cutting away all artifice. If I did, what would be left?

When I glanced at the title early this morning, after reading *Caitanya-caritamrta*, "No Fairy Tales" seemed cynical and worldly. I would prefer a title to be lush with

transcendental flavor, like, "The Moonlight of Krishna's Pastimes Falling on The Nectarean Devotees" "you know, the sort of thing that comes in Sanskrit and can't quite be translated.

Anyway, aside from the title, I was surrendering to writing without springboard or structure. Just my own low-level mix (from a cement mixer?) grinding out the news and views of the day. I do try to avoid the mundane. It helps to read sacred books when you are trying to avoid the mundane. But I don't want to avoid looking for my Krishna conscious heart, even if it means an occasional foray . . .

O you people in ronda's Migraine Journal and the little summer midges who come indoors "I chase you out. The midges go for my urine bottle; they like the acidic smell. Let me put some cleanser in there to make it less attractive. Dredges of a urine bottle, yet some living being goes there. Srila Prabhupada told how in Indian villages children pass stool here and there, and adult men pass in the fields. The hogs look for all those leavings and eat them. He also said baby hogs will drink their mother's milk, then immediately after try to have sex with their mothers. This is nature study, he said. Some polite Hindus were put off by Prabhupada's frank look at nature. His point is not that hog life is wonderful but that we shouldn't imitate them.

I couldn't paint, I couldn't holler, I could count my pages and charge by the dollar. U could hound and give myself an Irish pound . . . Krishna, Krishna, Krishna.

How is so-and-so doing? I am concerned, because I want them to progress. Maybe they should write me letters so I can show my concern.

I have a built-in instinct to survive in Krishna consciousness. Surrender, surrender. It's not so easy, but I can do it all day long in little ways. Surrender is no different than renunciation and devotional service and . . . yes, it's all the same.

When M. returns tomorrow morning, he'll tell me if he won the competition that will allow him to get to the all-Ireland finals. He'd really like a shot at the singing part. A Hare Krishna man among the Irish trad musicians. He'll stand out, but he'll have to perform like everyone else. Sing and dance and be judged in ten or twelve ways, not too fast or too slow, keep the bass and the beat, give it the right feeling, because they know just how they want it, those judges.

* * *

4:15 p.m.

"After the reaching the shore of the Ocean of Milk, the demigods worshiped the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Visnu . . . who provides for everyone and diminishes everyone's suffering." (*Bhag.* 10.1.20) They recited the Purusa-Sukta Prayers, but they couldn't see Lord Visnu directly. Krishna is the chief *iSvara* above all demigods and worldly bosses: *iSvara-parama-Krishna*. Of course, most people don't accept Krishna as such, or some may have only a grudging or vague acceptance. Whatever they think, no one can avoid His features as Death and Time.

Hootin' tootin' Krishnaites
avaishnava behavior we
fight among ourselves and
some just stay home and tune

out. I reject TV as well as
computers but accept milk sweets
offered to the Lord. I'd
accept a personal epic of
three hundred separate poems
if one came to me to be
written but if not I'll accept what is.

"While in trance, Lord Brahma heard the words of Lord Visnu vibrating in the sky." He told the demigods to hear from him Lord Visnu's order "and execute it attentively without delay." Most people are tuned into TV, radio, cellular and other phones, e-mail, Internet, so they can't hear Krishna's message within themselves. I'd like to. I'd be like Lord Brahma "stay home in trance, head cocked to one side, writing it all down with a pen. I'd say, "I hear from Krishna. Now you hear from me and do as He says." That would be the fulfillment of a humble yet ambitious literary aspiration.

We hear through the heart. Sometimes Lord Krishna descends to earth. This is His causeless mercy, "but fools and nondevotees think that Krishna is an ordinary historical person."

I just imagined a critic discussing my writing and saying, "Up until the end of his life he maintained his belief in the Krishna dogmas, but one can see an increasing strain in his ability to accept it. He quoted the master while seeming to doubt the truth of his master's words within himself." The critic would add that I had potential as a writer, but it was never realized because I couldn't break the shackles of the Krishna belief system. To hell with Professor Know-it-all, I say. I hope he reads that too.

It's raining heavily. I thought I heard a tinkle of the gate bell. It's an inadequate bell. Most of the time I hear it, but Madhu doesn't. I have to call him to answer it. No, perhaps I just imagined it this time. It's raining hard, and everyone is either at Govinda's in Dublin or at home.

* * *

6:00 p.m.

Greely growly hibernet "you have a body yet. Greeny-meeny hoppers too "St. Patrick's Day is not for you. Stay home and make a scheme "you'll be pleased unless you dream. When you go to heaven and you start to hoe, don't forget to row your boat home under Krishna's instructions. Yes, He especially helps His devotees.

I'm looking at you, He says in *sastra*, so we (here goes) ought to become pure devotees. Don't give up your different strategies to attract Krishna's mercy. The goal is *so* important. Try for nothing else.

What do you think? Can you surrender more in *any* way? Krishna tells us to give up other processes and surrender directly to Him. There's nothing more important. I don't doubt it, no matter what any future professor says. I want to live in Krishna's presence. So let me turn to Him in a simple way. Hare Krishna. Dear Lord, here I am "here we are "trying to become Yours.

July 20, 1:45 a.m.

Early-stage twinge stayed all night, so I couldn't sleep last night. Stayed in bed until now, so missed my midnight Cc. reading and early rounds, both dear and deeply ingrained habits. (I wish they were so ingrained that they were like lines etched into a rock.) Took Esgic at 1:20 a.m. Now trying to begin *japa*.

* * *

4:41 a.m.

Different schedule today. Way behind on rounds and writing, but hope to make them up. I spoke some "Tape Journal" for the first time in a while. Maybe I can revive it.

Now on the run "time for my aerobic walk in which I'm almost not aware I'm communing with nature. Try to see it, will you? The happiness inherent in being able to walk, pain-free, and grateful to be chanting Hare Krishna "I am blessed.

I think it's starting to get darker in the morning, or is it just the cloudiness?

News: Madhu won second prize (silver medal) for melodeon playing and Irish-style singing in the competitions at the province level. He already won medals in the county-level competitions. Now he has earned the right to go to the all-Ireland finals at the end of August. We (his fans) are proud of him. He says because he enters their midst as a *lone* Hare Krishna (shaved head, *dhoti*), they tend to be helpful toward him. They want to make him feel at home. I'm glad for him. He's giving his *prana* as he sings as an offering to Krishna. It's something he loves, and those who are connoisseurs recognize his talent. He has entered the heart of Ireland. In a sense, it's better than when only devotees appreciate another devotee.

* * *

Dreamt I was associated with the Indian army somehow "not in an official capacity. I was sitting on the outskirts of a big lecture being given by a general, but I couldn't hear what he was saying. When he was finished, he began speaking casually to various people in the audience. Then he came over to me and invited me to another one of his lectures. I said, "Yes sir," but he wasn't satisfied with my response. "Why don't you say, 'Thank you'?" I did, then realized I was being instructed on how to live according to Indian culture. Another person told me to wash my hands, then a man began to pinch my chin, saying he was killing hornets. He said, "I think you had better gather your strength or you're going to get a disease." I was obviously a Westerner dressed like a pseudo Indian, and I felt my foreignness strongly in this dream.

* * *

5:20 a.m.

I walked to my usual border, then started back. It's a very dark day. Looks like it's about to rain. The headache book I was reading stressed the importance of aerobic exercise, and that made me think more kindly about my daily walk. Exercise is supposed to produce endorphins and make you more resistant to headaches. On the way back, I heard a car coming up from behind. I turned and saw the driver "the car's headlights on

"moving fast. In such situations, I usually delay moving to the side of the road. In fact, I stay in the middle of the road longer than is perhaps safe, because I want to be sure the driver sees me, especially now that my clothes are green. Green on green. When I thought he had had enough time to see me, I deliberately stepped off the road onto the grassy bank. I didn't turn to look at him, but I crossed my fingers in hope that he wouldn't veer off and finish me. Of course, he didn't, but he sped by at quite a clip. At the little bridge, I saw his car dip twice as it splashed through puddles. It occurred to me how dangerous it is to speed in a car. You don't have time to adjust the speed if you meet something unexpected. For example, in all this rain, the bridge could have been washed out or those puddles hidden deep pot holes. He could have gotten himself into serious trouble. Madhu speeds regularly. Should I tell him about it? As I walked up the rocky road to the house, I heard one of those pewee-type birds which I so much like "the weak cry, the sweet song.

* * *

5:40 a.m.

Oh, Quaker oats. What's coming down the pike? How long can I wait for it? How much time do I have to spare for it? Some guy said that Guru Maharaji was one of the most potent, spiritual leaders to come down the pike in a long time. This disciple was formerly a famous, radical student associated with the "Five" of Chicago. So? Madhu was playing a melodeon tape as I entered the house. I pulled off my boots and heard it. Yeah, I'm okay, although behind in my quotas. How about you?

You and everyone else? We should do something for humankind. The best we can do is to make some Krishna conscious contribution that will hit them in the roots of their culture, something that will grow and be harvested for a long time. Krishna conscious somersaults. But I can't stay awake right now to discuss it. I'm always sleepy after the walk. That Indian general quoted *Brahma-samhita* in his lecture, but I kept my distance "didn't hear him properly. That man squeezed a hornet, or some horned insect, out of my skin. It actually emerged. Could my disease end in that way? A fantasy. I'll always have it with me, the human disease of the material body.

* * *

5:50 a.m.

A devotee wrote me, "Every once in a while I check up on the opposite sex." He phones some of his favorite women, although he is a no-illicit-sex member of the Hare Krishna movement. I told you of the other man who entrusts to God his lack of money, even his anxiety, and he said it works "he gets money from those machines. Kali-yuga is getting worse every day "it's certainly worse that it was even thirty years ago. I'm full of influences from others. That's . . . finish now from Hibernia.

9:10 a.m.

I read to M. from Dr. Robbins's book on chronic headaches, taking the risk that he wouldn't like what the doctor had to say. I figured that when he saw how enthusiastic I was about it, he would go along with it. Dr. Robbins discusses the modern approach to headache management: tuning into the wide choice of non-med and medication treatments. He suggests sufferers take hold of their lives and not remain passive sufferers. He also acknowledges that medication is the main method of pain management for most sufferers, and that relaxation and other techniques, while important, are rarely enough. He talks about quality of life and encourages sufferers to realize that this is their life, pain and all. Get on and do with it what you want to do. It's not always a straight path "sometimes you'll get backtracked, meet dead ends, and have to try new things "but you should realize that your life is at stake.

M. liked his mood but jumped to his own conclusions: Even if you were to shorten your life duration by taking allopathic medications, it would still be your own choice. He got into his usual line about how allopathic drugs affect the liver and that the liver affects the rest of the body. He told me how for the first time in fifteen years yesterday, he used an inhaler. It helped him sing in the competition, but it will probably affect his liver, which may worsen his asthma. Nevertheless, he used it because he wanted to sing. Well, I want to write, read, and chant. Therefore, I have to decide for myself what price I am willing to pay to get the facility to do those things. Don't trust Dr. Robbins or my doctor in America to make the decision for me. I may live fewer years in the long run, but what is the value of a long life if it's lived without the ability to serve Krishna actively?

Still, thinking it over further after the discussion with Madhu, I felt deflated. Why should I believe M. and not Dr. Robbins? Robbins didn't say that by a judicious use of meds your liver would be affected and your life duration shortened "that's M.'s theory, which he picked up somewhere. As he spoke, I thought, going along with him, "M. seems to be an expert on how the liver affects the body." I think I will tell him that I disagree and thus throw off the influence his theory had on me, insisting that by following my present pain management course I would live less years. But let me face this truth about myself: I want to get things done. I don't want to live the life of a complete invalid when I can learn to manage the pain.

Later, I spoke with M. about how to go about re-initiating this woman in Italy. Should I do it by mail or wait until we go there at the end of 1999? He surprised me by suggesting that we go to Italy this October. It took me by surprise because we have so much been in the mood of no international (passport-stamping) travel. But perhaps it's a good idea.

I guess because I maintain a myth about this life "although I disproved it by my experiences when I was writing *Cc. ASraya* "that if I stay on in one place, I'll achieve some undisturbed, deeper *babaji* state where I'll start concentrating on *sastra* and the holy name and the subtleties of expression in EJW. All of that, I have come to believe, would not be possible if I were traveling. Hare Krishna.

Oh, arise, O sign of rain, O typing in the back room . . . oh, the little things that go on, such as the electric heater breaking and the stomach refusing to digest the milk sweet Gopi-manjari gave me yesterday. Something is bound to break down. I am not living right, according to some philosophies. I am about to abort a headache. I tried that once already today, but I'm ready to try it again.

Thinking more about travel. Actually, we get somewhat involved in the goings-on here in Wicklow and among the Irish devotees. Traveling would give us a break from that and allow us to clear our minds. It has that advantage. Maybe a week in Italy in September or October would be nice.

Now please chant Hare Krishna. That's another thing. I was so far behind I didn't have the energy to chant vigorous rounds. Instead, I slumped in a chair and chanted quietly. This is a behind day due to exhaustion and pain. Hare Krishna. I felt up and talkative for a little bit this morning when I did "Tape Journal." remembered delicious words.

* * *

10:05 a.m.

Strange day and mind-set. Complaining about fairly relative things, such as the disturbance of my schedule. But when am I ever on schedule? Often I'm not. The late morning dip from 8 - 11 a.m. with possible head pressure is itself so regular that I have to account for it during my day. If I go to Italy, how will I be able to put up with the extra demands on body and mind? Oh, I'll manage. And when I don't feel well, I can just lie down.

But I'll miss the art room, the house, the garden (which I can't use because it gives me hay fever). Everything here is just where I want it. Travel is austerity in that regard. And especially, I won't be able to take Radha-Govinda and Prabhupada. That will be strange too. It's almost like I'm declaring to radha and Govinda, "You belong to me for my convenience. When I travel, You simply stop getting offerings, and neither will You be dressed or bathed." When I went to the U.S.A. and the Caribbean, They stayed in bed and waited for me. Srila Prabhupada stayed wrapped in his nighttime *cadar*. It seemed all right. I came back and took up the worship again. I guess it's a question of accepting myself and my limits and saying (not as in that derogatory statement above), "Lord, I do want to worship You in my home, but I can't always be at home. You can't travel with me because of Your size, and You have so much paraphernalia. Please allow me to go, and please don't take it as neglect."

I guess I could go. M. says the main reason to travel would be to benefit the devotees in southern Europe. It might be my proclivity to stay here, but it is better for them if I go, especially since I haven't taken any radical vows never to leave here.

So far today, no *sastra* reading "part of my petulant, fall-behind mood. At least let me write. But it would be nice to occupy myself, to hold and embrace at least for a few minutes the sacred scripture with my eyes, and to worship it with my intelligence. I did hear *sastra* today because I played a tape. I'll hear another at 11:00 when I do Prabhupada's *puja*. Try to be up for it.

* * *

Write through your trouble and leave something to read later. What are the side effects of living in the material world? We so-called enjoy, then have to pay the price in karma. Srila Prabhupada says the nondevotees pay attention to alleviating miseries such as old age and disease, but don't know how to relieve the condition of death. But the misery of death can be alleviated. We should live for never having to die again.

That's a tall order.

Daruka wrote me that in one of my books, I said I didn't think I was going back to Godhead after this life. He said many ISKCON devotees think that just by chanting sixteen rounds, they will definitely join Krishna when they die. They quote Srila Prabhupada as saying so. It's possible, I told him, but you have to be in a very good state. By chanting those sixteen rounds and whatever else you do, you have to reach the state of desirelessness and wanting nothing more than to be with Krishna in Goloka, if that's where you're going. You have to burn up your *anarthas* "those things that prevent you from that single-pointed desire. Yes, it is possible "even for me. But I recognize my ineligibility with a natural humility. It seems foolish to boast of something I haven't yet attained. But perhaps the others are also being humble and submissive by simply reciting that quote by Prabhupada. I say there's an inner meaning to the quote that they are not recognizing. Maybe I'm too negative. Let's all go back to the spiritual world and have another ISKCON "everyone, except Mr. Nair.

I am smart. I know the answers to things according to Srila Prabhupada and the *Bhagavatam*. I've been around in this movement for over thirty years. I'm not bitter, just sadder but wiser. I can fish out quotes and anecdotes as good as the next guy. Just try me.

But don't push me. I'm fragile now and need to take it easy. No meetings, no phone calls, no emergency calls in the night.

What is this linking I claim I do? Linking them to Krishna and Prabhupada. He said no one should become a mother or father unless he or she can save the offspring from death. That is the responsibility of parenthood. raise them to become devotees. It's not easy.

Matchless Gift.

Rivet the ride.

Over the top. retired

USMC gets migraines, wants to know

if anyone out there has tried feverfew nasal spray in conjunction with Fiorinal with codeine. God bless all sufferers. They think there has to be a cure "we simply have to find it. Not true. "I am praying," she said, "to Jude the Obscure, the patron saint for lost causes, and lighting a candle for y'all." I see them in their dark rooms, calling in to work, "I can't come in today." The boss fires them sometimes. E.r. docs often think they're junkies coming in for a Demerol shot.

The name of the cultural organization that sponsors the Irish Traditional Music competition is Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eareann, and the style of singing M. does is called Sean-nos (old style). I'm going to keep writing because when I do, Gingrich and what's-his-name, Death, will keep away, because Yamaraja likes the *kirtana*, and this is *kirtana*.

* * *

10:54 a.m.

Approach the Prabhupada *puja*. I'm here to give mercy to others. Brothers and children and me smiley on top. Thumbs up. I have to keep living and lecturing from *sastra*. Sixty. Forty. What are you counting? How many heartbeats, how many pulses?

I told M., "Don't tell me I'm going to die early because I take pills." Then I realized that this could become a mundane worry. Old people are often afraid to die, and they fantasize on how many years they have left. They desire to optimize their last years so they can enjoy peaceful sense gratification. In the end, they actually deny death.

M. said, "Death comes according to karma."

"And Krishna can change that." See how smart I am?

* * *

11:48 a.m.

You have to preach, O preacher, from the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. You go over the verse, the tumultuous, non-platitudinous things he says. Then you blow off steam in a creative way, one sentence after another, each waiting its turn

like a Grecian urn.

Dead past. *Just* "recent past."

I am not concentrating on Krishna because it's not the end of my life? I have to look around and preach up a storm. I look up and out at the audience, then read the purport where Srila Prabhupada uses words like "the Supreme Lord" and explains why God must exist "logically, theologically, in reality. I go over the arguments and examples that appeal to me.

We will stay in a room with a few things, try to make the best of it, and if I am to die on the road on the way there, that's okay too. That will be Krishna's will, because no one can kill me if Krishna wants to protect me, and if He wants to kill me in Italy or on the stairs in Ireland, who can protect me? No one. No one.

I go from example to example. O brother, *this* is the sweetness. My little stomach can't hold much, and I can only get through the days, but there is sweetness in a Krishna conscious life.

Plink, plunk. Each one makes an offering, turning to the Lord, searching the books for what is appropriate, trying to do something different for His pleasure. Hare Krishna. I'm blank now and stretching to reach the bottom of this page.

Krishna squirted dye at the *gopis* and they at Him. I heard this morning on a tape that Purnamasi said . . . He said, "Whose granddaughter . . ." Radha . . . The son of . . . I forget right now, but I do remember Madhumangala said that his friend wanted *laddus* and *jallebis*, and then they wanted to meet Radha. I was listening.

Prism. But.

Do the wrong thing.

You are not so great after all. Still, you will arrive in the afternoon and open the *Bhagavatam* even if only for ten or fifteen minutes. *sastra* takes me out of the world

of body and mind and the worrying about who's at the door and whether there's any mail.
I'm daring myself to go up into the air and land in another country to share what I know
with others.

* * *

Happy Idea #10
Green grass, pines out
the window.
Prabhupada *murti* . . .
Are you adding this up
to equal happiness?

* * *

I take rest before 7 p.m.
Hurry, ten minutes before bedtime.
Sleeping bag mummy style,
tape recorder set
with *japa* tape,
urine bottle for relief
during the night.
Calm and quiet.

* * *

While I try to sleep,
Madhu will spend three hours in
the bathroom singing and
composing. I won't hear "
ear plugs . . .

* * *

Keep out noise and disturbing thoughts
preserve this simple version of life
while you can.
Tomorrow I
will read what happens
to a miserable self who
is born again in human form.

* * *

Happy Idea #11
I am happy to

chant 16 "good" rounds.
Happy to have the
day to serve Krishna,

* * *

to walk
pain-free. religion makes
me happy.

* * *

Srila Prabhupada: "Is everything all right?"
We: "Yes!"

* * *

"Now that You are here we
are happy, but when You go,"
said Queen Kunti, "then our
name and fame will vanish.
Unless You glance upon us we
cannot be happy."

* * *

Happy Idea #12
Happy tones
move along in groove.

* * *

Prabhupada is ready for me
to take off his woolen day
cadar and put on his
heavy evening one,
his warm hat.

* * *

I have a plan
to read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.
It's up to the *Bhagavatam*
whether he will have me.
Don't spit me out, please.
I used to type and edit this 3rd

Canto. I have a right
to read it and write notes.

* * *

I have a right . . .
Prabhupada is right to call them rascals.
He knows he's right
and so do I . . .

* * *

My words are running down
as they should at this hour
to a rhythm that coaxes me
to sleep . . . that's all I
want . . . this night,
to sleep in His bosom.

* * *

12:34 p.m.

Looking at Matthiessen's Zen journals. He talks of self, emptiness, and the pain of sitting still for hours at a time when he meditates. None of this is for me. He has no God, just himself, his empty no-self wisdom.

I'd like to be calm in mind and spirit and hear the holy names, but I can't. Has Matthiessen attained mental control or even watchfulness? I respect him for that if he has. Just because I'm a Hare Krishna doesn't mean I'm the best at everything. But *Krishna* is the best. He's YogeSvara. Buddha comes from Him. Chanting Hare Krishna.

Indigestion. Pains in head, in wandering mind. Looking for material comfort? Sometimes I long for it. That's why I'm so easily disturbed.

Those who chant the holy name or distribute books for long hours, or who take care of young children all day, or work at full-time jobs "they are all performing austerities. The ability to chant is the fruit of study in the *bhakti-Sastras*. Listening now for the bell at the front gate. She's at least fifteen minutes late with my lunch, as usual. Where is the bell, the front door opening, the familiar sounds? Time, time, August, September . . . planning all these months ahead. If they live in the present, I respect them for that.

* * *

2:23 p.m.

Lord Brahma said that Lord Krishna was going to appear on earth to diminish the demons' potency. The demigods, he said, should appear as relatives in the dynasty. The demons had increased their military strength. That's also true now. "Therefore, Krishna

has appeared by His name, in the Hare Krishna movement, which will certainly diminish the burden of the world." (*Bhag.* 10.1.22, purport)

I seem to think ISKCON doesn't have much potency "certainly not the potency Prabhupada ascribes to it in his purport. Obviously it doesn't have political clout or cultural influence. Neither does it seem to have single-mindedness or depth or purity. How, then, is it going to offset the world's militaristic demons? Srila Prabhupada states (and *sastra* states) that the transcendental sound vibration of Hare Krishna is nondifferent from the person Krishna. Although ISKCON itself may be struggling, the Hare Krishna mantra can alleviate suffering. ISKCON doesn't own the Hare Krishna chanting, but it can promulgate it. As one member, I wish to feel the holy name's potency within myself and then to be able to honestly tell both devotees and nondevotees, "Please chant Hare Krishna. This alone can offset the demoniac influence."

When we know the nature of Krishna's appearance and activities, we go to Him where He is in His *lila* in the universe. There we receive further training in how to live with Krishna. After that, we are transferred to Goloka Vrndavana.

M. talking too much downstairs. I buzzed the intercom and said, "I'm reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. This is my first chance at it today. Please be quiet."

"All right," he said, and now it's dead quiet. Now I'm wondering where he went and who he's talking to. Anyway, Lord Krishna said that Lord Balarama would appear with Him. Also, Visnu-maya, who acts both as Yoga-maya and Maha-maya, will appear to execute His work.

Sukadeva next sets the scene by mentioning Mathura, the place where Surasena went to rule the Yadu dynasty. "The city and district of Mathura are very intimately connected with Krishna, for Lord Krishna lives there eternally." (*Bhag.* 10.1.28)

"There are many devotees who vow never to leave Vrndavana . . . but if one leaves Vrndavana . . . or Navadvipa-dhama for the service of the Lord, he is not disconnected from the Supreme Personality of Godhead." Yet Srila Prabhupada states that whoever executes devotional service in those *dhamas* goes back to Godhead. It may be harder for me to practice the connection from the West, but that's the challenge I face.

Am I going to read all the verses from the first few chapters of the Tenth Canto to prepare for Janmastami? I prefer to read only certain ones. It might be good at this time to read all of them and to think how everything is connected to Krishna.

* * *

3:10 p.m.

This writing is heavy on the little life. Once upon a time, Maharaja Pariksit went out. He became tired and entered the cottage belonging to Samika Rsi.

Once upon a time "

I have no story. Stay easy and calm.

No title, no theme, no myth. But Krishna is preparing to appear in Mathura. Yes, I should read the whole thing. Gradually, I'll keep it all in my mind "how it starts with questions by Maharaja Pariksit. Sukadeva doesn't just say, "So Krishna was born." rather, he tells all the events that led up to it. The demigods were concerned that the earth was overburdened by demons. They went to the spiritual planet within this

universe, where Lord Visnu resides on the Ocean of Milk. No myth. If we want *Krishna-lila*, we have to take this too. Faith in this *leads* to faith in *Krishna-lila*.

Of course, I can say Krishna descended with His *vraja-lila* not because of the demigods' request but because He wanted to attract souls. Still, we honor the chronology given in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Krishna says He will appear on earth and that the demigods should appear there before Him. Lord Visnu means that original Krishna will appear. Mathura is mentioned as the Lord's eternal abode, and Vrndavana is within Mathura. Now I am again reading that scene I never so much enjoyed, except perhaps the first time I read it, where Devaki and Vasudeva mount the chariot with Kamsa at the reins. There is a long philosophical speech by Vasudeva, and we already have a pretty good idea what Srila Prabhupada says in the purports he wrote in 1977. I'm sure there are things in there that I have not learned, so let me read it all again. My loyalty to Prabhupada must be born out in real ways, and reading his purports with interest and faith is one of the main methods.

When I'm done, I'll call M. up here and talk about that travel plan that sprung up today. Sounds good. After that, I'll go out and walk the boards while chanting Hare Krishna. Hope I don't get a hay fever attack while I'm out there. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. Chant and don't fall down. Harness the horses, and don't look at women or other objects of sense gratification. Put everything but the holy name out of your mind.

* * *

Swami No-myth "controlled no
women, belly
and genitals controlled
don't worry about money:
in God we trust.

* * *

Swami No-myth
open to Krishna

* * *

Mercy comes to you
and Yadu-kumara knows
Vraja-kumara "ask Him please
for *seva*.

* * *

3:48 p.m.

I like the shrubs with their shiny leaves that resemble holly out here in the garden. They look like they might grow up and become trees before their lives are over. I also like the pretty flowers, but know they can't last past the first frost. If all you have is

flowers, then when they die, you have a flower graveyard. I place my hopes in the shrubs. No grass growing yet. Looks a bit like a deserted lot. Maybe this is the nature of a first-season garden. Oh, you lord, sitting here looking at flowers and shrubs while the world burns.

I heard that one of the gurus is having mental and physical problems. How can that be? Give us some steadiness in our Krishna conscious movement so that it doesn't shake apart. Maybe they'll want to restructure it again. Maybe they'll say no one is guru. But that's just as ridiculous as saying we're all gurus. Grasping and groping, we are. Committees and reformers trying to define and redefine, while we all look silly and sad. I have nothing to lose "none of us do "because the chanting has been given to us for eternity.

Shrubs, he said. He wants shrubs and a lamp and to worship Radha-Govinda. I have everything I need here.

The midges are quite tiny. I think I'll go inside to plant paint on canvas and pray for the Lord's mercy to spare the leaders and their followers from trouble.

* * *

5:19 p.m.

We've decided to go to Italy around the third week of September. We have also just received the shocking news about HK Swami's breakdown. I don't know what waves and counter-waves all this will cause. When I heard it, I almost canceled my plans to travel, imagining myself grabbed and pressed into service to help quell controversies and revolutions. It's not what I want to do in this movement.

My bed is like a nest with its new sheets and cover, but my bones and flesh can't give me much happiness. Dreams. My cousin in the bathtub "did he drown? Was I to blame? Hare Krishna. He broke down. It could happen to anyone.

Better I don't talk about that too much here. Let's all go back to Godhead if we can.

July 21, Midnight

Krishnadasankirtanananda asked him immediately after the lecture. Little did we know.

HK Maharaja has had a breakdown. It's on my mind. Who will be next? How to deal with it? This literary work "it has become a diary (always was), yet it is also a call to right behavior, to strong Krishna conscious aspirations. The GBC chairman advises us all to "behave toward him with compassion, patience, and charity of spirit." After all, he has helped us so much over the years, done so much service for Srila Prabhupada. Life even in this institution has such harsh features, but we are called upon to behave decently despite them. Soon enough we reach the end.

Just one verse by Bilvamangala Thakura and then move on. Or would I linger here to visualize? "Under the shade of His lotus feet, which are like desire trees, JayaSri (Radharani) enjoys the transcendental mellow of an eternal consort." reminds me of that picture where She is offering flowers at His feet. "It is a book to be read and understood by the most elevated devotees of Sri Krishna." (Cc. *Adi* 1.57, purport)

"Since one cannot visually experience the presence of the Supersoul, He appears before us as a liberated devotee. Such a spiritual master is no one other than Krishna Himself." (Cc. *Adi* 1.58) Maybe a great rare soul can personally meet Krishna in Vrndavana, but it's not possible for us conditioned souls. If we are sincere and seriously engaged in devotional service, Lord Krishna will send us a spiritual master to invoke our dormant propensity to serve Him. At the same time, devotees are guided within by *caitya-guru*, Krishna Himself.

Very well. We can assume that we too are being guided. Now our spiritual master has left our sight, and it's not possible to receive instructions in the same way we did before. Still, we can hear his eternal instructions in his books, just as I am reading *Caitanya-caritamrta*. Be submissive and adjust to what he says.

The author of *Caitanya-caritamrta* further advises that we avoid bad company and associate only with devotees. "With their realized instructions, such saints can cut the knot connecting one with activities unfavorable to devotional service." (Cc. *Adi* 1.59) Srila Prabhupada elaborates on bad association: gross materialists who are constantly involved in sense gratification, unbelievers, and speculators. Are we following?

Misgivings and other obstacles threaten our devotional service. Yes, I guess that's true. They block us from finding the *satam prasangat*, the intimate association of devotees with whom we can talk of the full spiritual potency. They also block us from talking alone with ourselves. The outer work of the Krishna consciousness movement is often too much for us. We certainly can't do all of it by ourselves. Therefore, we should do inner work. Do the work outlined in the verse, *satam prasangam mama virya-samvidoh*. Free yourself of envy.

"The Lord, being full and free from problems, can wholeheartedly care for His devotees. His concern is how to elevate and protect all those who have taken shelter at His feet." (Cc. *Adi* 1.62, purport) The spiritual master is also concerned that his disciples make progress in devotional service. I seem to say by my actions that I need time alone to make my own progress. Progress is slow. How can I help others? It's not easy. At least I can be true and encourage others to do the same. I can do what I think best in Krishna consciousness and encourage others to seek their own inner awareness of how to serve.

Now I will select verses and purports to read from the next chapter of *Caitanya-caritamrta*. By writing and reading, I associate with transcendental thoughts. They make me fearless.

* * *

2:50 a.m., Myth #42 (and #43)

We walked on the path.

This is a myth. It takes place in a realm. The colander tells the serf, "You messed around with another man's wife, and now you have also compromised my situation."

A large toad reared up, saying "well, I can't tell you what it said. Then it suddenly keeled over, hind legs sticking straight out. We may all die that quickly, furiously, in a nuclear cloud of fire.

Is this the Bartok of my youth? I heard him on the subway once. He sounded like he was lost and pining for something. It moved me. Is this the Henry Miller? The Saroyan?

No, they wrote different books.

Antlers. Where is thy lady? This is Myth 42, already in tatters before it has begun.

The frog jumped "something happy about that. Something has to be full of slashes from start to finish. There can be piano runs, noise, conferences, half-truths, and the author in his underwear sitting to write.

He sent Sir Lancelot away for his indiscretion. That's what they say.

No, no, he told him not to mess around. His crowning achievement was that he finished fourteen rounds and never thought of God once. He's not crazy or riotous, but a green-painted myth in shorts, a troll standing against elves in battle under the bridge as the rain comes down these mythic hills.

Start again.

EkadaSi two days in a row because he ate carob. Bring him to Varuna's court.

"Krishna is the one story that's *not* a myth "the *only* one. And for that matter, other myths are partial truths."

Varuna brought Krishna's father down to his kingdom "the same Varuna who was challenged by Hiranyaksa and said, "I'm too old to fight."

Similarly, I was called down to Varuna's court for breaking EkadaSi. I said I didn't know, did it in ignorance. They slipped the carob into my sweets. Let us travel and get away from too much attachment to this place.

This is Myth 42, and I'm happy. The elves will take part. Janmastami in three weeks. The piano is all heart.

Under the bridge, I mean.

The serf said, "I'm sorry I forgot. I forgot your instruction."

Then they had to consider a mad toad and a badger. They were two in one. This is actually a different myth "more like 43. Gambling in St. Clare's hall. Half-truth! The myth recommended. It will help us. St. Francis and Rupa Gosvami didn't meet at all. Or Lord Caitanya and Christopher Columbus, although they were contemporaries. Lord Caitanya didn't meet St. John of the Cross either, but Little John and Teresa did meet.

So 42 is a good number, as good as 24.

The judge was a mole, a big guy, but not like Bhaktivinoda Thakura. He said he had too many cases to judge today, so he wanted to go home and start over to think.

This is an orientation day to get you acquainted. We will actually begin next time to move into the realm of myth.

Okay, believe in it if you will the

trill hill is pouring down water

and I went to bed with it always

afraid of some indiscretion

some lack of devotion

lack of preaching

falldown

missing Goloka the

whole society turned

topsy-turvy

or me dead.

Better write while I

can
to God.

* * *

5:53 a.m.

You're seeking art, Swami, but you should seek Krishna. read the scriptures, for example, and wear *tilaka*. Place your forehead on the floor and say prayers along with the others. Take part in some way in ISKCON's preaching activities. Then you can write something "an essay, an edict (hire yourself out as a scribe for a committee), direct and devotional.

I say that, but there are other ways to write. May the colored pencils reveal them. May I see Krishna in all things, I say, and saunter away. With difficulty they ran after him and brought him back to sit at a table.

* * *

9:26 a.m.

Henry Grimes arrived on time for his appointment with the literary therapist in downtown Dublin. "You're not going to give this an Irish slant, are you?" he asked.

The man burped, as if in reply. They both had headaches they were trying to abort with prescriptive medications. They were waiting to see if the pain would go down.

"Let's not waste time," said the therapist. (We may call him Bill or Culachain.)

"Okay. I want to know the best way to present myself in writing."

"Do you feel committed to the pen? Let's talk it out instead."

"No, pen and typewriter."

They discussed myths, the value of fiction, some favorite authors, none of whom fully satisfied Henry. Henry mentioned that he had to carry the burden of theology (a phrase he had picked up in a Christian book) in his writings.

"Well, go Zen," Culachain suggested. "Then you could write from the moment."

"No, I want to be Krishna conscious."

"What's that?"

"If I tell you, it will take up all our time and I'll have to pay you too. Here's a book you can read to fill yourself in."

"I don't have time for *that*."

Henry saw how their relationship was strictly a professional one. He yearned for a more intimate, literary relationship. Lone-artist syndrome.

"Has this been helpful?" Culachain asked after a while.

"Maybe. I forgot why I wanted to come here. Maybe I need to center myself more before I come to see you, but this pain "I can't let go of it and find myself."

"Why not write about pain?"

"Maybe I'm afraid of failing in the more standard forms. Maybe I'm afraid I'm too old to train myself as a fiction writer. Besides, those books move too slowly for me. Still, I don't want *only* diary. You're a literary man, aren't you? Do you follow me?"

"Sure. You have to write according to your capacity and inclination. I know you want to leave an oeuvre as an offering to your movement, not just a had-lunch diary."

"Exactly!"

"Would you like a beer?"

"No, some water perhaps."

They really didn't get anywhere, but Henry was satisfied that they had made a start.

* * *

10:15 a.m.

What is this quota stuff? Why do I think I ought to write twenty pages a day? And damn those who read this and criticize. I think a quota has a function. My art is so artless as to be nonexistent, but I want to defend it anyway. Most art out there tends to be a show. It can be so sophisticated that people only pretend to understand it. Then basically you have an illusion going where a cunning artist pulls strings and moves mirrors, and a willing public buys it even though its meaningless to them. They even say it's more essential truth than what we usually call reality, what most of us live on the surface. Art has a definite advantage over reality because it can isolate experiences to share and thus put them in a new light. But it's not real, because you still don't know what's going on in the artist's actual life, that same boring routine of ups and downs. You select only the dramatic moments.

No myth, I say, no fairy tales. There's a method here, and a point, and I only hope the reader can find them and draw from them for his or her own life.

Here, let's go for a little ride.

Zen master said, "If you can understand a frog, you can understand Zen."

You mean its guts? Maybe someone asked that, like a biologist. "Poor frog," as Srila Prabhupada said. Maybe the master meant the frog's tendency to sit all day long like a meditator. But I agree, if we could understand that the frog is spirit soul, part and parcel of Krishna, we would be enlightened.

Another Zen expression: "I know nothing." They call the ability to admit you know nothing more than what you know wisdom. Yes, I think that's true. There is such a point for the tiny living being where he cannot know more than is humanly possible. For example, we start with the axiomatic statement that God has inconceivable powers. Then we have to acknowledge that we cannot know His nature entirely. But if we were asked, "Is there a God?" we wouldn't say, "I don't know." We would tell what we understand. Our *dharma* is not voidistic.

* * *

I'm grateful I got the Cc. reading in this morning about Cintamani and the Lord who wears a peacock feather as guru. But I couldn't read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* later in the morning because of the pain. I'm still grateful that *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is in my life. Maybe I can look at it this afternoon.

A woman who is a few years younger than me wrote and said that she keeps forgetting things. Her memory is getting worse. She can't even remember simple things. If that sort of thing happens to me, maybe I can dovetail it and make it a literary technique. I can write just one thought after another and not worry whether they connect, or if I forget what I was saying in the middle of a line, maybe it didn't matter anyway.

Oh yeah, I was saying that *Krishna-lila* is not mythological, although everything else tends to be. I have been afraid to look into world mythology, thinking, "Oh, if all this stuff about gods and the cosmos is myth "that is, man-made "then what's different about what we read in the *Bhagavatam*? How can I dare claim that only the Hindu 'myths' are not myths?"

Sadaputa Prabhu takes another approach to the study of world mythology. When he looks at myths, he sees their similarity to our "myths" and argues that until the scientific age, people accepted these "myths" as history. He also states that the *Vedas* are the original source for myths in other cultures. I suppose it takes sophistication and scholarship to understand it properly, and to see all the links, and I am impressed at how Sadaputa Prabhu has assimilated this knowledge and connected it to Vedic culture. He seems happy to discover that a Norse or Native American creation myth bears resemblance to a Vedic concept.

Anyway, I'm going off a little on the word *myth*, but I brought it up in terms of going on with the myths of our own lives, facing the half-truths and the fun of wearing costumes as we do.

I also wanted to point out that Krishna is not mythological, nor His *lila*. Kamsa (who Prabhupada said also understood spiritual philosophy), drove his sister's chariot after her marriage. He heard a voice in the sky. I can take it just as simply as I did in 1969 when I heard it for the first time. I don't have to prove scientifically how a voice can emanate from the sky "it just did. The *Vedas* assure me of that fact.

* * *

The Supreme Lord has material and spiritual energies. Myths come from the material energy, if by myth we mean man-made stories of gods, anthropomorphism. It's religion in the material modes "concocted, not direct revelation of the Absolute Truth, as is available in the sattvic *Puranas*. Yet the myths cannot all be false. Nothing is absolutely false because it all comes from the Supreme Truth.

* * *

Noon

Happy Idea #13

The happiness of *brahmananda*
is like the puddle made by
a calf's hoof compared to
the ocean that is love of God.

* * *

Go downstairs now into the cold
bathroom. Brush your teeth.
Say hello and obeisances to Madhu
as he's heating up water for
my bath.

* * *

Happiness is being able to write.
At midnight it went faster and
more than usual, my pen hand steady.
"I have not forgotten to free-write."

* * *

We aspiring devotees know
something others don't,
but we'll each be tested.

* * *

Happy Idea #14
There's a vise in my head.
I'll go to bed early.

* * *

Happy ideas: write a
lot. Stay here in
Ireland or a country like
it and they can know
you are here but you
won't come out.
Sell your van.
Don't advertise you are here
but decide on it
and they can know.
Face yourself
in your cell.

* * *

Read *Bhagavatam* every day.
When vise comes, ease
out of the routine.

* * *

This is for myself but the
main idea is for everyone!

* * *

Happy Idea #15

Happy to have Krishna consciousness
to sing about.

Happy to chant and read,
even though

I don't do it right.

I got the right thing.

Krishna in Vrndavana
with His *parisads*.

* * *

Holy name,

muttering, uttering, clear

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna

Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama

Rama Rama Hare Hare.

* * *

Put "Krishna"

and "Caitanya" in your poem

and it's redeemed.

* * *

The open secret "

"Krishna is the Supreme."

* * *

2:51 p.m.

Devaka gave his daughter a grand dowry. "These are all old customs in the society of *varnaSrama-dharma*, which is now wrongly designated as Hindu." (*Bhag.* 10.1.32) Then a voice from the sky told Kamsa that the eighth child of his sister would kill him. Kamsa was immediately prepared to kill his sister to protect his own life, although only moments ago he was showing her affection. (We can feel these events leading up to Lord Krishna's appearance; they are like scenes in a drama.) Vasudeva remained sober and tried to pacify Kamsa: "O great hero, one who takes birth is sure to die, for death is born with the body. One may die today or after hundreds of years, but death is sure for every living entity." (*Bhag.* 10.1.38)

My pills won't stop death, although they may improve my "quality of life."
Everything, however, is relative compared to death. We may get an opulently carved throne for the Deities, but we will still have to die. Don't get carried away and forget the

essence. We should use our time to end birth and death. "It is not that to save oneself from death one should entangle oneself in sinful activities."

I recently requested devotees in Vrndavana to help me get a new *Srngasana* for my Radha-Govinda, but now I think I made a mistake. Devarata Prabhu wrote back and said that he intended to arrange for an ornate throne to match the ones the Deities have at the Krishna-Balaram Mandir. Perhaps that throne will bind me to living in this house. Why not keep my worship simple? Most devotees couldn't afford to hire the two carvers for the two months it will take to make the throne, so why should I have such a privilege? The whole idea came about when I thought I would like to get a better *vyasasana* for Srila Prabhupada. The one he has now has no back rest but just a simple cushion. I thought that if I upgraded Srila Prabhupada's seat I should also upgrade Radha-Govinda's "throne," which currently is only a thin piece of cloth.

Oh, when I die, my body will turn to dust and my *atma* will receive another body according to what I deserve and what I desire. This is the simple but profound philosophy, although few people in this world understand it. The self-realized soul doesn't panic at death. He knows he won't be destroyed but will only lose his outer covering for some time. We have changed bodies almost constantly; our life duration in each is relatively short. Even Kamsa couldn't prevent his eventual death, and if he killed Devaki, he would not be able to acquire a good body in his next life. Think it out.

* * *

4:00 p.m.

Breezed through a thick book on classical mythology. The introductory definitions interested me. "The word *myth* comes from the Greek word *mythos*, which means 'word,' 'speech,' 'tale,' or 'story.' That is essentially what a myth is: a story." (*Classical Mythology*, Fifth edition, Morford and Lenardon) Most myths are concerned with demigods and people's relationships with them. Saga, legend, and folk tales tended to be rooted in historical incidents or earthly activities. Mythology is preoccupied with the gods, humankind, the afterlife, and other spiritual concerns. "Thus mythology and religion are inextricably entwined."

"In everyday speech the most common association of the words *myth* and *mythical* is with what is incredible and fantastic. How often do we hear the expression, 'It's a myth,' uttered in derogatory contrast with such laudable concepts as reality, truth, science and the facts." Lovers of mythology don't like this derogatory view. They say, "Myth, in a sense, is the highest reality; and the thoughtless dismissal of myth as untruth, fiction, or a lie is the most barren and misleading definition of all."

What's this got to do with me and my Krishna consciousness? Very little. I wouldn't want to compare mythologies and tangle with all that cross-cultural and religious scholarship. I received Krishna consciousness directly from Srila Prabhupada, and learned not to consider the *Vedas* and their creation stories and demigods and Supreme God Visnu as mythical. It does seem dangerous to play with myths from other world cultures because you become relativized, mythologized.

But what about my one-day-old budding attempt to write myths and fairy tales in EJW? If they are to last at all and not be destroyed by frost of judgment, I have to think

of "myth" and "tale" entirely in my own way with no bearing on classical or so-called primitive mythologies. I mean something different when I use the word "myth." I mean using half-truth as a way to write about my life and the things in it that I would normally be afraid to express. I want to use mythology as a way to dig up more and finally say it in Krishna consciousness. I want to use it to help myself surrender.

* * *

The Myth of My Headache

Once there lived a wicked giant.

Once he came in an Excedrin. *Two* of them.

Once there was a GBC meeting. He felt the head pain and took a pill. So it began.

It all began when Demeter came to earth. She is the origin of headaches. She had the first attachment. She was supposed to be a chaste matron, but she fell in love with one of her worshipers. She refrained from intercourse, but her passion gave her a headache. That's how headaches began. By transference, all mortals are now susceptible to head pain.

A version of this story was set to music by a man who suffered from migraines. He wanted to make pain an art, to express it with arpeggios on piano and drums and clarinets and oboes. Through music he expressed the aura and the euphoria that come before pain strikes.

Now modern medicine gives some relief sometimes.

What really happened?

I'm telling you. This is the origin of headaches.

I imagine someone asking, as they do when they hear myths, "Do you believe in them?" As if they don't exist. Better to ask, "How can we get rid of them?"

I'll tell you. You have to worship . . . uh . . . I don't really know. I just don't know. You live with them and move on to other topics in a Krishna conscious life.

He took a pill

and used his energy to combat

anxiety

boredom

attachment to the people who

listen to him. Now please be tolerant and listen to more of this myth. As I was saying . . . Demeter is the first headache goddess; it was she who distributed head pain far and wide. She taught people to seek relief in feverfew and other medicinal herbs, but the herbs didn't always work. Then an oracle told her (and through her, others) that if she could just be herself, she might just feel better. Had she repressed a little too much passion?

No, Demeter thought. Even if she had repressed her passion in a by-gone age, she was no longer attracted to that worshipper, who had long ago been eaten by old age and disease.

The oracle asked her what she wanted to be, to do.

Demeter said, "These cult priests are always asking me to go into the market for worship and rituals and buying and selling, but people throw fish at my statue. I *live* in

my statue. I'd like to live elsewhere, so when they call me, I tell them I have a headache and can't see them. They can't force me to see them. I *do* have a headache."

Or is that a myth? I mean, isn't head pain all in your . . . head?

No, it's not! At least not like that!

But if you didn't have pain, would you go down to the ritual market at Thebes?

"I think so." Demeter was in her cave during this interview, and she did not want to talk more, yet she seemed somewhat interested too. She drew pictures in the sand on the floor to distract herself from the issue at hand.

"Do you have a headache now?" he asked.

("Who?" The mistral Joy-Juice, the school goofier, asked.)

"No, I don't have a headache now, but it could come at any moment. These Harpies and Furies, you know, are quite out of control. Headaches come at night when those screeching elves show up. But right now, I have a break. I can't take it. This is just a break, after all. You have to believe me. In these peaceful interim times, I feel I should do as many worthy acts as I can."

So Demeter made reeds and wrote poems of some variety.

And Krishna?

"He's always my worshipable God. Thank you for asking."

And it's true. He's the Lord of all. At death we must turn to Him, and even now. We try to dedicate ourselves to Him, chant His names, feel His power, His love. Look at me, I'm dressed as a devotee. I follow the four rules. Do I look like a nondevotee?

The scholar felt he should leave the cave. He too was a devotee. He didn't want to catch headaches from Demeter. Anyway, it was time for other functions. Demeter, he realized, probably wanted to be alone. She was a hermit, an ascetic, and happiest that way. Whatever had caused her the first headache "frustration, some secret cause, repressed passion of *any* sort, something physical, whatever "it couldn't be solved just now. Let her rest in pain-free moments.

* * *

6:38 p.m.

Painted. Quickly resolved the drawings (six of them) after the first draft. Cartoony figures, not much to my liking. Didn't seem to dig out any feelings deep enough from my psyche. But at least I enjoyed hearing Srila Prabhupada sing and putting a few Krishna conscious words here and there on the work.

Then upstairs, hearing Srila Prabhupada sing *pranama-mantras* while I put Radha and Govinda and Srila Prabhupada to bed. Suddenly I heard a noise at the window. What, was it Bhakta Leo with a ladder? *Something*. I went and saw that a bird "looked like a small eagle "had smashed into the window and was now recuperating on the ledge. I got an excellent look at it. Soft brown patterns (not so unlike the brown Radha-Govinda are wearing today). I guessed it was okay "didn't look injured, just stunned. It occasionally turned its head to look in at me, but it didn't seem to register that I was there. Its beak seemed cracked. After a few minutes of this rare opportunity for close scrutiny of a very wild bird (not a little garden fellow), the bird turned and looked me straight in the eye. I lowered my gaze so as not to frighten it away, but it was too late. The bird had registered

that I was there "a tall living being only inches away. It instantly took off in a perfect downward swoop toward M.'s house. I don't know what it was "probably a juvenile hawk, although a bit neckless, like an owl. When it flew, its wings and tail reminded me of a swallow's. What a visitor! Those dark, shining eyes! Perhaps it was an omen telling me to stay in this house and pursue inner life.

July 22, 12:10 a.m.

"I offer my obeisances to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, by whose mercy even an ignorant child can swim across the ocean of conclusive truth, which is full of the crocodiles of various theories." (Cc. *Adi* 2.1) Srila Prabhupada mentions "the philosophy of the Buddha" as one of the dangerous crocodiles in the ocean of nescience. One can have the essence of knowledge "by avoiding these sectarian views and accepting the lotus feet of Krishna as the ultimate goal of life." That's what I want to do, even though people will accuse me of being sectarian. Accept the lotus feet of Krishna, by Lord Caitanya and Srila Prabhupada's mercy. It appears that I am a Westerner and that they have adopted me into Indian culture, but that's not the case. I'm not American and Lord Krishna is not Hindu.

"O my merciful Lord Caitanya, may the nectarean Ganges waters of Your transcendental activities flow on the surface of my desert-like tongue."

I'm reading what's easy for me, what inspires me. "Each day is like a crap shoot." That's how one migraineur put it. I don't know if I'll be shut down from my reading and writing by a headache "no, I know I will. What I don't know is when. Therefore, I try not to do things that trigger pain. Yet if pain comes despite my meds and plotting, I can do nothing more than accept it. And try to control it. And stay alive in it. For example, I can look to Lord Krishna for direction in how best to serve Him.

After deciding to travel to Italy on M.'s suggestion, I now think I might not go. I'd rather stay here in this house as long as I can. I'm not afraid of the end, and I shouldn't be afraid that staying here will make my writing dead, as if there's nothing to write about. Let me look for the inner action.

I woke at eight last night to the gate bell ringing. I peeked out and saw a red car and a white-haired man at the front gate. I sat down on the bed and felt my heart beat quickly. He drove away. It was difficult getting back to sleep. At ten I awoke to hear M. arriving in the van. Where's the inner action in that? It's there.

Read a little, even a little, and let Lord Caitanya enter your life. It's almost Janmastami, and some may think we should be reading of Krishna in Vrndavana, but there is no way to understand Him except through Lord Caitanya. He is always the way. It is He who enables us to cross the crocodile-filled ocean. They are His transcendental activities that are like the Ganges whose "flowing produces a melodious sound." His name gladdens the ears of unalloyed devotees.

The tongue is compared to a desert. "The transient pleasure derived from mundane topics of art, culture, politics, sociology, dry philosophy, poetry and so on is compared to a mere drop of water . . . " Therefore, this is the mercy I request: to always live in Lord Caitanya's movement. Materialistic persons don't find deep inner satisfaction from their conversations. I hope to speak about something more. Let all our words bring us to

Krishna, even if those words are sometimes indirect. The indirect way is often the best way to catch us fresh and unaware, ready to live in the Krishna conscious moment.

But the goal must always be clear and always sought if we ever hope to reach it. "If they were to use their dry tongues to chant the holy name of the Lord "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare "as exemplified by Lord Caitanya, they would taste sweet nectar and enjoy life." (Cc. *Adi* 2.2, purport)

Realizing the Absolute Truth as Brahman is like seeing a hill from a distance and thinking it a smoky cloud. I seek protection in these examples. The Buddha's teaching is like a shark. Or it gives a drop of water when an ocean is required to quench a parched tongue. Give us the nectar of Lord Caitanya. If you think Lord Caitanya's teachings are sectarian or sentimental, then discuss them with logic as you feel necessary.

The Brahman effulgence, praised in the *Upanisads*, is but the rays emanating from Lord Krishna's transcendental body. That same Lord Krishna has appeared as Sri Gaurasundara. He is the Absolute Truth in all fullness; He is Bhagavan, *sat-cit-ananda-vigraha*. His form and personality are never mundane or make-believe. He is not only *sat*, not only *cit*, but full in all three features of the Absolute Truth. Stick to this line of reasoning, this camp where I joined and where I still belong. I may sometimes be laughable and open to criticism from nondevotees: "Look at him! If he's so satisfied, why can't he taste pleasure in his basic practices?" And our spiritual society obviously suffers setbacks. Just look at how many leaders have fallen, even after strenuous service. Material pundits observe us and laugh, but this is a beloved movement, Srila Prabhupada's own. Is my loyalty laughable? No. Come join the dance.

* * *

Adventures of Haladhara dasa

Henry Grimes forgot he was actually an initiated devotee, Haladhara dasa. He climbed down the office stairs after seeing his literary therapist. "I don't know what I gained from that," he thought. On O'Connell Street, he attempted to recollect himself: "Who am I? What am I supposed to be doing?" He recalled the Sastric injunction that life is not merely for pursuing the animal propensities but for reviving dormant love of Krishna and going back to Godhead. "That's a good way to express it," he thought. "There are many comprehensive, compact statements like that, all of which have been derived from Vedic literature and presented by Srila Prabhupada." And as if to give himself an example, Haladhara dasa said aloud, "I am spirit soul, the eternal servant of Krishna. I am meant to render Him loving service, for His pleasure."

"Haladhara is my name," he thought. Then he realized that his name meant Balarama, carrier of the plow. The eternal spiritual master is Lord Balarama's representative. We pray to guru and Balarama for the strength to serve our spiritual master and to please Krishna.

Very nice "this is going along in a Krishna conscious way.

Now on the street, "where the elite meet to eat" "or so read a sign over Duffy's Tavern. "So many pubs in this country! I wonder if I will meet anyone I know?"

I didn't, but just then Haladhara saw an old acquaintance coming through the crowd. It was Prema dasa, a man who had taken initiation into the Gaudiya Math.

He pulled at his nose. Thought of St. Francis, Sydney, Australia, Sir Philip Sydney, Francis McArthur.

Fran

Fran boy

this is it.

Haladhara reflected. Was that the gate bell ringing? No, it wouldn't be ringing at this time in the morning, and this is Wicklow, not Vrndavana, where so many sounds . . .

Chill air. Give us a little action.

"What's new, Prema?" Haladhara asked.

"Oh, it's you. I'm on my way to sing with a *kirtana* group at St. Stephen's Green. Want to come along?"

Haladhara wasn't sure. Maybe he would. Cars and the *garda* and the ordinary people were rushing by, and he realized they would have to pick their way through the street crowds.

Haladhara is a writer. What would be his purpose in going to St. Stephen's Green? He decided that ISKCON wouldn't like to see him singing with Prema's group, because his group doesn't recognize the GBC and they seem to minimize Srila Prabhupada. He felt shame, in a way, that he couldn't just go off and sit in a park and sing with these fellas "I mean, *Prabhus* " but it would probably turn political, which means nasty.

"Oh, Prema, I had better not go." Haladhara told him why, and Prema accepted it. Then they shared *prasankirtana* party.

Haladhara felt at loose ends. He decided to go into a bookstore (he often did that). "Let me walk around and see what reaches out to me. This will be a good follow-up to my talk with my literary therapist, who suggested so many things I have already forgotten half of them. Writing is my service to Krishna, so I'm allowed to look at various literary forms. Maybe the *karmis* are doing something I can use in Krishna's service." With that, his step picked up as he walked down the street. As he walked, he passed the place where the street artists chalk out portraits on the sidewalk. He saw (1) a 1957 Dodge with spectacular tail fins; (2) a picture of Lord Siva and Parvati; and (3) a picture of a sunset. Then in he ducked through the open door of Dakota Books.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

Bubbling with new creations sent by God. Happy over the outdoor clothes I have to wear "the boots, the fresh air, and breathing it in and out.

I've been telling one of the devotees here details about my health. He responded, "Health is wealth." He said he appreciates his own health now and doesn't take it for granted.

Health is wealth.

These rocks on the path have been here almost since the beginning of time. Breathe in and out and let your eyes roam skyward amid the slow-moving woolly clouds. The slight peak of that hill is softly outlined against the sky. Passed the car that was junked in that

meadow quite a few years ago. Aniruddha once volunteered to remove it "it's an eyesore. I asked him how he could do it; it isn't his. Anyway, I can't just arrange the world to look good for me, because even when I look out my window I see the cattle doomed for slaughter. Aniruddha can't change *that*."

But I do like to see beautiful things "upright foxgloves, the quiet undisturbed front gate to the neighbor's house, especially when he's away, the mighty weeds growing in all their varieties. rain-dropped wet grass blades and the white blossoms still on the berry bush."

* * *

Mythos Fantasia: The Fallen Soul

There was once a god who fell.

The soul of each *jiva* is like a god.

They wanted to know how a god could fall.

Don't be bothered by that. Just hear my story. The god fell into a river, which cushioned his fall.

Turn off from the world.

"He fell," I said. The farmers gathered around. "What is it? Is it hurt? Who are you?"

The god said, "I know you don't really care. I'm looking for a Hare Krishna care center, but not one for crazy and lazy fellows "not a free hotel."

"Hey, it's a Hare Krishna from outer space!" They all laughed. They told him offhandedly where the farm was located in the valley, wherein the Krishnas dwell.

They thought he might be Icarus, but he wasn't.

He picked himself up. No broken bones. He walked toward town.

But these ventures didn't usually work "one remained lost, as if in a dream. But in real life, one ought to be able to do better than dream. He decided to pray to God. He wanted to be able to see the light. I mean, to accept his fate as Krishna's mercy and as ordained by Him."

The people watching him grew tired and went to sleep.

The soul wandered on and arrived at a pub. From outside, he heard someone telling the story of the sun-god's son, Phaethon. There was some rumor that Phaethon was not Helios' real son. The people in the pub joked and swore. The soul heard them clinking their glasses and tuned in more to the storyteller, who was now telling how Phaethon had gone to his father and said, "If I am your son, I insist on being allowed to drive your chariot." His father was reluctant, but he gave in in the end. Phaethon, however, could not control the horses. They flew up, then came crashing down, causing great damage. Zeus rushed forward, at Gaia's request, and killed Phaethon. They were both afraid he would burn the earth to ashes with the sun's chariot. The nymphs later buried him with the inscription, "Here is buried Phaethon, charioteer of his father's car; he could not control it, yet he died after daring great deeds."

"Hey," said the soul to himself, "sound familiar?" We could not run our spiritual master's chariot of guruship, although we sure tried. We crashed and had to be killed. We did daring deeds, though, but no one much remembers them. Perhaps this is a valuable insight that I should take back to my people.

But how to interpret it? Some will say we should never have attempted to be gurus. We are certainly sons, but helpless ones. We should have served him in minor positions. Others may interpret it differently.

The soul "let's call him Jiva dasa "then fell asleep in a local haystack. A farmer's daughter woke him up and reported him to the villagers. When he awoke, they insisted on knowing who he was and what he was up to.

He said nothing. He didn't want to admit that he was fallen.

So the episode ends here without resolution, except this: Jiva dasa became determined to go on living, even if he was not able to return to his ancestral home. He decided he wanted to be humble.

* * *

9:12 a.m.

Vasudeva told Kamsa that the mind develops the next gross body. Whatever we think of, that we become. Thus he assured him that (1) he couldn't prevent his physical death; and (2) death would only be a change of body for the eternal self. Srila Prabhupada states, "The Krishna consciousness movement, therefore, offers a process of transcendental activities wherein the mind is fully absorbed in affairs pertaining to Krishna." (*Bhag.* 10.1.41, purport) I ought to do that "attach my consciousness to Krishna. Then I'll not have to take another material body. Me and at least one Godbrother friend I know read books outside Krishna consciousness. He recently told me, "I'm running out of steam for outside reading." Oh, I thought, does that mean I should give it up too? *Can I?*

When a Krishna conscious leader's health collapses, he decides to live alone for a while, chant and read, take nature walks, and remove himself from management. If that's a life conducive to health, why not do it all the time? Or at least until we are called back out onto the battlefield by the powers that be.

Lord Krishna advises that we always think of Him, become His devotee, and attain the perfection of yoga, but we know that is difficult to do in a normal state, and harder still at the time of death. Well, here's good news: "Instead of allowing one to forget one's real position, Krishna can revive one's original identity at the time of one's death, even though the mind may be flickering. Although the mind may work imperfectly at the time of death, Krishna gives the devotee shelter at His lotus feet." (*Bhag.* 10.1.41) Thus, the mind won't take a devotee to another body; "rather Krishna takes the devotee to that place where He is engaged in His pastimes." Good news to know that Krishna will rescue us despite our mental flickering! Still, we have to work at it from our own side to show Him we are earnest.

Engage your mind in Krishna's service in a flowing, natural way. Don't try to force it, as in mechanical yoga practice. Srila Prabhupada writes, "By chanting the Hare Krishna mantra constantly, one can fix the mind on the lotus feet of Krishna." I'm glad to hear it, even though it seems impossible for me. Even if I chanted constantly, would I be able to fix my mind on Krishna? I don't disbelieve or mistrust this statement, even though I also sankirtana.

Whatever we do materially is lost to us at death. We may have built skyscrapers and they may remain, but when we die, what good will those buildings do us? Our sons may become gods in their next lives and we dogs, so what good are our solid relations? *Think* about this, people, and adjust your lives so you don't rack up a total loss.

* * *

10:00 a.m.

Haladhara did carry the plough through the late morning. Dasa, I mean, not the original. I mean the one who has to fail and taste ashes, who needs to become humble enough to understand that he's dependent on God. I mean the proud one, the one who hasn't yet learned spiritual truth, so chooses to suffer. He doesn't even turn to his spiritual master as he did when he was young. Yet he knows at death all he's achieved will fail him and that only loving service will count.

These thoughts I just stole from a Godbrother's letter.

Hala is hanging on. It hasn't been decided whether or not he will get pain today. He seems afraid of the decision.

* * *

10:24 a.m.

Tired of intellectual and psychological explanations, but neither can he escape them. When that side isn't satisfied, he may rebel when he's asked to totally surrender and accept someone or some instruction as absolutely true. He just wants to sit it out, take it easy, ride out the storm. On the front porch in the old age home, or better yet, on one's own homestead, he hopes to have all his needs satisfied and his demands tolerated. He wants to be where his bed and bedroom are always waiting, ready and quiet, the temperature adjusted for comfort. He will lay down there and wait for energy to well up in him so he can write or speak.

"Sweet and petite," someone said upon seeing a photo of my Radha-Govinda. Then he reminded me that Deity worship is one of the five most important practices given by the Lord. The others are reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, chanting Hare Krishna, associating with devotees, and living in the holy *dhama*. Sweet and petite . . .

You want to be with me as I am? But I get irritable. I want to be something more than I am. raindrops make a pointillism effect on the skylight windowpane. Don't forget to see through it to the leafy tree branches. "Do not go gentle . . ." But I want to go gentle. I don't want to go angry or lose my life to frivolity. I can't expect, however, that I will go gentle in the sense of ease or comfort. Death is hard, especially for a person with attachments who has not surrendered completely to Krishna. Perhaps we missed out on big items of self-work and spiritual development. "Oh, I was supposed to do that?! And I neglected to do *that*?" Most likely, we will be back to try again. I really don't even want to think about it, how I spent the credits my spiritual master gave me.

I may have to go natural today if "it" comes. I'll just have to ask my endorphins to supply those morphine-like substances. If they are unwilling, I'll have to talk to my blood vessels. If none of that works, I will simply have to find Krishna in the pain and through the pain. I'll endure.

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare.

* * *

11:55 a.m.

I took the Esgic and laid in bed, listening to the rain beating on the skylight "a very soothing sound. Quite soon the pain went down. Now back to my life.

Hare Krishna. Go for the quota. Answer mail. What shall I do with my bought time? Write myths and stories. Be on top. Be on the bottom. Eat ashes. Be a Hare Krishna cowpoke. Don't tell everything, but something. Tell what you feel like when "it" comes. Turn to *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, even for a short session. I'm fighting for my life.

Because life is a wonderful opportunity to practice Krishna consciousness. There is so much to learn. I want to study Vasudeva's speech to Kamsa. The soul and the changing of bodies "he discusses all that. I believe it, although I have no remembrance of it right now. Many things beyond our direct experience we accept as knowledge. That's *Sruti*.

Srila Prabhupada made this point in Mexico City. A person with an academic, intellectual, inquiring voice said he had difficulty with the concept of "perfect knowledge." Srila Prabhupada said that we simply have to accept what *sastra* says. We may be imperfect, but we receive perfect knowledge by studying *sastra*. Quoted *sastra*. When he spoke of chanting Hare Krishna, I felt particularly pleased.

* * *

Happy Idea #16

Happy with all things in this life
especially a lone peace
to write and read and draw.

* * *

Little things like exercise by
the open window on a
June morning, sky
clear blue
with clouds "Ireland.

* * *

Anticipating the Sunday lecture.
Hearing how the others are
doing, Madhu's
singing career growing.

* * *

Midnight and the life
of reading "sitting up for
the next verse and purport and
thus coming to know Him
secretly, gradually.
If I get wrenched
away may I never forget
and always be grateful and
greedy for more.

* * *

Happy Idea #17
Happy-sad-indifferent-
don't know "check one "
or none of the above.

* * *

No ideas but things.
Nada-nirvana,
beyond all that is
supreme form of supreme
truth.

* * *

Now here's Happy Idea #42:

* * *

no foolin' chant Hare Krishna,
count on beads.
Read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, live
with devotees. Love
Vrndavana. Worship the
Deity. Be prideless. Don't
waste time. Of
nine limbs of *bhakti* . . .
do one.

* * *

Happy Idea #18
Prabhupada
comes back to me after my

performance at lecture in the schoolhouse.

* * *

Prabhupada wearing
his silk-soft saffron
Swami hat, warm *cadar*
looks upon me.
Soon I'll start the worship "
massage him, bathe him,
dress him again.

* * *

Happiness is absence of pain
and obvious danger and suffering.
There's deeper happiness.

* * *

Ideas for making money and
for preaching "opening a
Restaurant, doing *nama-hatta* on a
computer, going to England to sing at
Hare Krishna festivals, writing a
book. Making money, purifying it
yourself. Telling others good ideas
they can use.

* * *

12:45 p.m.
Lunch late? Take advantage of the time to write. Okay, Swami, express.
Soon he'll eat-chomp
whatever they give "peas and parsley
from a rain-soaked garden
Madhu, Mani, Muni
in old times people were
simple and strong.

* * *

Lunch is here
under duress I eat
no pain now because
Cu Chulainn (me) paid

hard-nosed pills.

Run along. The Celtic myths are not just for learning but for fun. Someone seduced someone's wife. reminds you of Indra. Isn't there a Tara (Irish name) among the Vedic demigods? I'm not afraid of similarities. I won't study them, but when I see them I'll take Sadaputa Prabhu's attitude. The more, the merrier "it proves the Vedic world view of other worlds, gods, and even the Supreme God. Celtic lore teaches the understanding of transmigration.

Hare Krishna dasi says this is the worst summer she's seen in a long time "hardly any sunny, or even clear, days. Her husband jokes that maybe they'll move to where they can see the sun. She hopes it doesn't put me off. Mostly it doesn't. I like the sound of rain. I don't think it gives me more headaches either. I live in headaches. rain streaks like tears; we can be friends. What does it matter where I live in pain? When I am suffering like that, I don't go outside anyway.

* * *

2:40 p.m.

Vasudeva said the moon, when reflected in a puddle, appears broken because of the wind's movements. Similarly, the fixed spirit soul appears shattered when in contact with the material modes. I say, "I have a headache," or, "The pain went down," but I, the soul, do not suffer at all. It is only my identification with my body that brings me pain.

This is hardly solace to a person in pain, except theoretically. If I could return to my original form and understanding, I would surrender to Krishna and He would (is) give me full protection.

Lord Krishna is Acyuta. We fall down and become agitated by material nature, but He does not.

If we are envious, we set ourselves up for suffering in the next life. "One should always act piously, thinking that this life is temporary, and not be attached to temporary happiness and distress." (*Bhag.* 10.1.44, purport)

Vasudeva's philosophical speech did not pacify or terrify Kamsa, so Vasudeva spoke more diplomatically and practically.

* * *

Haladhara in the Bookstore

He forgot how to spell his name. "My intellect seems to be shrinking," he said to himself. The bookstore had ads with pictures of Woody Allen and Groucho Marx. The ad with Groucho's picture said, "Outside of a dog, a book is a man's best friend." I won't tell you the rest. We should be serious.

"Where is the diary section?" Haladhara asked a store hand.

"In with the biographies."

Strange place for diaries.

After all, they have John Berryman in the poetry section. Maybe poetry should be divided into comprehensible and incomprehensible.

Haladhara looked around. There were no explicitly Krishna conscious books "not a one. For that you need to go to an ISKCON bookstore.

Haladhara remembered when his name used to be Henry Grimes. His mind went off. Brought it back "what was his purpose? I guess to look at some books that might help his writing. How about Sam Beckett's *Malone Dies*? Naw, he knows he can't get into it.

Well, that's true of *all* the books here. As he noticed, they don't have a single Krishna conscious title, not a single one.

"How about this?" Hala's red-headed friend produced a book written by a woman who had sailed around the world in a little boat.

Why would he care about *that*?

"Help!" Haladhara cried. "Let's get out of here."

"No, wait "there are books on Zen and vegetarian BBQ and the baseball star, Kareem, who is a migraineur."

Haladhara stepped out. This wasn't a very good bookstore. But I'll tell you what he came home with. Don't worry, I'm getting to the point, the conclusion "why this story is worthwhile.

It's worth it because I took a pill to be able to write it. It *has* to be good. How about this conclusion: Haladhara gradually realizes that outside reading holds no prize and that he should read only his spiritual master's books. From that moment on, he loses all other interests and remains like a bee in the nectar-soaked interior of the flower of his guru's books/

Don't believe it. He learned to dovetail. Something he picked up helped him. Learned the hard way that carob is a bean.

But no Krishna conscious books "not a single one.

He'll have to write his own.

So Haladhara decided to do just that. It won't be a Hitchcock thriller but a drifting semi-essay.

"Excuse me, did anyone ever write one long book about his life? Do you have all fifty volumes?"

They only have books on Baribizon, if I remember it right. *The Life of a Man About To Die*. No, that's not the title. It's on the tip of my tongue. But it's out of print. "Have you tried Thoreau's journals?"

"Yes, thanks. Oh, never mind. I doubt the book I want exists. I really will have to write it myself."

"Wise guy," the store hand thought. "He'd better buy something after taking up so much of my time." Haladhara agreed, secretly, that he should leave the store as soon as possible, but only after he bought a book. He got a seven-pound book, and while he waited for the cashier to give him his change, he stared at the other book titles next to the cash register "the last diary of a man dying of AIDS, who didn't even mention God but only movie stars and memoirs by movie stars.

It was raining when Haladhara left the store. Sad. But a devotee can chant in any condition, even if he still chants with offenses. Groucho: "Inside a dog, it's too dark to read anyway."

* * *

5:37 p.m.

Well, I had to wash the pots, the Deity plates, my own plates, and M.'s plates. The whole time I was doing it I was planning the note I would leave for M.: "You left me with all the pots and dishes to clean for two days in a row. You should wash up before you leave."

But actually, I didn't mind doing the dishes. I watched my mind as it went on complaining ""Your Guru Maharaja should not be your servant," etc. "and saw how it cut through the fun of washing the pots. Neither were the dishes hard to clean, because I had some wash-up liquid, a sponge, and a Brillo pad. I then realized how I was pain-free "so pain-free I could do something ordinary like wash the pots. So I decided not to leave M. that note. Leave him alone, free to sing and play his melodeon at Govinda's while I, Cinderella dasa, stay home to mop and vacuum and wash the pots.

More? I mean, how do you use your eyes?

From one book to another.

And your ears?

To hear Hare Krishna and all those other sounds that fail to satisfy. Krishna sees my shortcomings.

What *is* it? Why don't I cry out, dependent on Krishna's mercy? Am I really that proud?

So many people can analyze it intellectually, but it's all theory when it comes to facing ourselves. We need to feel the facts. If we don't feel them, it's simply all theory.

* * *

6:10 p.m.

Grind it out, man, in lines and words. There are three kinds of people in this world: the materialistic, the liberated, and those who are trying to become liberated. Everyone can read *Krishna* book. Close your eyes and think about that.

But I just saw an ad for "the singers" of the '30s and '40s "Bing Crosby, Fats Waller, Billie Holiday. They crowd out the sublimely transcendental by their presence in this world. I had better become a stricter desert monk if I want to have full concentration. Srila Prabhupada says, however, that even if we become inactive, the world seems to remain active in us. We have to learn to dovetail.

* * *

Myth-o-rama

Once, the great king of tribes . . .

Yeah, he was my agent. He said, "I curse this land to suffer boredom. May people die or get rebound headaches. May they live without taste."

Here comes the hero: "Is there some way we can call off this curse?"

"Chop off their genitals."

Ugh. What kind of a tale is *this*?

What do you mean? That's the sort of thing that's always said in myths. Cronus ate his children as soon as they were born. Zeus was saved, though, and he later killed Cronus.

I want . . . a tree,

trees. Music. I dunno.

I have to springboard off something *if* I'm going to play this game.

Okay, then try again.

Here we go. Once the king cursed the land. He said people would be bored and writers unable to reach resolutions in their little pieces. They won't like anything they say. They won't be able to enjoy themselves.

A meteor fell from the sky and little people stepped out of it.

All right, enough. O Krishna, myths get in the way of telling Your pastimes. remember of Sisyphus? He had to roll that rock forever. Why do people like that story?

Let me put the Deities to rest.

This myth stuff stinks. That's why I said at the beginning, "No fairy tales!"

My Krishna consciousness doesn't need them. They are simply confusing. And those high school songs . . .

I have no abracadabra. Time is running out and I am still running in place. Hare Krishna. At least the Deities are sweet, and They accept me despite my shortcomings.

July 23, 12:05 a.m.

"He whom *Srimad-Bhagavatam* describes as the son of Nanda Maharaja has descended to earth as Lord Caitanya." (Cc. *Adi* 2.9) Krishnadasa Kaviraja proves it and I accept. I don't need more proof than he gives, although I need more faith and experience and ability to remember his words at every moment of every day.

Feet on the floor before midnight. remembered who I was and what I was doing "only after a few minutes did I recall that I'm someone who gets pain. Is that an exaggeration? I have taken three pills in three days. I expect a headache by eight or nine, or maybe ten or eleven this morning.

I get pain and I take meds. Why? For years I simply canceled my life when I had pain. I won't do that anymore. No one can tell me if it's the right decision.

But I don't feel like thinking rigorously. Let me just absorb the arguments Krishnadasa Kaviraja makes. Even a small sentence, such as this one: "According to the rules . . . a subject should be mentioned before its predicate" "I can't think it out right now. Need to stay smooth and easy. Lord Caitanya is God. I accept it. That's all.

"If it is proved . . . " Yes, it is proved. Let it be proven by my actions. Let me at least stay with the book open and choose "good" verses.

"A sincere student should not neglect the discussion of such conclusions, considering them controversial, for such discussions strengthen the mind. Thus one's mind becomes attached to Sri Krishna." (*Bhag.* 2.1.17)

Even a preacher has to be ready to deal with challenges to the *sampradaya*. We should all know the arguments and scriptural truths, and then be able to advance with our own logic to prove what is being taught. Otherwise, innocent people can be misled when others say, "Lord Caitanya is not God, and neither is Krishna. In fact, there *is* no God." Or any combination of beliefs and disbeliefs. For example, they may accept Krishna, but not Lord Caitanya. Or Lord Caitanya, but not Srila Prabhupada. Or Srila Prabhupada, but not the GBC. Or the GBC, but not me. Or me, but not my writing. Some people are too enthusiastic for the debates, always ready to draw a sword and flourish it.

Srila Prabhupada states, "If because of laziness one does not come to know Krishna . . . " Don't be misguided, and don't pretend to be an advanced devotee. Arguments are necessary to convince us, but Krishna can really only be known "through the vision of the revealed scriptures, the bona fide devotees and the spiritual master."

Therefore we should each hear and chant for our own benefit, and to benefit our audience. No audience? Find one and tell the members that Krishna is God, that Lord Caitanya is Krishna, and that you can prove it. If we want to convince others, we need to know the arguments. Even more importantly, we need to be moral, kind, discrete, not overly aggressive, and not merely looking for followers and money. We need to realize at least something about Krishna. But who's to say? Even if we are ourselves misguided, perhaps we can still convince others for a while to serve and surrender to Krishna. If our misunderstandings require rectification, however, we will also have to suffer defeat and be humbled.

Srila Prabhupada wants us to hear from the spiritual master and be active in his cause. Don't cry artificial tears.

Yes, I've behaved according to these instructions. Now I'm tired of that, tired physically and mentally. I wouldn't *mind* some tears. But not artificial ones. Am I feeling self-pity? Maybe. But self-care is good. Let me take simple care of this sixty-year-old man. Let the holy name bathe his parched tongue. I don't know if he'll be able to chant better today than he did yesterday, but let him beg Krishna for the strength to chant his rounds.

Devotional service, especially preaching, is not ordinary, fruitive action. The rigorous study of books is good and required and transcendental. I sympathize with some lady disciples who feel weak but who love to tend gardens. I know what they feel and encourage them that their work can be Krishna consciousness. I'm a guru for gardeners and hard-working mothers of small children and men who have to drive their cars out to sell paintings or do other work. Hare Krishna.

* * *

I dreamt I was involved in the building and opening of a temple in Vrndavana along with Mahanidhi Swami and Tamal Krishna Maharaja. It was a private project, yet part of ISKCON. Many devotees attended the opening. I'd learned to levitate by this time "something I had learned during the construction period "and as I did it, others also tried. We also tried to matchmake some of the members in the audience.

* * *

At Govinda's

Haladhara entered the restaurant. Sixty kinds of *prasadam* were available in buffet. A traditional Irish music band "accordion and fiddle players "was playing jigs.

"Is this Govinda's? Where's Radha?" asked Hala. The boss told him that worship of Radha is confidential but that Her *darSana* may be obtained by going to a Krishna temple, such as at Inis rath or Belfast.

"Not in the republic of Ireland?"

"Some people worship Radha-Krishna in their homes here," he said. "There's an elder doing that in County Wicklow, but his worship is private."

"What's the sense in *that*?" Hala asked. "Aren't we supposed to be exclusively preachers?"

"No, not everything is directly for preaching," said the boss. He invited Haladhara to sit down with him. Another devotee joined them and asked Hala what book he had purchased at Waterstones. He didn't want to say.

Worship of Radha is confidential. "Yes," thought Hala, "but She is mentioned in *The Nectar of Devotion* as the shelter of Krishna's *bhaktas*, especially those in Vrndavana. They pray to Her and She recommends them to Krishna. Her appearance is not far away, but how is it possible for neophytes like us to do Her justice?

"I'm tired," Hala told his table mates.

"Here, drink some nectar to stay awake. Listen to the music. Tap your toe."

They both began to do that. They thought it was okay to remember Krishna while sitting at a restaurant table listening to Irish trad music. Lord,

Lord,

You're in the world.

The man playing the accordion began to sing, "O Lord of Radha, You are with each of us in all of Your forms. We see You in the 'fascinatin' rhythm' and kyre eleison and Irish jig "oh yeah!"

"This is truth," thought the man called Hala. "God is in everything."

Some men came into the restaurant. They weren't menacing or anything, but they reminded Hala that sometimes burglars break into homes at night. It had happened to a man he knew, and the man's wife had been killed. O Lord Nrsimha!

Was it Hala thinking these alarming thoughts? They passed the thought, one to another, from Hala to the redhead to the singer to the proprietor, and on to the men who came in from the rain.

Aside from fearful thoughts, I'll tell you what happened: They ate their *prasadam*, then Hala wrote in a notepad for a while (he's a writer). He told himself, "I have to write something soon or die."

Then . . .

That's all.

What happened? Not much. No conflict. They simply ate their *sabji* and cupcakes, and rinsed their mouths and hands and said, "Govinda's *prasadam* is glorious."

Later, out on the street, one car hit another. The *garda* arrested a man for drunk driving, but not the avenue for twisting or the Lifey for being polluted.

Out there, a man thought about a bad deed he'd do later.

Out there, someone brandished a knife and mugged a poet: "Give me your f____n' money!" The poet stared at him and the mugger said, "What the f____ are you looking at? Give me your money!" The poet did what he was told. Molly Malone's statue saw it all.

Of course, out there it was also raining. A woman sat on the sidewalk outside the open chapel of the Virgin Mary, begging, sorrowful, cunning, counting. And the rain. Business as usual.

As for the politics in the Dail or the Church or the many thousands of little dramas behind the windows in the flats and the pub talk, the omniscient author knows nothing about them and lacks the imaginative drive to make them up.

Hala is named after Balarama. You know, there is so much important stuff in here if we could only find a way to access it. We are souls. We should talk about God and prepare to go to Him. All else is a waste. We quest for Him alone.

"Here, sir, take a book. We're passing them out." Gaura dasa entered a shoe store in Dublin, hoping the shoe man would take a book. Gaura dasa was empowered to encourage him. The book went out along with many others. Hare Krishna.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

How to describe what I see? Could a photograph capture it? It's so overcast that I can't even see the hilltops, but here on low ground, although it's dark, everything is clear. There are tons of ferns along the creek banks. The creek is a torrent with all that fresh rain we've had "white water driving down, cutting down, gorging down from the top of the hill. I can also see the ancient stone walls, which resemble the ruins of some old monastery "beehives of architecture leading up in a maze between the green pastures.

Words, words . . . What is the word for puddle? For clear, reflecting, mirror puddle? How to describe the sensation of slapping through a puddle in wellies? Of knowing you're going home? I mean, to a house where you live with confidence, although you've been defeated in some ways by old age and disease? Despite pride, despite illusion, despite bodily attachment and fear of pain, you're going home to pray to go home. What does that feel like?

* * *

Taboo and Curse

Once a curse was placed on people so that they would be gobbledegook people and not know what they were doing. They would have to live in NYC and be fashionable. The one who cursed them was a scholar in his previous life. He said, "Life is terror, so humans created gods and tales of creation and cosmic order and stories of a next life so that they would not have to face terror." Now he's a bull living in Mesopotamia. Yet he remembers his previous life.

It is taboo for any Krishnaite to blaspheme God or his founder-*acarya*. If anyone breaks the taboo, he'd get a serious reaction, just like the mythological heroes of old. Cu Cuchulainn was cursed by the goddess of death in battles, the Morrighan, to die at a pillar stone, because he rejected her love. When he died, an otter drank his blood and she appeared on his shoulder in the form of a raven and pecked out his eyes, I'm sorry to say. So be very careful not to break taboos. We admitted to friends that sometimes, despite ourselves, some criticism or resentment does come out toward the great authorities in our lives "the guru or Krishna. But we don't want to be cursed, so we discussed our fallibility and how it might have developed, and especially, how to strengthen our hearts.

Another taboo delivered in ancient times was that certain names should never be uttered. Don't say this but that instead. Even in the nineteenth century in Manx, when

fishermen set foot aboard their boats, it is taboo to refer to the moon only as the "queen of the night" and the sun only as "the glory of the day" and not to use more ordinary words. We can think of similar examples in ISKCON.

Less severe than taboos are morés, traditions, and conventions. I defy some of them. Who am I? An elfin elder. Still, I defy the maxim that we may not use our left hand for much and that we always have to wear *dhotis* (if we're men). I mean, I wear rain pants in the rain.

No beautiful girls. The goddesses never approached him, so they didn't have to curse him when he refused them. Thank God for that! And may He preserve my honor. I pray to Him, Lord of *sannyasis*.

Srila Prabhupada said Lord Krishna never told anyone they had to become a *sannyasi*. Rather, He said, "Think of Me, become My devotee, surrender unto Me." *Sannyasa* is a state of being in this life, it's a way to get through in one piece. But regardless of the road we choose, we still have to surrender to Krishna. Don't wait for anything better to happen first.

Srngi cursed Maharaja Pariksit, Durvasa cursed Maharaja Ambarisa. (Durvasa also tried to curse the Pandavas, but Krishna outwitted him.) We came down the hillside. Did the fairy folk curse us for uprooting their mushrooms? This sort of thing happens; we can't avoid it. Therefore, we chanted Hare Krishna to make up for what we lacked. These are a few points to consider while we study myths. We need to be on guard. Don't drink while driving "don't drink at *all*. In myths, gods wed and bear special children. Huge things happen in humanlike god affairs. We won't dwell on them all. Mostly we know only the "myth" of our own lives, of the time we ate the forbidden pineapple or whatever. I mean, when fate frowned upon us and forced us to beg for Krishna's mercy. Think about it.

* * *

9:13 a.m.

Don't complain no how. Wind in trees. I have my life "or not? Whose life is this? All these names floating out to sea. If he asks me how I am doing, what will I say? Answer for the moment or the long-term?

Give a man a *Srimad-Bhagavatam* so he can consider the events prior to Krishna's appearance. Did they leave some things out? Yes, always. We can't expect to hear every last detail. On the higher planets, the *Bhagavatam* is much longer. But everything that is said in ours is true. Vasudeva and Devaki were imprisoned by Kamsa.

Read slowly. Ask of readers the same. Don't be short-tempered or uncompassionate. read with love for the book, for ourselves, and for others. We Krishna people.

Picture of Dizzy Fat Gerald. The face can undergo transformation. Someone told me about a video documentary of Charlie Parker. Not afraid to mention that. Even pure devotees have backgrounds, and they're not always ashamed of them either. I could be going more slowly through the mail, but here I am, slowly going through life in a way that seems right at this moment.

Krishna devotees. He told me, "I have it from an authoritative source that So-and-so Prabhu considers ISKCON irrelevant." Isn't it ironic that the one who spoke against my

wish for solitude ("He needs more association") took off time to get it for himself? We can't know another man unless we walk in his moccasins.

If someone sells GNP books or donates money to print books, how do I feel about that? Is it a good use of money? Sure. Why not? We need Krishna conscious books in this world.

"I hear you're writing a new kind of book which resembles a perpetual marathon of writing. In it, I've heard, you admit that you don't *always* think of Krishna. Why print such a book?"

Because in forgetting Krishna, I find myself trying to remember Him again. Just like the rest of us. The difference is, I am uttering the password frequently "Hare Krishna" and that validates this work.

Prabhupada is wearing a knit hat, but now it's too warm in here for that. Krishna science is personal. I skipped doing his *puja* over the last two days. The pain came, and I had to retreat. I'll try to do it today. Krishna people. He said, "I have a little money given to me as an inheritance. I thought I would buy a house near Gita-nagari before my money dwindled. What do you think?" Sounds like a good idea. A sign of seriousness. Sooner or later he'll probably get married and move there. No temple authority can stop him. I just have to make it clear to my disciples that this is their life "think carefully how best to use it.

Soon the quiet Swami has to decide
whether reading *Krishna* book at this
exact moment is
advisable for a migraining
man or whether to take
a neck massage in earnest.

Is everything like that, so either/ or? Seems so. Unless we can expand ourselves and do more than one thing at a time. The one thing we can do while we do all others, however, is to think of Krishna alone. If we do that, we're Krishna conscious; if we don't, we are not. Or we may be wishing we were, in which case we're between *maya* and Krishna. Because where there is Krishna there is no nescience. He is like the sun: *Krishna "surya-sama; maya haya andhakara*. He drives away the dark. Therefore, we should serve Him constantly. It's really as simple as that.

* * *

10:01 a.m.

So as not to become a liar, Vasudeva delivered his first son to Kamsa. "What is painful for saintly persons who strictly adhere to the truth? . . . And what cannot be given up for the sake of Lord Krishna by those who have fully surrendered at His lotus feet?" (*Bhag.* 10.1.58)

Could I give up things to which I'm attached, things I may even consider my devotional service, if Krishna indicated that that was what He wanted of me? And what about when He forces me to give things up "will I take it graciously? The meaning of gracious: think of the way Lord Rama accepted His banishment on the morning of His

coronation. Vasudeva was forbearing. He too believed that Krishna would appear as his eighth son.

Then Narada approached Kamsa and told him how the demons would be killed. Lord Krishna was going to appear no matter what Kamsa did.

Lord Caitanya doesn't kill demons. rather, by spreading love of Krishna, He kills their nefarious activities. The happy, simple (inscrutable) panacea: "Let the people chant the Hare Krishna mantra constantly." There is no other way. If we don't follow this edict, Kali-yuga will become an instant hell. On the other hand, if one perfectly understands Krishna through *sastra*, one becomes immortal (see Bg. 4.9).

Kamsa knew that Lord Visnu could not be killed. "Even partial understanding of the activities of Lord Visnu makes one eligible for salvation." If Kamsa knew only a little and received liberation, what about learned devotees? "It is therefore the duty of everyone to read *Bhagavad-gita* and understand Krishna perfectly." (*Bhag.* 10.1.67, purport)

* * *

Happy Idea #19

Flowers dead in vase,
cow lowing in pasture
where she's kept for
slaughter. Can you be happy
amid cruel nature
and men?

* * *

"Women have a different psychological makeup," he explained. We tried to understand "Women are less intelligent" in a way that would not offend.

* * *

I'd say I'm okay but you'd misunderstand. Words fail and that's okay too. I want to be known as a blissful devotee. Served his guru, Prabhupada.

* * *

A happy idea: to wake and read the words of Devahuti in the

last chapter of Third Canto, then
start the Fourth. Alone in the house
all day but not lonely except
in a Krishna conscious way.

* * *

Happy Idea #20
My gremlin doesn't
like a plan for "One Hundred Happy
Ideas." He wants at least
one unhappy fact to counter
the foolish happies.

* * *

But his time comes later. Lord
Brahma created rudra who
immediately began to destroy everything
with his hordes. Brahma
said, "Go. Perform austerities
and wait until the time of
annihilation.
Don't interfere
with creation."

* * *

A natural, clear
sentence. What about the
temporary "appetite and
lunch (three different preps of potatoes
on EkadaSi)? What about
a joke? They are *asat*.
Pure bliss *ananda* in form,
loving Krishna.
Sometimes I just repeat it.

* * *

Happy Idea #21
These helpful hints, man-made
are small-time.
The Great Idea in the mind of
God is loving service.
He wants to submit himself to

best devotees. He's
bhakta-vatsala, inclined toward them.

* * *

Of all God's glories that's
the best. I want even a
little of His glory to brush over
me, assurance of His love.
They say pain has to
come first, but main thing is
nayam atma pravacanena labhyo . . .
Only to one whom He chooses,
does He give His mercy.

* * *

A happy idea:
"Surrender to Me."

* * *

12:20 p.m.

Thought of Charlie Parker this morning, and how someone said he worked with limited material but constantly rearranged it, often quoting lines from popular songs, his previous compositions, and music from classical composers such as Wagner and Bizet. He was a virtuoso on his instrument, fast and aggressive in his playing,

I aspire for some of his improvisational qualities in my writing. I too have a limited repertoire, which I rework constantly. One scholar discovered that Parker reworked about a hundred themes. I wonder how many I rework? I talk about Krishna consciousness, doubts, faith, Srila Prabhupada, the spiritual world, Krishna Himself, ISKCON both pro and con, my desire for solitude, fears of what I have to lose, fears that my attempt to live alone will not please Prabhupada, death "and I rotate these topics around and around.

When Charlie Parker came on the scene, he changed what almost everyone else was doing. They started to play as he played. I don't have that impact on the ISKCON scene, yet I feel I'm writing in a contemporary way. I like to think of him, and how with his music he moved a whole generation forward even while remaining rooted in his own tradition.

* * *

2:46 p.m.

At the end of the first chapter of the Tenth Canto, Srila Prabhupada wrote fourteen pages of "additional notes from this chapter." I don't think he did that for any other chapter in his books. He starts out with notes by Madhvacarya on transmigration.

Madhva compares transmigration to a dream wherein we forget the dream upon awakening. This topic is discussed in Vasudeva's speech to Kamsa. The living entity takes birth in various species of life "due to the agitation of the mind." Better we fix our mind at Krishna's lotus feet.

I thank God for even a few minutes of steady reading. When we take a human birth, we have the power to decide whether to continue wandering around the universe or to go back to Godhead. reading helps the path to Godhead seem superior "certainly better than a life of trying to become a great improviser or great *anything* in this temporary world. I'm grateful for Lord Krishna's personalism in *Bhagavad-gita*, which goes so far beyond temporary life and impersonalism that they cannot even be compared.

I heard from Madhu that Caitanya-candrodaya bought me a standing lamp in London. It has two 100-watt bulbs in it. Plus he got a desk lamp with one 100-watt bulb. Neither of these lamps were available in Dublin. (I got rid of my fluorescent lamp because a headache prevention book said fluorescent light causes headaches.) Hearing that these lamps are on the way makes me happy.

But is such happiness enough? Will I be able to live forever now with my two lamps? Will they enlighten me? Why is it that I feel perks for such small things? They wear out so quickly and leave me empty of bliss.

Lord Krishna appeared with His part and parcel, *amsena*. Another meaning of *amsena* (partial) is that no one can explain Krishna in full. "Whatever descriptions we find in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* are partial explanations of Krishna."

UttamaSloka means Krishna, the best of the best. But *uttamaSloka* also sometimes refers to Krishna's devotees, who are eager to praise Krishna. Praising His devotees is as good as praising Krishna. "Or rather, glorifying the devotee is more important than glorifying the Lord directly."

* * *

2:25 p.m.

I'm thinking I don't want to push myself to produce another myth and another Haladhara episode this afternoon. Those episodes employ indirect techniques which may make good reading and dig up surprising material. They are not like writing direct Krishna consciousness, however. Not only that, they create structure, and I don't like that. It makes me tense up with fear that I'll fail; it makes me feel as if I have to perform as I write each segment. Anyway, no one is making me do it.

Do I even have to make the twenty-page quota? Should I tangle with a few more letters instead? Let me clear my throat and assume my mail-answering voice: "Dear so-and-so." Get them done, get

them done.

I work in my office
like any other worker.

I'll try to go outside today
for a walk
for a round.

Release,

Release.

God is my shelter. Let me tell them that.

* * *

"Get a Doctor's Note"

Just before leaving the restaurant, Hala saw a card on the table requesting the customers to comment. He wrote on it: "Ideal atmosphere, cheap, good food, smiley staff, *Krishna-prasadam* "please stay open, because you're doing a great job!"

I also forgot to tell you that at the restaurant, there was a man at an adjacent table. He had a letter addressed to Haladhara. When Hal opened it, he saw it was a from a GBC-sponsored committee asking his presence at a meeting to discuss social development. The chairperson said that if Haladhara could not attend, he should produce a doctor's note.

So "hold onto your horses, authorji! This is a thin device here. Sounds too much like SDG and his headaches.

Well, that's all right. Don't interfere. I had this idea earlier today. Just go with it. Pipe down.

"So . . . " Hal said, "they don't believe me, eh? Okay, I'll find out a doctor."

Oh, oh, I'm feeling so low
got no doctor in Erin though
I used to have one in the U.S.A.
where I used to live in a cabin
by the river wearing
silk *dhotis*, getting headaches
too much responsibility and
honor in those days of yore
full of riding in limousines and
too many chores.

Questions about Hal:

1. Is he a guru or just an elder?
2. How does he get his money?
3. Where does he live?
4. Do people do things for him?
5. Is he married?
6. Don't you have to know a lot about a character before you write of him?

Questions about this fiction:

1. I thought you didn't like fiction?
2. Even if you want to write fiction, does Haladhara feel right to you as a character?
3. You started out with him not knowing who he was or where the story was going.

Improvisation should be built on a foundation, not just *off you go!* I mean, we have to *live* with this.

(Author scratches his neck, takes off his shoes.)

Hal . . . Hal . . .

He's named after Balarama. I gave out that name once or twice. Srila Prabhupada gave it to a young man long ago.

Uh . . . I thought *this* Hal could see a doctor and they could talk like this:

Hal: What kind of headaches do you have?

Doc: What kind of headaches do you want?

Hal: I'll take a migraine mixed with a small tension. Can you write me 'scripts'?

Doc: I can, but don't become a junkie.

Hal: I don't need you. I can get them elsewhere.

Doc: Are you some kind of guru?

Hal: That's a tough question. In this story, I am trying to discover my identity. All I know so far is what appears in these episodes. I have been to a bookstore and a restaurant. I can't remember what I was doing before that. It's been a long day. I'm some kind of Hare Krishna devotee. That's all I know so far. I have to wait for the rest to appear in the writing.

* * *

No Myth

There dwelt a bench and a fellow who sat on it chanting Hare Krishna. He imagined he took a vow to chant an enormous number of rounds and told his friends of this vow. But he was a "*dusta-mane!*" case: "O mind, why are you cheating, chanting Hare Krishna in a solitary place?"

Once, two green apples fell and a fellow "a different one" put them into his beadbag. They sprouted imagination.

Once, a fellow let himself go off duty for five minutes and to play in the gravel. He wanted to build something, imagined a village. But he could not sustain the effort. He was supposed to write a myth before it was too late.

What's a myth?

"It's a half-truth" he told himself, but wasn't sure.

Unsure, onshore, dragons and druids, heroes carrying magical weapons. The *Bhagavatam* tells all, but it contains no make-believe. And the Celts and Greeks, the romans and Norse "they too have a semblance. But no *siddhanta*.

Maybe reading myths is unfavorable for my Krishna consciousness. I have a straight and narrow definition of devotional life. Better to remain with the flat-out flail where nothing is mythological, nothing art, nothing magic, and everything . . . But *this* is flat-out flailing too "this attempt to write a myth.

His self gave up hope of becoming a great *sadhu*. He searched here and there, then wrote book reviews for a living. What did he find?

Yes, he found Krishna in the end.

* * *

5:48 p.m.

Psychologists could see right through me to my shadowy, repressed side. Our bodies are only shells of the persons we are. Look what thirty-three years in a religious institution has done to me. If I spoke to psychologists, they would see it all "what a mess

I am, what a coward, and so on. Would they think I was causing my own disease? Some would see symbols everywhere "in my drawings and scribbles. What's this? He drew something that was neither man nor woman, writer nor manager. They'd have a good time slicing and dicing me, another victim, another misleader. They would know that I fortify a certain type of life.

Anyway, I can't worry much about them. I can't even understand what they're talking about, because I am not a trained Jungian, reichian, or any other "ian." I turn only to those whom I hope will lead me through the dark to the light. Should I attempt to bring more out from myself? Is it too late "for anything? (Like a riven cloud I'll be, Arjuna feared, but Krishna told him not to worry, because one who does good never meets with evil. By "good" He means devotional service.)

Mittens, gyres, jacks and
a ball, hard rubber.
I am myself, nothing more,
nothing less.

Am I willing to change my life? Do I know *how* to make those necessary inward changes? Because life moves from in to out.

July 24, 12:00 a.m.

Couldn't sleep all night. Twinge in eye. It wasn't *so* painful, but I expected it to build. I took an Imigram at 10:45, hoping it would free me to sleep, but I still couldn't sleep even after the pain eased. I'm quite attached to my midnight rising, because it's the best shot I have in the day to read Prabhupada's books attentively as well as to chant most of my rounds, but it's not always possible to do all that with energy. The body and mind don't always stay in the groove.

Yesterday, M. again suggested travel. "Why not a trip to Newcastle?" I don't want to do it. Going to North Ireland for two weeks will be enough change for me right now. I want as controlled and quiet and non-demanding an atmosphere as possible.

What now? Do I dare try to chant my rounds? That will be the test of whether I'm about to get another headache or not, and whether I'll be able to stay up, even though I didn't sleep during the night. I think I'll leave this writing. I feel too tense, even irritable, nervous, to read scripture right now.

* * *

I dreamt that I was traveling with very little money. A woman at an airlines desk took pity on me and gave me a cloth bag filled with coins. I now thought I could make progress. Suddenly, I found myself in some God-forsaken land, a dangerous, Middle Eastern country, where there were no laws to protect citizens or travelers. Somehow, all of my belongings were stolen, even my passport, and I no longer had anything to prove who I was. I realized I was going to be stranded in this country.

After some time, I found some devotees living in the country. They had become fatalistic, even sardonic, about their having to live always in the survival mode. I was trying to break into the same mood. I asked for certain foods for breakfast, but realized

that nothing I wanted was available. I suddenly realized that here, I was worth nothing at all. Being an American didn't count for anything either.

I was an observer in this dream, not really suffering deeply in the dream identity. Intellectually, I felt myself ponder the situation and realize that from the spiritual point of view, there was nothing left now but to depend on Krishna

* * *

"Who am I?"

"Am I a guru or not?" Hal questioned himself. "If I am not, then I can go to a pub or a movie. If I am, then I should go home and study scripture to prepare a lecture." He decided he had to take a pill to prevent a headache. His eyes were red with impending pain. He tried to calculate whether he was taking too many pills. "Why so afraid of pain and being sidelined?"

Dragons belch fire.

(No, that's from the myth. I thought sooner or later you'd confuse a story with a myth or make them interchangeable.)

The dragon, like Con Edison smokestacks, belched fire. It's true.

That's better.

Haladhara dasa asked himself questions, and from within himself he heard a voice. Or did it come from the sky? It said, "You are a kind of guru, so you should go home and study. But remember, you have to get a doctor's note and follow other courses."

Tired of this, tired of this
the red-eyed author and
the hay fever suffering
persona-devotee-invalid,
and the hard-nosed . . .
people get weary of these
devices.

"*Push on*," said the voice of process. Don't abandon this series.

But where will Hal go? He reminds me of Bhakta Bob. He's becoming a cardboard cut-out. Not real. He's having a literary heart attack, a nervous breakdown, developing an expatriate snuffle. He's never without his demitasse or his Sigma Tai sweetheart.

"Yeah, I have to go home and chant my rounds," said simple Hal. "I am behind in my quota. I can't let that happen." Suddenly, as he was about to board the bus or walk the entire distance, he felt more serious. He remembered that the purpose of life is to remember Krishna. He uttered the holy name. When his mind began to wander, he remembered a time when a young disciple complained to Prabhupada, "When I chant my beads, I find it difficult to control the mind." Srila Prabhupada replied, "Vibrate with tongue and hear with ear. What is the question of the mind?"

A Sanskrit professor from Mexico, emerging from the Trinity University library, met Haladhara in the street. This old professor, now retired, had met Srila Prabhupada in 1975 and posed the question, "Why is there anything?"

"remember?" he asked Haladhara. Haladhara told him that he wasn't there at the time, but he remembered hearing it on tape. I am willing to discuss the question with you on a

park bench, but perhaps we can also discuss, "Why is there Haladhara dasa?" The two entered St. Stephen's Green.

* * *

8:22 a.m.

A loud belch to greet the morning. Look down the long road, because you heard something. No car in sight, though. Must have been a cow in some far-off pasture. The light, delicate "smoke" of the clouds peels over the mountaintop. Foxgloves close up an enamel pink. Now the weeds are as golden as wheat. They are bending over. It's almost August.

White clover and white flowers in blossom on the berry bushes. Maybe I'll make something out of this day after all. It seemed like it was starting with a disaster, because I was up all night with pain, and the Imigram and the itchy eyes and the pill count up so high by Friday. It could be better, but it could be a lot worse too. Try to make up for losses. Behind in pages and rounds. Quick, fumbling chanting. Couldn't get out the front gate; the door was wedged shut from the dampness. Madhu pried it open with a greater strength than I possess.

* * *

Divination

Divination, dragons, druids "such is the world of myth. Let's not be derogatory about it. Here are some myths we know well: the myth of the innocent victim and the myth of ourselves as pure devotees before we met our master. At his birth, a character whom I shall call Beemis, was told by passive astrologers that he would become a great Phelp when he grew up. After that, they said, he would peter out. He would be eaten by mice-men and thrown to the winds while squealing children laughed. He'd be torn asunder, I mean.

The astrologers laughed, because of course they knew they were exaggerating. It was how they got their fun. For them and their people, tragedy was full of optimism, if you know what I mean. They knew that the soul was eternal, so what was there to worry about? The worse thing that could happen is that they would get another body to be thrown from mountaintops or eaten by hounds. There's always time for more misery. Misery makes good storytelling.

Dragons, they say, are mythical beasts. Does that mean they don't exist? No, it means they are found in mythology (like unicorns), even if we don't see them in the world today. We don't see dodos either, or carrier pigeons. Both are extinct species. But people *used* to see them. *Devas* and dragons are like that. In Celtic mythology, dragons sometimes guard forts or live at the bottoms of lakes.

O Beemis, beam on us. Tell us you have made progress. Sing us a folk song, tell us a tale. Here's a Kleenex, so blow your nose. Compose yourself, then compose a song. This service makes you welcome in our homes, although you will always remain an uninvited guest.

It's a myth that I was a hipster living on the Lower East Side; a myth that I was a dedicated artist. A negative, sad myth that I was a sexually starved rotten apple in the Big Apple. It's a myth I'd soon be forgotten. The *actual* truth is even more sordid.

It's a myth that we met the Swami. I mean, it's true, but it has legendary proportions. The eternal guru from India brought the eternal sound vibration to us and we tried to become responsible sons.

But I digress. Beemis at birth was told by passive and tense astrologers that he'd become a mismatch and meet a bad end. He tried to avoid his fate in many ways, but who can succeed at that? However, before he died, he met a devotee of Krishna and honored *prasadam*, so ultimately, he *did* avoid his fate. We can't tell from here (we have limited vision), but we believe he went on to a better next birth. I hope ISKCON survives and improves so it will learn to accommodate souls born into the world and give them a chance to escape their karma. Divination: "This person will make spiritual progress and save his forebears. In his next life, he will come close to Krishna, the eternal Lord."

* * *

6:10 a.m.

Swami, swoon, be compassionate.

Will you need compassion when it's your turn?

Your brother needs it now. The master
was kind to all.

I'm no enemy of his movement.

I ate a pill at 11:00 p.m. What else could I do? Some people on ronda's on-line migraine journal want to get off their meds, while others consider stopping the pain foremost. Some offer prayers for relief. They want support and appreciate when they get it. I wrote in under a fake name, asking about Esgic. I got one private response: "What's Esgic?"

Now waiting for breakfast. Move fast uphill. Hare Krishna mantras, quick. So what if they don't "mean" anything, or if we don't feel them? "What is the question of the mind?" Just chant.

Ah, but He wants us to chant with *priti*.

Pretty

good.

I want that

too.

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. Still, we have a quota and limited time, so we move through our rounds, even if they are offensive. Meditators and slow prayer-makers and social activists laugh at us when we stick to our beads, but we know we have become laughing stocks for Krishna's pleasure. This is, after all, the *yuga-dharma*, and there is no other way. A polecat can chant, and even a child can chant and dance in ecstasy.

* * *

9:15 a.m.

Long, drawn-out, inattentive rounds.

But I get them done.

Could I write a letter to a friend asking for help?

But there's no gimmick, no advice anyone can give that will really help. We simply have to do it. In his biography, I wrote that Prabhupada struggled to the end. I wonder sometimes where he found the energy.

I also wonder how Prabhupada might treat us differently in our old age. When we knew him, we were all young. Time sure flies.

About the Hare Krishna mantra "a fantasy: I suddenly get a *taste* for it, pay attention to it, become aware it's Krishna. Then I don't need any more assurance of that fact but plunge into sixty-one hundred rounds a day. No one can scare me by saying, "Srila Prabhupada didn't want us to spend so much time chanting," because I know I've always lacked this awareness and now that I have it, I won't let it go. Surely he'll approve. That would end my apparent need to read outside books, and even my writing would lessen, the taste for artistic effect or roundabout fiction would fade fast.

And the headaches?

I would chant through them. That would be the real test of taste.

In the meantime, counting up and counting down. Krishna, Krishna, Krishna.

* * *

"The transcendental sound vibrations concerning the Lord's name, fame, form, qualities and paraphernalia are all non-different from the Lord. Therefore the very sound vibration of the Lord's glorification and name are pleasing to the ears, and by understanding the absolute nature of the Lord's name, form and qualities the devotee becomes joyful." (Bg. 10.1 additional notes) All three kinds of persons in the world may take pleasure in hearing *Krishna-katha*. This sound vibration is especially pleasing to liberated souls such as Narada and Pariksit Maharaja. Not that when we become liberated, we abandon chanting and hearing.

The notes to 10.1 discuss the words *yoga-maya*. We are deluded by *maya* and think that Krishna is an ordinary person. The Lord acts in two ways: to help a willing devotee to understand Him (Prahlada), and to send others into the cycle of repeated birth and death. The Lord gives liberation to anyone who wants it.

* * *

10:20 a.m.

Massage back and neck. Now sitting here to take advantage of the energy the massage brought. Blood flows through my head, and my words flow onto the page.

You mean like the floating page on the Cambridge notepad? Why do they show that?

It shows a piece of paper floating down. Would I like to write prose that floats like that, as if it were floating on a magic cloud? Or how about prose that flies up on a chariot to the spiritual world? Imagine the consciousness one needs to attain that. We

don't go to the spiritual world to enjoy ourselves. We have to be keen to worship Krishna, to serve Him, to want nothing more than to be with Him. It takes deep yearning to help Him manage His transcendental cows or to help with some other service. Not just, "Oh boy, I'll be free of headaches there and able to digest better in a spiritual body. I won't be pushed around by materialists or by ill-motivated religious leaders." Are we in consciousness suitable for returning to Goloka? Doesn't seem so.

Then what's the use of this writing? It's meant to support fellow strugglers, those who at least would like to be on the path leading to the spiritual world. Thinking of Bhakta Linc managing the Boston temple kitchen. He told me he's often alone during the day, even though he's out in the city, shopping for *bhoga*. He calls it his time alone with Krishna. Nice. We don't have to live in a cave to be alone with Krishna. Srila Prabhupada was always alone with Krishna. Our own *darSana* of Krishna in our hearts "we will one day want to see Him with our own eyes, and we will see Him in a particularly unique way "in the form in which we wish to serve Him. We will first have to learn to engage our senses and mind "our *own* senses and mind "in worshiping Him before that day, however. No one can bring Him to us. Hare Krishna.

Sigh. Going to lay back awhile and take it easy, man? What do you think is best for migraine? Here's what one person wrote on the on-line journal: "My daily prayer for all us [headache sufferers] goes something like: Dearest Lord, thank You that I'm not in pain right now. (If I'm in the midst of headache I say, 'Please give me the grace to get through these days as best as possible.') For those in pain right now, Lord, I ask You to relieve their suffering. Comfort them physically and spiritually, and strengthen them. Help us all to find the cure that's right for us. Help us to lean on You through it all and learn to love You."

Another emphasizes getting off drugs, taking control of our lives by thinking positively and doing positive things. But for most, that's not enough, so the on-line journal names the drugs they are currently using with success or setbacks. Lots of complaints against uncaring docs. Take control of your life . . .

Hare Krishna, Hare
Krishna.

What did you have for breakfast?

Why are you breaking our hearts by such inadequate disclosures?

Tell us some Sanskrit words from the Tenth Canto, then describe how the *acaryas* analyzed them. For example, what does *jagat* mean? What is *bhakti*? What is *vasudeva*?

Move along to the chapter, "Prayers By the Demigods for Lord Krishna in the Womb." May He be present in my mind on Janmastami.

* * *

11:23 a.m.

Thick cobwebs on skylight. What gets you down? Dirty dishes in the sink.

That's not *so* bad, I guess. I check the resentment I feel about it, the anger. My lack of Krishna consciousness coupled with doubts. Lack, lack. Disciples write to me mostly about their material affairs. The young, recently married, tell me they are thinking of

having children. Of course, *it will bring suffering*. To them, spiritual life is mostly about the rules and regs we call "*sadhana*" "doing the prescribed rounds, following the principles, or trying to. They mostly pursue a religious material life and reach out to me periodically to let me know what they're doing. Of course, I too am imperfect, not so different. Writing it here provides the harsh view, the shortcoming. Admit it "we all lack. A guy on the Internet wrote in about his back pain. He said he took a friend's morphine tab and felt good for the first time in forty years, but he knows he can't keep doing that. Do I seek something similar? A spiritual turn on? Ah! *That's* Krishna consciousness. Oh boy! Krishna sure is beautiful! Oh boy, I see it in living color at last!

Rather, what I see, what I *would* see, is my sins and your shortcomings, my inability to do what is required to reach my own life's goal.

* * *

11:50 a.m.

Desk spread out. Neaten it. Same stuff to report. Looking for new paper clips instead of other things this morning.

Bees in the bonnet
won't write a sonnet
he's all awry thinking
his own ship is sinking
for Krishna conscious merits
he can't think a rhyme.

Remembers long conversations he was spared. What's the diff? Where's the prize, the merit? Newspaper story: "Boy Bites Dog." "Man Somersaults Into *raganuga*." "*Mahabhagavata* Discovered at North Pole." He was living in an abandoned mine. How do we know he is a great soul? By the way he shone and advertised his self. That, and his followers' propaganda. Does everyone accept? No.

We can thank our president and the American flag if the people get a break. Go ahead, slice open one of those envelopes and read what it contains. reading my mail feels like receiving a tennis ball. I always try to hit it back smartly.

If I could expand into three or four heads, I could read some of these extra books lying around here. You'd use *siddhis* for *jnana* and *karmi* purposes? But Rupa Gosvami said if he had more heads, he would do more chanting. I'm not sure I'd use mine that way.

* * *

Happy Idea #22

Okay, Captain, take off this plane
called Morning Schedule:
heat water in the kitchen,
take a bath, back up here
all within half an hour.

* * *

Happy ideas for sale free.
Hey, you ought to first
live out your ideas before
peddling them.

* * *

A good Vaisnava idea is worth a
thousand Chinese sayings.

* * *

Krishna conscious ideas and actions "
even if you only *think*
eternal God, that's
a form of service absolute and if
you serve Him with body mind and words,
that's more. As you bathe and
work and eat and think.

* * *

The satisfaction
of pleasing Krishna. You don't
know if you did that? But you
tried, working in *parampara*.
Prabhupada is here.

* * *

Happy Idea #23
Queen Kunti said,
"You come to us in danger.
So let the dangers remain
because when we see You "
apunar bhava darSanam,
we'll see no more of birth and death."
"That is real happiness,"
said Srila Prabhupada.

* * *

Happy Idea #24
A voice is chattering inside.
The mechanical man crosses his legs,
takes off his wool cap and scarf.

He's aware he's sitting in front
of Prabhupada.

* * *

12:35 p.m.

Keep to yourself. Out of that, you'll be real enough to relate to others. Find those few who have time and interest to know you.

Write. Emeritus sin-maker no more. Lunch on the way. Salivate, brain hears his footsteps climbing the wooden stairs with the Deities' plates. When they arrive, I'll fall to my knees and recite the prayers three times. I'll trust in the prayers' words. Prabhupada, Radha-Govinda "I like to see them, and Govinda's shy glances at His Radha.

We are each into our selves; we *are* our selves. They tell us not to be self-ish, but I think that's impossible in the ultimate sense. We must give to others, care for their suffering, and wish to alleviate their pain. Go out of your way, we say, and some of us actually do. I'm selfish, but I don't hate myself.

Someone says he and his wife are going to Vrndavana for Karttika. Good, go. I'll stay here and look at Govinda's face.

* * *

3:16 p.m.

Break through the barrier that says, "Don't write here!" I will serve the Lord. I am keeping a clear head by using medication only so I can serve and not be sidelined by pain. I know I should be able to serve Lord Krishna even when pinned down by pain, but I've decided at this point in my life to avoid pen as much as possible. I've become afraid of it "more than I used to be. But I know I will have to suffer it again. And when I do, although inactive, I'll try to remember, "They also serve who only stand and wait."

* * *

The demigods' *purusa-Sukta* prayers were filled with *bhakti*. That's what I want to be doing "I want to be under Yoga-maya's power, not under the power of her material agent, Maha-maya. I don't want to be covered. The Lord's *lila* and the arrangements for it are Yoga-maya. The *maya* which drags a person away from the Supreme Personality of Godhead is Maha-maya, Jada-maya. Do I have what it takes to become uncovered? Can't claim I'm completely free yet.

Mathura refers not just to a place. "In other words, when one acts in the process of *bhakti-yoga*, he may live anywhere, but actually he lives in Mathura-Vrndavana."

Now I have a chance to once again memorize the information from the *Harivamsa* about the identity of Devaki's six sons, all killed by Kamsa. But why bother? I'll only forget it again. I have such limited time and capacity. They were formerly HiranyakaSipu's grandsons. I also know that no one can blame Narada for giving Kamsa the information that led to the death of Devaki's sons. So many events are beyond our understanding. We think something bad is taking place, but it is actually beneficial. We cannot understand why things happen, because we have such limited

vision. Please, Lord, let me go on hearing during the days leading up to Your appearance. At that time, I'll be at Inis rath. Or will I be? May I be situated at Your lotus feet.

* * *

Seeking Peace in the Park

Prof remembered that he asked Srila Prabhupada, "Why is there anything?" A woman Sanskrit prof was also present. She laughed a lot. Srila Prabhupada chose to reply by rephrasing the question: "Where does everything come from?" The man said that that was too abstract. He wanted to know why anything existed. "Do you know the answer?" Srila Prabhupada asked him. The man replied that he did not. "Then your knowledge is insufficient." Srila Prabhupada said that the best knowledge comes when we receive *brahma-Sabda*, knowledge from a perfect source.

"Yes, I remember hearing that talk," said Haladhara. He was glad he was pain-free. That was his main sensation, and of course, to have his devotee identity intact, to be a functioning Hare Krishna, at least apparently. The prof couldn't know that Hal was relishing something other than his talk with him, and that he was also closely monitoring even the slightest rise in pain. So absorbed in that was he that Hal even surprised himself by it.

He wanted to engage the prof in more devotional service. The prof said he had not accepted Srila Prabhupada's conclusion wholeheartedly at the time, "Or else I would have become his disciple, yes?"

"Then why are you eager to recall it with me?" Hal asked.

"I guess I'm like that Professor Kotovsky, who also liked to recall his meeting with Prabhupada. We're impressed that the Krishna consciousness movement has grown all over the world, although I'm also aware that you've had many troubles."

"Ah yes, let's not talk about them." In St. Stephen's Park, people passed them by. It also began to look as if it were going to rain again. The prof said he'd have to leave now, and Haladhara stood to shake his hand. The meeting seemed to lack resolution, but there was nothing he could add to it now that the man was about to leave. "At least give me your business card," Hal requested. "Maybe we can continue to recall your impressions of Srila Prabhupada." The professor gave his card willingly. He was white-haired and stubble-bearded. Then he was gone. Hal felt that old question rise in his head again: "Am I a guru?" He kept thinking that if he weren't, he'd be able to live a less restricted life. He really wanted to know what or who he was.

The sky bared her bosom of cloud. The dark grew near a tear of soil. A cheek of . . . incense didn't float up. "What will we do now?" said Hal, toying with the bag he'd obtained from Waterstones. "Sing the *purusa-Sukta* prayers with devotion?" Actually, he wanted to get back to the temple.

Gee whiz, I'm sorry the action has slowed down so much, but I really don't want trouble, and drama *means* trouble. Let there be peace, I say. Let's go about our routines uneventfully "no robberies, no break-ins, no romantic triangles or illicit acts, no moral dilemmas "at least not now.

* * *

4:50 p.m.

Here is a piece of wisdom from an ordinary soul on ronda's on-line journal: "Listen to your own body and soul. Do what you know in your heart is truly right for you. Be true and honest with yourself. . . . We must take back our lives! Only we know truly what we need for ourselves. Do whatever it takes to get better. Take baby steps. Just make sure they are steps forward. And don't kick yourself for setbacks."

* * *

Myth and Facts

Once there was a man who was given a certain amount of time to complete a certain literary work. It came to him in muscular form, reminding him of his father's muscles. His father's family secret was the fist. He never directly gave this secret to his son, but he taught it to him through his actions. "Son, if you want to achieve upward mobility, ya gotta have physical strength and be prepared to use it." The son, however, had a different demeanor, an opposite one, in fact, and a very different physical build. What was he to do with his family's secret of success? His own fists were small and thin, his wrists and forearms inconsequential. Neither did he possess a fighter's spirit.

It turned out that the son used his father's secret in the way he shaped his handwriting, in his words, and his urgency to express. He became a strong-armed scribe.

But he could not write anything except what occurred to him in the moment. Or what he imagined. Not too much structure. This muscle man of spirit joined a religious movement and ascended in it much as his father had ascended in the world of the Navy and the firehouse. How he did it is a wonder, since he was so passive and frail (another myth). He was obedient to his strong spiritual father, his founder-*acarya*. He rose by obedience and endurance. Got through some rough stuff. Later he dwindled and now lives in pain.

Now in the latter days. A myth? Krishna consciousness is no myth; it is the Absolute Truth. It's a myth that the son of a fireman becomes a guru and a fixed-up servant of Vaisnavas, whereas in fact he's something less.

Voices echo: "Well, what is real?"

The moment by moment. Let no one proclaim *they* know. Our hero was lecturing in a college mythology class. He dovetailed it into a presentation from the *Vedas*. Lord Caitanya's teachings are the religion and sect of the Absolute Truth. No sectarian or national viewpoint here but truth, the way the sky is truth, or gold is truly gold whether possessed by a Hindu or a German.

One of his friends said, "We cannot imagine how you have endured the pain you have endured."

That is another myth, because all pain is subjective.

Myth: He gathered five hundred followers on a mountaintop and read them his *Every Day, Just Write*. Half the audience fell asleep, the other half suffered heatstroke. Soon, the followers began to make excuses why they had to leave. I mean, they had families

and businesses to attend to. What started out as an enthusiastic meeting dwindled. Only a few remained, but they also asked him to stop, "For your own good," they said.

And it was a fact. He could not continue. He had a splitting headache. They set up a tent for him, and he told them, "Never again will I hold such marathon readings. From now on, I'll try to spend my time writing when I can, and holding small daily sessions to read what I have written. Can you arrange it?" They could. It would be a low-profile *mela* called "Every Day, Just Hear His Little Life Put into Prose."

A banner was made to
celebrate the cause that here
a mighty hero did not slay
a giant hound or seduce a
princess and give birth to a hero
but here a *sannyasi* obeyed,
by the grace of his guru, and
avoided the *rurus*.

* * *

May those who are honest and
like unassuming art come and
hear by the light of the lamp
in our Krishna conscious camp.

* * *

6:00 p.m., Night Notes

Hurry, pain coming. I want twenty pages. Greed. Srila Prabhupada is my mentor. Say it all. Krishna is God. If I am pain-free at midnight, I'll read the second chapter of the Tenth Canto. Because I'm a good guy and Krishna consciousness is not a myth.

This is pain-absorbed writing, I know, and I don't mean to give *you* pain, reader, as you hear it, but the truth must be told. Anyway, writing it out helps me cope with it. I'm not a hero.

I'm heading for the last roundup. Maharaja Pariksit had seven days, then six, five . . . He heard and became a *maha-bhagavata* right there on the bank of the Yamuna. He endured all pain and surrendered his entire being to Krishna. Just heard "didn't bother about pain, hunger, thirst, or fear. And he prayed, "If I am to be reborn, let it be with full faith in Krishna, in association with His devotees, and feeling goodwill toward all creatures." Such a hero.

July 25, 12:00 a.m.

Kamsa made alliances with Jarasandha and other demons, and thus the Supreme Lord came to fulfill His statements in *Bhagavad-gita* to annihilate the demons and protect the devotees. The demons appeared more powerful, but, "because of help received from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the demons were defeated and the demigods triumphant." (*Bhag.* 10.2.3, purport) Same thing today in the world. Also within me. I

say I want Krishna to be fully manifest in me but that demons or *anarthas* overcome me. Don't give up. Vasudeva and demigods had to endure for some time. Then they had a glorious victory. Don't give up trying to chant nicely and to write and read. Contribute your little effort to ISKCON.

"A pure devotee is always fearful of material existence." Devaki was afraid of Kamsa. "No one knows what will happen next, for one may have to change his body at any moment." (*Bhag.*10.2.6, purport)

A pure devotee acts so that he won't have his life spoiled by being forced to accept another body and the tribulations of material life. The Supreme Lord is always alert to protect His devotees. This is an interesting statement. Often we hear that pure devotees are fearless, *abhaya*, but here Prabhupada describes *bhaya*, fear of material life. The pain of material life is our impetus to turn to Krishna and for the Lord to assure us of His shelter. Fear creates a situation wherein the devotees never forgets Krishna while in this world. "To show them special mercy, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance." (Bg. 10.11)

The Supreme Lord asked Yoga-maya to transfer Sankarsana (Balarama) from the womb of Devaki to the womb of Rohini. This is not a myth either, if by myth you mean made-up story. It is transcendental reality. When we narrate it, it becomes a story. It is incredible by material standards "things like that don't happen nowadays "but they did happen then, so its told as *brahma-Sabda*. I needn't dwell on the many ways we may doubt and counter-doubt it. Let's just remain simple, accepting, and willing to pray for ever-deepening understanding. Then let's move on, cherishing what we have gained and thinking about how to apply it in our practical lives. Because, "One can understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead as He is only by devotional service." (Bg. 18.55, quoted in)

Lord Krishna entered the world through Devaki's womb (after Sankarsana had appeared there), yet He is transcendental. He doesn't enter the material world at all, actually. *Acintya-bhedabheda-tattva*. Similarly, a pure devotee appears in the material world, yet is never part of it.

While he is here, the pure devotee always fears that he will become contaminated. "Therefore he is always alert in fear, which gradually diminishes his material association." Srila Prabhupada once said we don't fear material association enough. Fear can nourish the appearance of *bhakti* if it drives us to turn to Krishna and repel *maya*. If we think the material world is a safe and wonderful place, it will work against us.

I forgot having ever read this before. It strikes me as useful. I'm jumpy, fearful even of noises in the night, worrying that someone is coming to violate my private space. I can use my fear to become more Krishna conscious, as is confirmed and repeated in these purports.

All the *devas* feared Kamsa, and they eagerly awaited rescue by the Lord. Lord Brahma said that Lord Krishna had told him He would appear. I should be afraid of rebirth and of material contamination, alert and always turning toward Krishna. I am already familiar with the feeling of dependence, and I am grateful to Srila Prabhupada for encouraging me that such feelings are not outside the realm of pure devotion. I will remember this when devotees say how we should be *unafraid*.

I'm well into the *lila* now leading to Krishna's appearance, yet it's still three full weeks before Janmastami. I may read it all again in *Krishna* book. I'll prepare my lecture as an exercise in meditation on Krishna. Consider the angles about what Janmastami can mean to us today. See *Bhagavad-gita* verses also. I think *Laghu-Bhagavatamrta* contains the esoteric meaning of Krishna's being the son of Nanda and Yashoda.

So, I am afraid I may get a rebound headache. I am afraid of pain interrupting my reading and writing, but Krishna won't leave me. When pain comes, think, "All right, Lord, today I have used up my pill arsenal, so I'll have to be Krishna conscious even without my normal service activities. I have no one but You upon whom I can depend. Please be with me in the most primitive ways."

* * *

The red Bus

"I wish to be a haven for pure thought," said Haladhara. "I also wish to be free of physical pain. But that's not possible when we have material bodies." Haladhara also realized that he wanted to be free of lust, envy, anger, fear. How could he do it? By thinking of Krishna twenty-four hours a day?

"But why say it if the *want* is mere wishful thinking?" He nodded at his own thoughts. He was sitting on the upper deck of a red bus as it careened through town.

"*Why is there anything?*" The professor's question still rankled in his mind.

Now lusty Haladhara, pinched-nerves Hal, declared that he would not live forever at the rate he was presently going. "Still," he thought, "life seems long."

The bus passed high stone walls. Hal looked, but he couldn't see into the courtyards of the rich. "I'm not actually lusty," he thought, "not really. I'm old now, and old age has delivered me. But it could be awakened "that old serpent. I'm not like a younger man who has to restrain himself while he feels a boiling sex desire while his spiritual life feels stagnant." Hal knew of people who made strange arguments to themselves, justifying their lust: "If I have sex outside my marriage, I'll get burnt out and be done with material enjoyment. Then I can be peaceful and go on with my pious progress." One person who had said this had actually revealed this logic to his wife, who said, "You're about to be captured by *maya*."

"I have too many thoughts about others," thought Hal. "I am not King Hal in a Shakespeare play. I am not Hotspur or Halbard and Holbrook." The question of guru remained dormant in his mind for the moment.

Haladhara finally opened his green, Waterstones bag. It contained a Zen manual with calligraphy on one side and little explanations on the other. He bought it because he thought he could do something like this in Krishna consciousness.

This while the bus bussed.

* * *

Big girl mouse cute. *Is she cute?* "Avoid non-Krishna conscious things," he said. "At death especially, you'll want to be empty of garbage. Do it while you can." He looked at the Swami's picture. Has it been too long since he has seen him? Have they grown too distant? Has he defied him? Spoiled his life for a few moments of sense gratification?

Everything can be dovetailed. Better we learn the art.

Hal hummed an old tune and revived himself. He wanted the world to leave him alone, yet to be there, friendly. He doesn't know anything *but* this world, so how can he aspire for someplace beyond?

That takes us to the realm of myth "aspiring for what we can't see.

"Excuse me, are you a Krishna?" A man with a grungy red mustache interrupted Hal's reverie. Then, "May I sit here?"

"Yes," said Hal to both questions. He knew it was his duty to preach. Would this man be sincerely interested? "Start slow," he told himself. "Use strategy to help this soul find Krishna." Again he realized he had to be strict in his thoughts.

The man asked him if cats could wear pajamas.

"Yes, but that's not important."

The man asked, "Forsooth is an English expression, not Irish, right?"

Hal said, "I don't know the etymology."

They didn't have much time to talk. The bus careened.

The man asked, "Do you wear *tilaka*?"

"Yes, but it got rubbed off."

The man asked, "Do you love women? Are you homosexual?"

"No, love is for Krishna. Homosexuality is out."

The man asked, "What's the role of women in your . . . in your discussion about the cat's pajamas?"

Hal was already thinking, "Leave me alone." Instead he said, "Why don't you read *Bhagavad-gita*? Everything is explained there."

The bus driver shouted suddenly, "Last stop. Everyone off. Krishnas too." As Hal passed him on his way to the door, the driver whispered, "Got any of those sweet balls?"

Hal got off but didn't know where he was. He remembered the time when he was a high-profile guru and never went anywhere unless he was surrounded by over-effusive disciples. This time, he stood on the street and hitched a ride. "Better," he thought, "I go back to Govinda's. That's the only place I know in this city. At least there'll be devotees there. If the restaurant's still open, I'll be able to catch a ride, or at least get directions." He realized he was dangerously incapable of taking care of himself in an unknown place and too full of fear of pain. Dusk fell. "Straight, no chaser," he hummed, and this episode faded out.

* * *

8:20 a.m.

Both sides of the road have been mowed since yesterday. Two cars in the neighbor's driveway, one white, one black. A whole day without rain, so no white water in the stream and the road remarkably dry. The sky is even a little blue. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna.

Walking with a mock marching gait, raising my legs high at the knees. That's called aerobics. Is it colder? At this rate, summer could turn a bend before I knew it and become autumn. I intend to be here through everything.

* * *

The druids were like Zen masters. They have been maligned by Greek and Latin writers. The first Celtic Christian "saints" were actually druids. They were the highest authorities in the society of the Celts.

The mythology professor droned on . . .

We want to write our own myths. The myths (many of them) start with druids of our own liking and dark forests in which to hide. The stocking-footed, straps-up-the-legs people wearing pagan ghost helmets "I could never survive under such hardy conditions. Fortunately, I only have to read about them in a book. I mean, the only outdoor job I ever had was working as a parkie at Great Kills Beach. I met no druids there. Neither did I meet any swamis. I did meet the Greek supervisor, who looked like my father "strong, not too tall, but swarthy. Both of them smoked cigars. The other supervisor looked like a tall and lanky cowboy. His name was Frank Bobbin, and he was a foul-mouthed, aggressive boaster.

Druids kept their hair long, and took twenty years to learn all their arts and sciences. They didn't put their secrets into writing "believed more in live spirit.

From here I can't reach over to my jar of Lavan Baskar, but I can write while I'm able. I told people that we tend not to notice much, but as I said it, I looked up and noticed an overhead jet trail as fresh as new-baked bread. One of those overnight flights from America to Ireland probably. Sky pink now. I haven't noticed it all day.

"We find in writers of Greek and Latin, stories of druids conducting human sacrifice *ad nauseam*, but those stories are not true," the teacher said. I carved my initials, B. H., on the desk. I shivered and shimmered. I saw the fairy elf at last. A moment of clarity. But I have to *keep* living. That means I need constant clarity.

No one but me on this road (says Basho and Taneda). Music. I still have time.

Druid is a major word. I thought druids were women and tree worshipers with long, unkempt hair. It's much more complicated than that.

A Krishna conscious person has direct Vedic conceptions and doesn't need druids. I mention it only to show the importance of spiritual persons in every culture. They are more than kings and business people. They are not mere officials but have actual potency. In that sense, an ISKCON guru is better than a druid only if he is really alive to what he is teaching.

Hare Krishna. Chant and taste and cry for more. Be humble and gentle; renounce the pursuit of followers and power. Know *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. "Druids no longer exist . . . " The prof was still droning.

* * *

9:02 a.m.

Pee Pee Jones fired his fast-ball and struck out Ko Ko Johnson. Then I said, "Oh yes, let's turn to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and be as Krishna conscious as possible." This is the bewitching hour when I turn ashen gray and my head shrinks inside and I'm given a prize. I told myself that even if it comes today, I won't be afraid. I've had so many of these headaches that I ought to be able to live with them by now.

Krishna consciousness on a string budget. I'm pretty sure I chanted my fifteenth round, but it was a spacey one.

Later dreamt I was with TKG. He was buying personal items, like a pair of "space shoes," in a big store. I inquired about his funding and learned it came from a rich disciple who considered it his service to support TKG. In the dream, I had no such funding and didn't even have a residence. I tried to think about where I could go, because I wouldn't be staying with TKG for very long. In the dream it dawned on me that I did have somewhere to stay, and I became dimly aware that I really lived in Ireland.

The security of my devotee identity is important to me. I'm an old guru who is maintained. That's my niche in this movement. I try to earn it by writing these books.

Better rest now. If I rest now, perhaps I can read in a little while. I'm not an angry man. Krishna is protecting me.

* * *

10:11 a.m.

Rama appeared first. Yoga-maya went to Gokula and did everything she had been instructed to do by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Lord's words are Vedic injunctions no one should neglect. In that sense, there's no point quoting *sastra* unless we understand that and are prepared to live what we hear. Srila Prabhupada explained this to the professors in Mexico. He mentioned *brahma-Sabda*, but one woman asked, "What about induction? Sankara mentions induction." Srila Prabhupada agreed that there was hypothesis, history, direct perception, and other forms of gathering knowledge, then added, "But of them all, *Sabda-brahma* is the best." He quoted *eka narayana asit . . .* "Before creation, before Brahma or Siva existed, God existed." Hear and act accordingly.

"Thus the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the Supersoul of all living entities and who vanquishes all the fear of His devotees, entered the mind of Vasudeva in full opulence." (*Bhag.*10.2.16)

I have always found this a satisfying image, even though I comprehend it only in a neophyte way. But to think of the Supreme Lord appearing in His pure devotee's mind! We can each receive that benediction; it is not only for Vasudeva. Each of us, even animals and insects, carries the Lord in his heart. A fortunate human being can become aware of that, then worship and serve Him. It occurred to Vasudeva as an awakening of consciousness. For me, I might be chanting *japa* or just walking downstairs, and Krishna might appear fully in my mind: "I am here. I am your God, the Supreme of all, and your best friend." Wouldn't that be nice?

"*Dhama* refers to the place where the Supreme Personality of Godhead resides." (*Bhag.* 10.2.17) So we speak of Vrndavana-dhama or Dvaraka-dhama. But when the Lord empowers a particular devotee, "the core of his heart becomes a *dhama* . . ." Thus he becomes powerful, and people are astonished by his devotional strength.

Vasudeva transferred the Supreme Lord Krishna from his mind to Devaki's mind. Vasudeva gave Devaki a kind of *diksa*. Srila Prabhupada initiated me. Perhaps that wasn't as dramatic as Vasudeva transferring Krishna to Devaki's mind. Krishna didn't make any dramatic appearances in *my* mind. But I'm carrying the import of the initiation,

and I treasure it. I was blessed "am still blessed "to one day receive Krishna according to my qualification. Let me serve my spiritual master by preaching. I received knowledge from him, so let me give it to others. When Devaki received Krishna within her in a heart-to-heart relationship, she could not manifest her fortune because she was in Kamsa's prison. Srila Prabhupada mentions that *Bhagavad-gita* has also been covered or confined in India, but now it's being distributed in the right way by the Krishna consciousness movement. I should take part in this movement.

* * *

Happy Idea #25
A Jagannatha tune
in my head.

* * *

The *maha-mantra*
or I'm dead.

* * *

This happy thought we plant in your ear:
serve God there.

* * *

Happy Idea #26
Grin crooked.

* * *

I don't want to go to Him,
not yet. I don't know who
I am or what I love.

* * *

Happy ideas:
keep searching gently, take a
morning walk, read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* even
if you don't love it.

* * *

You say, "I don't want to go yet
to where my spiritual master is but
I am with him now every day listening

to his speeches and reading his books."

* * *

I don't know what will happen.

"Trust in Krishna."

Happy Idea #27

Is it happy to rush and be
excited? Was Madhu happy
to perform Krishna songs of his
own composition on stage?

* * *

Temporary is misery, illusion.

Philosophy is another source
of solace.

And my "Dear Abbey,"
practical tips on bliss.

* * *

List: Bliss Bars (if you
can chew them);
money in the bank (should
be spent for Krishna);
bona fide guru
(follow Prabhupada and Krishna);
chant Hare Krishna "and even if you are
not immediately in bliss be
happy you found it.
"Chant Hare Krishna and be happy."

* * *

11:55 a.m.

We'll see what happens this afternoon "what I write about it. I can't push myself as if I were a new van with a massive engine. Instead, tiptoe lightly through the lilacs.

Oh, they are dead? Then tiptoe over the gravel path that leads to this house. Chant Hare Krishna more than the minimum. Tell us about someone besides yourself.

There's Abe Lincoln, but I don't know much about him except what I've read in other people's writings. There are "you know . . . other people, but if I talk of them, they will find out and say, "Not true! I don't like the way you portrayed me."

Could you speak a little of Krishna? But if you do, speak only His praises, because He is all-good. Whoever hears you will be benefited.

Lord Krishna set the stage for His appearance. He moved through all His *lilas*, one after another. At one point He was with the wives of the yajnic *brahmanas*. They entered the forest with a delicious feast for Him and His cowherd friends after hearing that they were hungry. The *dvija-patnis* saw Lord Krishna with His blackish complexion wearing garments that glittered like gold. He also wore a peacock feather in His turban and appeared most beautiful. The wives embraced Him with their eyes and hearts, and merged as one with Him in transcendental love. Then they asked Him to arrange that they may live always with Him in the forest. They were prepared to leave their homes and families. "No," Krishna said, "better you go home and do your duties. But always think of Me." He promised them they could know Him not by physical proximity but by minds absorbed in devotional love. The ladies did what He asked of them. They will always be remembered for their devotion and fearlessness, neither of which their husbands possessed. Krishna, Krishna, Krishna.

* * *

Haladhara refuses to run the restaurant

Did Hal return to Govinda's and eat more *halava*? Did he get a hollow, hallowed, late afternoon, down-in-the-dumps feeling?

"I know how you feel," someone told him.

"No, you can't exactly, but I appreciate your attempt to commiserate. I'm sure I have it much easier than many. It's just my ache and burden." Hala didn't want to complain.

Yes, Hal made it to Govinda's where they told him they were all going to London for ratha-yatra. They asked him to mind the restaurant in their absence.

"No, I won't. I'll go back to the country and stay there. I'll be lonely. I'll write something. I always wanted to be a writer. It's just this fear of failure from which I suffer."

"But you ought to preach and cooperate. If you stay in the city, you could do the work of five people and keep the restaurant open."

"No, I'm sorry," he said.

"Would you like to come with us to London then?"

"No," Hal said. "right now my head feels like a vise is closing in on it, and I feel neglected. I'd better not discuss these things until I'm in better shape."

"Yeah, okay." They wisely left him alone.

Hickory Dickory. He braced and gritted. Got a ride home. His front yard was overgrown with grass. He went upstairs to bed in the dark. He would be alone for the next few days in his house, so he decided to eat apples. He also decided to give himself an assignment: to write a lot of words in his book. Maybe he would call it "Hal's . . .

Couldn't think that far ahead. But that's what he wanted to do. And if he was accused of not cooperating, not preaching, not engaging in pure devotional service, he had a comeback ready for that too.

Hal lay back on the pillows and thought, "I'll *show* them." In the meantime, he located the pressure in his head, applied "healing music" like a Band-aid, although he knew it wouldn't work. Pain takes its own time to go.

Birds were singing. They seemed to know of his suffering. It was one of the busiest weeks in town "cash registers vying with one another to gain the tourists' money. Hal was glad he managed to stay clear of it all. He wished only to sing Hare Krishna, or say Hare Krishna on his beads, or at least think of Krishna once in a while, quietly in the garden, and to survive the pain.

* * *

4:03 p.m.

Radha-Govinda were polished today, and that worrisome spot disappeared from Govinda's forehead, I'm glad to say. Shiny Lord. Srila Prabhupada calm, receiving my massage. I offered them marigold garlands of orange and dark red flowers. Hare Krishna dasi put sticks in the ground next to the flowers, bushes, and young trees so that I would know their names. There is a bay tree beside the bench. When I go out there, I can be introduced to each of them. "This is bay tree." "Hello. Hare Krishna. Pleased to meet you. Please feel welcome in our humble garden."

"Thank you."

* * *

4:53 p.m.

I've been sitting around trying to get up the guts and composure to write my myth, but the vise is squeezing hard. Still, it doesn't feel like a polar bear biting me in half. I should be able to write through this. But all I can think of is, "Once upon a time, a vise gripped a man's head. He succumbed to the pain and wrote a vise saga." Exaggerated head prose.

Once a man was working with a vise and a knife, but the knife sprang from his hand and fell onto his toddler son's hand, who was playing in the sawdust at his feet. Blood spurted everywhere. He tended the wound quickly. Fifty-five years later, that boy still searches his left hand to find the white scar. It really happened. Then he looks at his right forearm where other scars are easily visible. That's where he got stitches when a plate glass window fell on him. *Haribol*. They saved him in the emergency room while he tried to save them with his preaching.

Did you ever notice how I keep rotating the same stories? Perhaps that's why I want to write myths. Then I would be able to develop new stories from the old, stories never told before, stories with heroic endings. The question is, would I feel those new stories as I feel my old scars? Perhaps.

This is the myth of the '57 Dodge. Call it a '58. The boy split his pants. Billy Cool married Diane Senn, the first kids to actually "grow up" and get married. I met him in Fiorelli's drug store after he was married. He was my age (what, sixteen? Eighteen at most?) and *married*. He had a job, a burden. He wasn't boasting or proud, as I remember it, but he was an odd species. It didn't seem romantic or even attractive to be married. Carol Singor "big girls that moved faster than me, although they were my age. Dagny Trevor, Patty Berra. At least I was invited to boy-girl parties when we were all twelve or thirteen. So? Give us the myth or go back to the *Bhagavatam*.

But all I can give right now is an achey head, a vise turning tighter. Swami gave us *dal*, rice, and *sabji*, hot and delicious. We'd broken off from mainstream American

civilization *and* from the hip Lower East Side ways too. We appeared to be a new brand of hip, at least for a while, because we thought we were going to stay high forever.

I think this vise may move to the right eye. It has that feeling to it. Better I move to the bed. Am I really not going to take any pills? No, I've had enough this week. I'm convinced taking more won't help; it will only cause rebound. Just stick it out by going inside yourself. It's not as bad when I don't wince and complain. After all, I am a soul.

* * *

5:45 p.m., Night Notes

Written under duress, I am hereby forced to go to bed because of my head. Man overboard. Vasudeva received Krishna in his heart, then Krishna went from his heart to Devaki's. Now He's here in His holy name. Never knew about that until I was twenty-six years old. I still know so little about it, but I chant and chant.

M. is readying his Epsom salts, so I shouldn't complain. At least I don't have *that* problem. He'll probably be in during the night, once the Epsom salts start working.

July 26, 12:02 am.

The soul is more important than the body, but materialistic society stresses the senses and doesn't understand the living force within. "Therefore Krishna has taken birth or taken shelter within the womb of the Krishna consciousness movement." (*Bhag.* 10.2.20, purport) Men like Kamsa try to check the Krishna consciousness movement.

As I read this, I become a bit skeptical of ISKCON's potency to challenge the materialists. Yet in countries such as the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, ISKCON *is* spreading. We each have to find a way to remain loyal to Prabhupada's movement, as well as how to improve it. It will take personal simplicity.

"The movement will go on increasing more and more provided the leaders of the movement remain firmly Krishna conscious by following the regulative principles and the primary activities of chanting the Hare Krishna mantra regularly."

Kamsa knew his enemy had appeared in Devaki's womb, but he refrained from killing her or her child. He feared the karma and for his reputation. He at least had had the good sense to understand transmigration. People nowadays are so lost in the bodily concept of life that they don't know about the results of sinful activities. What Kamsa feared, people are now too ignorant to protect themselves from.

Kamsa thought always of Krishna and became "unfavorably Krishna conscious." The nondevotees have a kind of Krishna consciousness when they always try to negate or avoid God. Srila rupa Gosvami describes favorable Krishna consciousness as *anukulyena Krishnanu Silanam*.

Actually, the happiness I seek is within favorable Krishna consciousness. I have ruined my chances of other kinds of happiness. I hanker for a devotee's *ananda*. I don't pray to God for happiness outside the taste of chanting and hearing and preaching and serving. I'd like less headaches, but I don't pray for that; at least I know I should not make physical peace and ease my goal of life.

This garden is now full of aspiring flowers and trees. It's nice. I know that many of the flowers will die at the first frost, and I by then, I too may no longer be here. So don't live only for the temporary. Walk the boards outside, and chant and hear in the eternal realm.

Kamsa wasn't happy. "A devotee, however, whether sitting on a throne or beneath a tree, is always happy." (*Bhag.* 10.2.24, purport)

"Even when a devotee is superficially put into great difficulty, he is never disturbed."

One could say that in the last ten years, I have concentrated more on taking care of my own needs than on caring for the needs of others. I don't consider this completely selfish. rather, it is a kind of example. We have seen so many of our leaders going to great pains to arrange for the growth of the Krishna conscious society in outward ways "buildings, laws, social development, education "but not taking care of themselves. Their self-sacrifice is commendable, but it often leads to their leaving this movement. If they are not actually happy and sane in their surrender, they will fracture their own faith and the faith of others. In the end, their leaving adversely effects all work they have done to provide for others and for that thing we call "the society." What is a leader? Someone whom people follow. He has to know where he's going to lead effectively.

Srila Rupa Gosvami resigned from government office to sit beneath a tree, "yet he was happy . . . favorably serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

"This comfortable position of a devotee can be established by the mercy of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Even when a devotee is superficially put into great difficulty, he is never disturbed." (*Bhag.* 10.2.24, purport) We should cut down our pride by self-examination, but it's also good to note where we are doing well, to offer ourselves encouragement. In that way, we will learn to both tolerate and pray for the Lord's mercy.

* * *

Haladhara's Notebook

I want to write some Krishna conscious pieces or a book. (Dare I say so many of us would like to do that, and it's a wish we may take to the grave with us?) This writing could be a retelling of *sastra*, a discussion of loyalty to guru, and it is, but it includes something of the self, something from the "blues" that make up a conditioned soul suffering in this world with higher aspirations.

This exact piece, however, is just a warm-up. Don't demand more right now. But that's the problem stated: I can't change myself in some way, or tack on Krishna's pastimes, or get too close to my own slangy voice, and I don't know what more to say. I live in two worlds that never seem to fully meet "Krishna in Goloka and me trying to reach Him. Until I go there, I know I have little access to the heart of it all, yet my own world is both important and unimportant to me. Krishna is God and I am me, and Charlie Parker is who he is, and the birds . . . and yet all are from Krishna. The master is one who teaches flowing Krishna consciousness.

Haladhara didn't get much into it. He lived in that house. The best thing he could do was to remain dedicated and prayerful throughout his life, and to expect always that more crumbs of mercy would come his way. He waited and waited. But he didn't wait to write. Because what if the revelation *didn't* come in this lifetime? If he sat around

waiting until it did come, it would mean he would die without having said anything. Haladhara's approach was to begin and keep going, keep moving, keep writing his way toward the revelation. That's what Hal decided to do. He could go to India and keep a notebook, or stay in Ireland and keep a notebook. If it turned into a coherent idea of a Krishna conscious book, fine; if not, at least he was writing.

With candles handy in case the lights failed, as sometimes happened, Haladhara wrote in his notebook as follows:

* * *

Krishna and Radha are in Vrndavana. I'm alone in Erin. My friends have all gone off. From the periphery "I recall growing up in the Bronx,
Onyx
a pretty day
in Bull Meadow.

"*Un Coeur Simple*" by Flaubert "the story we read in French. I remember it still. It was about a good and simple woman ascending into heaven where there was a great parrot. Sort of atavistic. What I want is not that but something Krishna conscious. You see, the concept of taking off or springboarding on *sastra* is shocking. Might be offensive. *sastra* is already perfect. Who am I? I don't even have a life. I am made of cardboard.

(Haladhara's notebook entry for July 26 ended here.)

* * *

5:20 a.m.

A steady, heavy rain as I walk. Puddles deep. Let me splash right through them in my wellies and Gore-tex rain gear. My eyeglasses are wet, though, which doesn't make for good visibility. It's Sunday morning, and I'm glad there are few cars on the road today.

What an excellent koan I could make out of Prabhupada saying, "What is the question of the mind?" We could think about that one for years. Prabhupada gave so many instructions, and we still haven't figured out how to carry them out successfully. Some things he said seem almost simplistic. Did he not understand how much we were struggling? "What is the question of the mind?"

* * *

Tired Druids

The druids were on the march. The Celts conquered Rome and went on to Greece, where they met Alexander the Great and made a peaceful settlement with him. Then Rome rose up and started to drive everyone back. The Celts too lost everything but Ireland. Rome never went there. The Celts had a religious stricture stating that they could not commit knowledge to writing, so it was not until the sixth century A.D. that their stuff got written down. Then it was bowdlerized by Christian scribes. Still . . .

I like the climate here in this Celtic land. I climbed the hill with the reluctant dragon. He wrote poems. I had none of my own. I wanted to live like Han Shan in *Cold*

Mountain. I'm always imitating. Don't know who I am. But I can't go back to other personas. No, that's because this is a myth. I'll never leave off communication as long as there are stamps and mailboxes. I'll write, and they can write me back. My life is my sense of integrity lived out.

Saw a mole dive under a wall while a bird flew over it. An insect bore right through the stone. The kingdom of mice and men. I have forsworn that I am not yours; we all belong to God. Let there be pretty music for His pleasure. Let there be berries and pretty girls while I remain a monk of a celibate myth. I mean, once a unicorn, always a unicorn.

They say, "If you go, I'll go," and then climb out of the tunnel together. Perhaps that tunnel is similar to the one leading into "and out of "Jambavan's cave. That was a very long tunnel, and reminds me in elongated form of the very short tunnel leading into the cave where Raghava Pandita once lived near Govardhana. Have you seen it?

Which *gopi* is Raghava in *Krishna-lila*? He is "sweet hands," she who makes the best sweets, Campakalata.

The druids say we don't die, that the soul would take another body, but still they were anxious.

Oh, so tired. What can I do?

The druids baked a cake for a Vaisnava's appearance day. The rain came down and down and down, and the roads were running with streamlets. No one else was out because not only was it raining, but it was Sunday at 5:30 a.m. What could he expect?

Bring druids overhill. The man who was a Gaudiya Vaisnava told no myth but spoke only *hari-katha*. Vyasa would not waste his time on make-believe. *Brahma-Sabda* is the best.

Mythos action beleaguered
you wait and wait
tough
however satisfied with
Krishna-katha but too tired to say anything.

* * *

8:57 a.m.

I have a right to desire up-time. Maybe I don't always feel like writing. Sometimes, writing feels like a burden, an assignment. That's all right. But if I didn't fear headache pain, I would push myself more.

Why do you fear pain?

Because it hurts. Because it means I have to shut down the activities I consider most important in my day. I no longer see it as morally superior to accept pain passively and not seek to stop it with meds.

I don't like long hours of waiting and wading through pain. It's hard, too, once it's gone, to get back on track again. I become moody, feel lonely. When I chant my rounds with pain, they are poor, often silent.

I don't like pain because I get absorbed in the whole cycle of taking meds and worrying about rebound, that whole cycle "the guilt, the defense against the anti-medication school of thought, and so on. It's such a distraction.

Pain makes me unfit to answer my mail, which is a major part of my preaching. It's even hard to write EJW, and it leaves me falling behind in my quotas.

I also can't read, when I have pain, the books I have here that help me in my creative process. I also have to eliminate painting "it's too vigorous an activity "and I resent that. When pain moves off, it may take days for me to return to my normal interest in my activities, but by then, the pain comes back.

* * *

They say that seventy percent of headache sufferers are not satisfied with their doctors, and don't know of the new medications or alternative therapies available. Dr. Robbins advises patients to acquaint themselves with all of it.

M. took his Epsom salts again, but they didn't produce the little stones he likes to see in his stool. He's going to try it again. It's like a sanitarium around here these days. I've been talking less with him about my health and expressing more to another devotee, who is keeping me informed about what happens on Ronda's migraine page. With most of my correspondents, SDG's headaches are confined to a brief mention at the end of a letter: "I hope you're getting relief from your headaches." Yeah, sure. I'm all better now.

I hope you are chanting Hare Krishna in pure bliss. I hope you have gone to Goloka and are writing back to us from there. I hope you'll have the solution to all my ills.

I do. The answer is to chant Hare Krishna. But how to convince you (and me) of the deep truth of that statement? Be like Padre Pio (without stigmata), and be so charismatic that they want reform themselves at your request.

* * *

Charlie Parker's daughter died at a young age. He was also a heroin addict. A musician who was with him reminisced that Charlie's playing of "Lover Man" on an occasion when he broke down during a recording session was "pure soul." He had sad eyes, the eyes of one afflicted. His art carried that sadness. Art is not decoration but life transformed, yet not removed from life either. That's what I want for my art "to let it transform life yet *be* life.

I wanted to write about Charlie Parker because I've been thinking about him and his art, and how it has meaning for me. Devotees will probably think of Charlie Parker as a *karmi* musician, but I have a hard time seeing it that way. In some ways, he has more soul than many raucous *kirtana* parties. How to resolve that? He didn't chant God's names. Still, he had spiritual feeling. I wish the two could come together. I hold onto Charlie Parker because his example fuels my expressiveness. I am an aspiring devotee, but I don't want to write propaganda. To have the soul that he felt through his music while I chant the holy names "I want that. I want to bring Krishna into my real life as much as possible. He's already present in everything; I just need to turn to Him with a full heart.

* * *

That was different, walking in total rain this morning. I had to be careful with the tape recorder. Tended not to stop and pause, but to walk on and get through the walk and return. It felt a bit like swimming. But my body was dry inside the rain gear. Glanced to see what round I was on. Eyeglasses fogged.

I don't feel I need to go anywhere, but we will be going to Inis rath in two-and-a-half weeks. Let me sing Hare Krishna with comrades or alone.

* * *

10:25 a.m.

"Lord Brahma and Lord Siva, accompanied by great sages like Narada, Devala and Vyasa, and by other demigods like Indra, Candra and Varuna, invisibly approached the room of Devaki, where they all joined in offering their respectful obeisances and prayers to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who can bestow blessings upon everyone." (*Bhag.* 10.2.25) This is the beginning of the prayers of the demigods to Krishna in the womb. They have come to welcome the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Kamsa was also awaiting His arrival.

Am I? I have been writing in my letters that "I'm looking forward to going to Inis rath for Janmastami," but for me, the temple observance is not the main excitement. Mostly, it's a day of endurance, no doubt with meds on hand, because I'll be giving an initiation-Janmastami lecture in the morning; then if I'm pain-free I'll attend the temple in the evening. Socializing. Not so inner. The inner life is taking place now, at a quiet but regular pace.

"*Satya, satya, satya*," the demigods pray. Krishna is truthful in many ways. "You are the supreme truth. Indeed, unless one is completely truthful, one cannot achieve Your favor, which therefore cannot be achieved by hypocrites." (*Bhag.* 10.2.26) The demigods surrendered to the Supreme Truth, not to relative truth. *Satyam param dhimahi*: let me meditate and pray to the Supreme Truth, Sri Krishna.

The Supreme Lord promised to protect His devotees. The *devas* declared that He would be true to that vow, because He is *satya-vrata*.

Get ready for Srila Prabhupada's *puja* and be grateful for the varieties of devotional service we've been given. Srila Prabhupada said book reading is theoretical and Deity worship is practical. Deity worship engages the body and senses, and the feelings. It's an easy and direct way to approach Krishna or guru. He receives the care along with our love. We make a token gesture in our worship, you could say, and I see that most when I worship my Prabhupada *murti*. I know what it means to have done the real, forty-five-minute workout in his physical presence.

* * *

11:53 a.m.

Fusty old gremlin from Texas. He has too much to say. Heck, let him say his worst. He won't stop me from writing deeply, even if he's the prince of darkness. I am surrendered to Krishna (I wish). I am at least enough surrendered to say . . . Sunday is nice. We all live in the earth household awhile.

* * *

Satyam param dhimahi. How do we meditate? Is meditation something brief and light, like looking out a window at a pasture? Or are we too busy even for something like that? Busy-ness makes us distracted and unable to concentrate. For me, meditation means to read scripture for fifteen or twenty minutes at a time, and to take it in while writing. Meditation includes writing the thoughts that come. Other things I really couldn't call meditation or prayer, such as the way I eat my lunch. I'm concentrating only on tasting it and filling my belly. Material sensations themselves are not meditation. We are Vaisnavas, so we mean loving service by all we hope to do, directing it toward guru and Krishna, but the conscious element of devotion has to be there for it to be actual meditation.

Eating for a devotee *should* be meditation. Although I find it difficult to actually meditate while I'm eating, I do listen to lecture tapes while I eat so that I can at least think of Krishna. We want to do everything in remembrance of Him.

Answering mail. I think how to answer letters according to what I've learned over the years. That's a service "to share what I have been given.

Bow down to the Deities. Many of our acts are brief and light, but if we put them together one after another, then the weight of our acts will gradually help our emotions become involved. Spirit and body work together in this way.

Sunday sermon? Dear brethren, we have gathered here today to thank our spiritual master for giving us the Krishna consciousness movement. I just want to remind you to try to read and chant *japa* every day, and to follow the four rules. Please pray for the well-being of our world leaders. Pray that Lord Caitanya will give us the strength and inspiration to proceed with purity. There are many wonderful things to be done, and there are realistic struggles and obstacles. We should somehow make friends with the devotees and live together in a cheerful mood "help one another out in a Krishna conscious way.

Someone says, "I'm afraid if I talk about Krishna, it will come out forced and unnatural." She adds, "We all seem selfish, even in our friendships. We want our own needs met." I guess she's right. Still, we can try to give someone Krishna consciousness, can't we? Give the world at least an example of a successful life. So many lives become travesties. Even aspiring devotees sometimes sell out to crass materialism. By talking about Krishna with one another, even if we think it's forced, we maintain our devotee identity and help others to do that too.

* * *

12:03 p.m.

Happy Idea #28

The *gopis'* joy is the
happiness of Krishna.

They desire it intensely.

Srimati Radharani says, "If

Krishna takes pleasure in making

Me miserable, I will
consider that misery
the greatest happiness."
Who can understand this?

* * *

Happy Idea #29
I'm happy to be chanting.
I wish you all well.

* * *

Be "happy, sad,
Remember
too. Give people
Krishna consciousness wherever you are.
This is the best idea
and that's why He gave it,
Lord Caitanya.

* * *

Happy Idea #30
Color comes from God
blue-yellow-brown-
Red "take your turn.
I once saw purple-blue in
an ocean wave
in January New England.

* * *

Plaid and plain
the mountain, sky, office,
be a Buddha or
a fool intelligent
normal person.

* * *

Krishna Krishna Krishna.

* * *

2:45 p.m.

The demigods were "very glad that the Lord was appearing to fulfill His mission, and they addressed Him as *satyam param*, or the supreme Absolute Truth." (*Bhag.* 10.2.26, purport)

I'm dry as dust. I'm not among those happy souls watching the Lord appear and going there to congratulate Him. I'm not even among those who trust Him even when they can't see Him. I'm a Doubting Thomas.

The Supreme Lord is true in all three phases of time and in all three principles of *jnana*, *bala*, and *kriya* (knowledge, strength, and full activity). Devotees of the Supreme Lord don't suffer want; He supplies everything.

Not true? All right, sometimes they might need something, but that's His own arrangement, to encourage their surrender. Whatever He does is fine by pure devotees. Only demons look to pick fights with Him, or to prove the devotees fools.

Now the prayers of the demigods will become quite technical and not as apparently devotional. They give figurative analogies by which they'll explain the Supreme Lord and His energies. These technical prayers are not as much to my liking, I'll admit, but I'll stay with them anyway. I want to be aware that the purpose of their words is to praise Govinda.

They compare the body to a tree with branches and leaves, and describe the two birds sitting in the tree, the individual soul and the Supersoul. Matter doesn't produce itself "it comes from Krishna. Vedic knowledge gives this information clearer than anywhere else. Body, proprietor of body, and Proprietor of all bodies. Transmigration. Liberation.

The demigods declare that the Supreme Lord is the cause and maintainer of the material world (or original tree). After annihilation, everything is conserved in Him. Those in *maya* cannot see Him behind everything.

Pure devotees are *vipascit*, learned, and they try to see God behind everything. "Learned devotees accept even conditions of distress as representing the presence of the Supreme Lord. When a devotee is in distress, he sees that the Lord has appeared as distress just to relieve or purify the devotee from the contamination of the material world." (*Bhag.* 10.2.28, purport) Distress in this world is another feature of the Lord. It cleanses us, so we won't have to remain in *samsara*. Thus devotees welcome distress.

* * *

Haladhara Is

Haladhara dasa is a plow-bearing stogie, not the original Haladhara, who is God. He is just a tiny, tiny bewildered living entity. Haladhara dasa? I fetch you out.

Haladhara's beyond and yet . . . he
freaked out.

He took a pill.

He got close to me, so
close that it reminded me of clouds
the music whispering behind clouds

chords of sweet and strange
invention.

Maybe He *should* be God. Then we would have a bona fide and flawless character, someone sublime. Anything God does, even when He becomes intoxicated, is spiritual, whereas this Haladhara dasa is a little cardboard.

They jimmied opened the desk lock and read my confidential letters to him. They realized he was me, the same me who waits for relief from storming pain. The same me who fights the Whitmanian "I".

I mean, who focuses on the right eye (or just behind it) as if he were flying a plane into the eye of the storm

looking around
at jagged lightning.

"I love your courage," she said.

He kept writing.

Waiting for things to calm. Is his face changing to resemble a wrinkled Jimmy Carter?

A Mr. Hyde? No, no,
calm down.

He is just a boy hearing
a blue jay.

At his death they had a party.

At last he could eat all the *samosas* he wanted "all of us "in the spiritual world.

He will be carried to the spiritual world in a saga, going directly with no stopovers in Port Said, Dubai, or Kuwait, and no headaches along the way.

* * *

6:00 p.m., Night Notes

In the battle between Mr. Pain and Mr. Free-write, Mr. Pain usually wins. Today, I may not let him. But it will be tough, because usually he tells me, "If you write during pain, I'll make it worse for you!" But I remember Bhaktisiddhanta Prabhu saying he went back to painting despite his pain, and his pain went away. Maybe I'll get the same opportunity.

No myth tonight, just me and my hand gripping my pen, moving along, going to bed and hoping to fall asleep "to pull out of this. I'm hoping I won't have a bad night. We'll see.

Hare Krishna. The *devas* pray to the original Visnu. I also get this stinging pain in my prostate gland. The body is "cursed." What can I expect? "Having come to this miserable and temporary material world, engage in My devotional service." I am not this body. Sure feels like I am, though, so beset with pains I am.

* * *

8:04 p.m.

Right-eye pain down some, but it might come up again. M. was out making phone calls but has now returned. I listen to every noise he makes in this house until he leaves

and goes to his. Then I get up and come in here to eke out one last page for July 26. Seems important to keep writing, talking, witnessing.

Say the truth of your life. May Sarton took Prozac in her last days. She sought peace through medication. Dare I say in my case that I am looking for a Krishna conscious peace? Peace is peace, some would say. Saints rise above meds and embrace the pain. Seeking release from pain to write odes is something.

I complained to a local devotee that I really could use a second assistant here to tend my needs. I said it, but it made me aware how well M. and I work together. Not only that, but it really would be hard for me to tolerate more noise. I value my peace and quiet, especially when it's time to sleep. I sleep at such odd hours for most people "7:00 p.m. to midnight "that it's hard to expect people to be quiet during that time.

I see a portrait coming (is it Dorian Gray's?) of an old man grasping at meds, trying to reduce pain, imprisoned by it, and justifying himself, fighting to "do his *sadhana*," which is his form of approaching love of God. Go ahead and say it, *bhava* and *prema* are out of my reach. I already know that. Still I love Krishna consciousness, this balm to a wounded spirit.

July 27, 2:50 a.m.

Missed the midnight scoop but barged through fourteen rounds. Who knows how good they will do? My sorry mind. He'd like to be told, "You don't know it, but actually your chanting is much appreciated by Krishna and Srila Prabhupada." The question is, is it true?

And where *is* Srila Prabhupada? If Krishna were to inform me, "Your chanting is poor, so you'll have to come back for a few more lifetimes in the material world to scrub pots and get out more of that soot," what would I sankirtana, or I'd have to get married, or take an animal body, or live through the rest of Kali-yuga, before I'd be able to chant purely. Would I find encouragement in Krishna's desire for me? Would I, like Mukunda, be able to say, "Wonderful! At least I will be able to see my Lord again!"?

Hey, you're pretty abrasive this morning. Where's your tender concern? What did you lose along the way? What got bruised? How to revive the finer simple spirit of love of God?

I don't know, because I have never had it in this lifetime. It's not so common that parents or priests can pass it on.

Let me peek at *Srimad-Bhagavatam* before going down to the bathroom. The demigods are still praying: "O Lord, You are always in full knowledge, and to bring all good fortune to all living entities, You appear in different incarnations . . . " (*Bhag.* 10.2.29) Lord Krishna is alert to our salvation. He cares for us. The pious are pleased, "but for nondevotees You are the annihilator."

By meditating on the lotus-eyed Lord's lotus feet (double metaphor, looks better in Sanskrit), we follow the path of the *mahajanas*. The feet of the Lord are a boat to cross the ocean of nescience. Any one of the nine processes of devotional service will do. Writing counts too if it praises Krishna and serves the Vaisnavas. Then you achieve the true mission of life "*crossing over the ocean of birth and death*." Verse quoted here by Srila Prabhupada: *Svayambhu narada sambhu* (*Bhag.* 6.3.20): follow the *mahajanas*.

Then it will be easy. Otherwise it will be too hard. The devotees become so attached to Krishna's form that they enter *samadhi* and don't care for anything else.

Samasritah ye pada palava plavam (Bhag. 10.14.58): The vast ocean becomes as easy to cross as a puddle on a Wicklow road. How? By accepting the boat of Murari's feet. It's so easy that even those who are not great, accomplished devotees can cross. Thus the *devas* praise Krishna as the savior and advise us all to board the boat if we at all want to save ourselves from rebirth. Get aboard and advise others to get aboard. Believe it and do it by regular prosecution of *bhakti*, as in chanting and hearing.

* * *

I dreamt that I was filled with a revival of the ecstatic hope that I could become a writer and live in the city. Then I realized that I didn't want to live in the city, there are too many gangsters there. I wanted to live in a quiet place where I could walk and pray. In the dream, I didn't have much money. Neither did I have much consciousness of myself as a devotee. I went into a small, conservative college's library and felt enthusiastic to write there. I thought that perhaps I could at least record the feelings I was having of what I once wanted to achieve as a writer and how I see my future. As soon as I sat down, however, the whole place became noisy. I asked two women who seemed to work there if there was somewhere quieter to go. They escorted me to another floor in the building and left me in a room after turning the lights on for me. I was so much looking forward to sitting down and pouring out my feelings. But I never got to it. Instead, I woke up.

* * *

Hal in Delhi

Mr. Free-write and Mr. Pain bought, I mean,
bout three thousand four hundred
and eighty.

That's a right to the jaw and a left to the abdomen, a feint to the memory and an anchor punch to the kidney (where confidence lies), a bluff to the head and poison to the liver. Throw in some whipped cream and blueberries at the face "of Haladhara dasa" who appears to be wearing a costume from the nineteenth century. We are fooling around, yet pain lurks. This is for comic relief.

"Just immerse me in *pujari* consciousness," he said. That was Mr. Free-write, who ranges from person to person, flying like a junior Garuda, wanting to be where it's happening.

Play the game in the war strategy room. How to deal with Mr. Pain today?

Haladhara dasa can be a stuffed prize. He can read literature like old issues of *The New Yorker* in the library at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi. Then when activists come in rioting their protest of America's economic sanctions against India, the police can form a barricade around Haladhara dasa, who is, after all, an American, and Haladhara can look nervously out over Saul Steinberg's cartoons and Peter Arno and . . . what's his name? Everyone's favorite? Who does the ghouls? "Alas, me memory fails me," says Haladhara to himself, slowly resuming his consistent character.

How did he get to Delhi? He wanted to go to Vrndavana before war broke out. Someone gave him a ticket, so there he is. A young married couple wanted to go for Karttika, but Haladhara went early because he promised he'd buy clothes and ornaments for someone's Deities. Hal the pawn.

Mr. Pain is not yet delivering his jabs. How can we refrain from taking a med as long as we have one in our pouch? Because they are not to be taken every day.

I heard Hal pooped out on his notebook aspiration to write something.

Yes, it's true. That's because he wrote so much like the author who created him that the author got jealous. He didn't want people coming onto his turf.

The passport was stamped in twenty-hundred places, on every inch and extra paper put in to add space, and still his ten years weren't up.

What is most American about jazz is the improvising. Jazz musicians can play while inventing. They play together and have only a brief time before they're not allowed to do more.

Someone could say we were doing something wrong. All the great demigods pray to Krishna, but His dear friends in Vrndavana love Him even more than they do. We approach Radha-Krishna in Vraja through Lord Caitanya. The Gaudiya literature assures us of this fact.

Srila Prabhupada confirmed that fact for us too. We believed him and wanted to serve him, never thinking he was taking advantage of us or that we should quit. In his arrival address in Miami in 1975, Srila Prabhupada spoke exclusively about the Deity of Lord Caitanya, telling his audience that He was the way to reach Vrndavana and that everyone could serve Him easily. He also said that Lord Caitanya doesn't take offense, that He is more liberal than Krishna. I mention it only because we want to tune in to the Lord's instructions.

Man, you're getting it right now. Are we going back to Delhi?

I'd rather not.

Why not? We had already got that far. We could have just gone on to Vrndavana. Before the bombs drop.

It's just a little way from here.

But did you hear? ISKCON is *agitated* with talk on its latest issues?

I heard . . . that they

want to bend

your ear.

An old Catholic adage: "Stay out of the boiler room." They mean, keep your distance from Church administration.

And Hal? He has already gone out the back door. Since he was wearing a Hare Krishna uniform, he begged, "I'm no American, just a spirit soul caught reading *The New Yorker* to get ideas from Saul Steinberg." Surely the protesters would understand that. I mean, everyone likes competent cartoonists.

* * *

5:20 a.m.

On the first half of my walk, the rain drops were so fine I couldn't see or feel them. After turning at the outer limit, however, after 108 Hare Krishna mantras, the rain increased and smeared my eyeglasses, slashing against my clothes. Everything quiet but the rain. reminded me of one of those Chinese landscape paintings, especially because of the pines.

Walk and find your heart "walking provides an opportunity for meditation and prayer. Unfortunately, I was thinking over a letter which had outlined agitating issues about whether ISKCON gurus are bona fide. I searched my soul, looked back to 1978 and how I had accepted honor from junior devotees. Seems like nothing to do now but continue as a senior. But do it right this time.

Pain or no? Lord, what's ahead for me today? I read and took it seriously that the purpose of life is to free oneself from the cycle of birth and death. But so gradual and feeble are my efforts in that direction. What will You decide? Please let me remember You life after life.

* * *

Should a Krishna Conscious Person Speak of Myths?

The Fian captured some of the Munchkins, a modern politician, and a Hare Krishna person (was it me?) and held them all hostage. To get out of the haunted castle, one had to win three out of four games of fitchell, "wooden wisdom." A friend of Cu Chulainn won Ferdia, came to visit our hero (similar to Toad) in prison, and made a plan how I (let's face it, it's me I wish to talk about, to save myself, but it's a mystical "I" nonetheless) could escape. They dressed me as a druid, which wasn't hard, since my *sannyasa* dress is Celtic, after all. *Everyone* is Celtic according to the Celts. If you have the wisdom to understand transmigration and the Otherworld, you're a Celt.

I had to come into this world. Srila Prabhupada says that aside from tradition, transmigration is fact. When we look at many of the world's oldest traditions, we can see that the *Vedas* are actually nonsectarian, ultimate truth. We can prove that with logic and by pointing to examples from the world of experience. Beyond that, however, we *vedantists* will always point to *Sabda-brahma* as carrying the truth.

I play with terms like "druid" and "King Arthur," but I don't play with tales from the *Mahabharata* or *Ramayana*. They are not myths. It's a tricky business "knowing what's make-believe, created by men, and what is a hundred percent truth handed down by sages and scriptures, and more difficult, what is between those two, tales that may have originally been Vedic but have been changed by time and different cultures.

Anyway, it's not my place to solve such conundrums or to argue them on Krishna's behalf. I am here to tell a mythic tale of my life; I want to uncover something helpful.

(Pause for Lavan Baskar, fifteen minutes before the breakfast I expect will be porridge.)

Here's something. King Arthur had a round table, right? Well, I have one too, only it exists within myself. Around my table sit my subpersons. Sats the devotee tells me to

speaking only strict *hari-katha*. Why should I pull in words from world mythology? We are interested only in the Vedic-Vaisnava version of truth, with commentary by Gaudiya Vaisnavas and others, such as Ramanuja and Madhva. We don't even want to hear from Vedic sages such as Sankara or Buddha.

Another Sats subperson says we can be more liberal.

Another subby says "he forgot what he was going to say just as he was about to say it.

Another says the fact that we have parts means we must acknowledge different tendencies. We don't have to agree on everything, even within ourselves, although we can't disagree to such an extent that we go insane.

The forgetful one says he remembers. He wants one person to take indisputable charge. Don't you remember how the sages who gathered with Maharaja Pariksit on the river bank quarreled as to what was best for him to do during his last seven days? Sukadeva appeared and settled everything.

That silenced all subpersons for a moment as they looked around, hoping a Sukadeva Gosvami would appear to take charge, someone they would be willing to follow.

* * *

I dreamt there was a gathering of devotees, including current and retired GBC men. We were having *kirtana*. When it was over, people began to introduce themselves and show short films. I got bored and wandered away with another devotee. As we left, I realized that all I wanted was to chant in the *kirtana*. I asked the assembled devotees if they wouldn't rather have *kirtana*, and when they responded positively, I led the singing with happiness. Nice dream.

* * *

9:00 a.m.

"O Lord, who resemble the shining sun, You are always ready to fulfill the desire of Your devotee . . . When *acaryas* completely take shelter under Your lotus feet in order to cross the fierce ocean of nescience, they leave behind on earth the method by which they cross, and because You are very merciful to Your other devotees, You accept this method to help them." (*Bhag.* 10.2.31)

Guru and Krishna combine to help the devotee who wants to go back to Godhead. The *acarya's* duty is to find the means whereby devotees can render a service that will be accepted by Krishna. Rupa Gosvami helped subsequent devotees by publishing books such as *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu*. "Thus it is the duty of the *acarya* to publish books that will help future candidates." Sure, I read into these statements that my own books will help devotees "I know that they do. I also know that writing them will help me struggle across the ocean.

Yen yen ravindaksa vimuktah maninas. The impersonalist who fails to accept the Absolute Truth as a person, who doesn't worship His lotus feet, will fall back into material life no matter how much he has perfected themselves on the impersonal path.

I don't have anything to do with that, right? I'm no disciple of a Mayavadi guru. But I could become like that. I could deviate. Therefore, let me maintain my worship of the persons Radha-Govinda and always remember the teachings of my Vaisnava guru.

Of course, the unspoken half of the prayer is that to remember my guru's teachings, I have to be satisfied with what comes in Krishna consciousness and not ask for benedictions that don't take me toward my Vaisnava goal.

"One who has not come to the point of seeing the lotus eyes and transcendental form of Syamasundara is a failure." By Deity worship we may develop love, and "if one develops even a little love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one is liberated without difficulty."

If a devotee who loves Madhava sometimes falls from the path of devotion, Krishna will protect him and he will continue to make progress. Srila Prabhupada gives the example of how the devotees won the "deprogramming" case in one day. What about the fact that another case took years to settle and drained ISKCON's finances? Was that Krishna's protection too? Of course, I admit I don't always understand how Krishna acts on His devotees' behalf. Only a complete atheist doubts that Lord Krishna and His opulences protect the devotees, but only a devotee can understand that Krishna protects us in His own way, in His own time. Hare Krishna.

* * *

The electric heater hasn't been working for days now, but suddenly it began working again. It's pouring so much heat into this room that I will have to open the window, yet I can't seem to turn it down. We try so hard to be comfortable in this world, but material nature conspires against us. Now we'll have to call someone to fix it, and that will cost us something. But the chances are that they won't come to fix it, or that they can't fix it, or perhaps we won't have the money to pay the repairman. So we have a choice: should we be overheated or freeze?

Freeze, frieze
sculpture
over doorways "*Vaisnava tilakas*,
elephants attacked by lions.

No, give no indication of what's going on inside. We don't want to interest people enough to ring the bell.

Freeze up on love. I hope not. Old skin and bones. He wants to burn with a flame of love in his heart. Don't drug or delude the self. Don't starve it either. In normal, daily ways, take doses of chanting and reading. The demigods pray and we should read what they say. They tell us we will be helped by following the ways of the *mahajanas*. Think about it. Be personalists, not Mayavadis. Worship the form of Krishna. Practice *bhakti* as it comes down to us.

Freeze and throw away all material interests. Krishna will help in every respect. Even if a devotee slips and falls, the Lord will be there to help him up and onward "if he seriously wants the help.

* * *

10:18 a.m.

Madhu is in his little house playing his melodeon, which I can hear because my window is open. Now moving into the far bedroom, where it's cooler. I was just telling

M. the history of my beginning medication. I didn't take any for ten years, then began, took enough that it caused rebound headaches, and went back to nothing again. Now I have some balance. In the telling, I confused the history. I couldn't remember the basic facts from 1996 - 97. History is like that. You confuse how things happen unless you have recorded it at the time. Those who do record history control the way we understand the past.

Sometimes people wonder why we care so much about the past since it has already been destroyed. It should be enough to say, "We stayed on the raft for a while, then everything was washed away." That's always a true statement. But somewhere along the line, whether we remember the exact dates or not, our fate can have changed. We might have met a pure devotee of Krishna and changed from the material raft to the boat of transcendental loving service. That boat does not get washed away; past event always counts as part of one's present.

"Crocodile, crocodile." He uttered the words that came up, babbling like a madman. They watched him and wondered what was wrong with him. He used to speak clearly enough when he gave us our orders. This new change came about when he signed himself over to that music. He has vowed to say a certain amount every day, and the only way to make the quota is to allow himself to say whatever comes. Perhaps that's what others have called "speaking in tongues." Do you think it's religious ecstasy?

We who like our onions skinned cry tears of clear logic. We don't honor a statement unless we can see it clearly and the writing is official. We belong to the side of the brain that is cold. We twitch, but only if it supports better business. We favor the masculine over the feminine. The this over the that.

Little Edgar, like a cartoon character and wearing a funky golf cap, a very short guy, walks along the street muttering prayers, "Dear Lord, let me get along. Let me pass through this gang-infested neighborhood and reach Your lotus feet with my humble offering." He's carrying the holy Eucharist against his chest. People try to stop him, but he's ready to die before he'll allow himself to be defiled. There is some story of a heroic Catholic boy like that, the Christian version of the spartan who let the wolf eat his innards rather than himself become a coward. But we cry out. We *want* relief. We want our activities to be smooth and easy.

We won't give away our innards cheaply
or even our outers
sang a minstrel on a fence
as Little Edgar, close to the ground,
made his way down the back alley.

* * *

O muse, I leave it to you. Please give me some Krishna conscious words.

Oh yes, here's a ratha-yatra tune. You can get a band together and play this on stage:

Hey, this material world is full of . . .

No, perhaps that started out too sordid. Do you have something more genteel?

Sorry. This is what the kids want nowadays. Perhaps you will want to render your own service in another tent of this many-ringed circus.

Muse, muse, this is faraway talk on your part. What about the real writing of the real me?

But sir, your words are just too quiet.

No, I like the fact that so much energy goes into outer trips while I can be quiet and alone. I am not ashamed to say that. If we are always running around, outward, we will crack up. It's true. We need to find our own gentleness. It's good to get off the beaten track every now and then to take a look at what you can find.

Muse: I could give you important and profound Krishna conscious things to say, but could you carry the burden?

There is no muse, only Krishna directly in the heart. The muse is a myth. It is just you, the soul on the tree of the body, and the Lord, the main bird in the heart. He speaks directly and provides the intelligence by which we can understand Him. He is there for all of us, if only we can hear Him. He is there for His devotees with special interests and expressions. Imagine Rupa Gosvami composing his dramas. He lived under a different tree every night. The Lord came to him and dictated how he should write his plays. Even Satyabhama once appeared. And of course, he used his own God-given devotional intelligence and free will to write those beautiful rows of pearls. Out came a shower of nectar much appreciated by the Lord's closest associates.

Back to this point: The *acarya* has the duty to help people manage their lives in such a way that they can render service to beautiful Krishna. We should not stray from *parampara*, but we should be real people participating in our own service to God.

* * *

12:02 p.m.

Happy Idea #31

Is a devotee's

life simpler, less stressed?

Maybe not, but he or she's

got Krishna, chanting, the

faith, the philosophy, and if

lucky, a few close friends.

* * *

God is Krishna in the book

and everywhere. We don't have

to speculate.

* * *

It is most unfortunate

when we don't talk of

the Vaikuntha world

and instead hanker and lament for

here and now.

* * *

Happy Idea #32

Patri tells me about his liver
deteriorating. We both have
chronic diseases. Mine seems to
be easy. He says he's putting off
getting a transplant. Told
the doctor, "I just want
twenty more years."

* * *

Rain. Talking in the kitchen.
"And how are you bearing up?"
I don't want him thinking
I am free of it.

* * *

Now I hear his feet on the gravel,
leaving me alone for the day
with *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

* * *

Chant and
draw pics "nothing
new.

* * *

Happy Idea #33

Be happy in this life and
the next. Transmigration's a mystery
but you believe it.

* * *

Tick-tock, I hear my
American Tourista clock "
tick-tock and the wind.

* * *

Here's my idea: breathe

and wait. Hear scripture.

* * *

Is that happy? It's serious.
A devotee is grave, *gambhira*.

* * *

He's not negative but it's
sad that he still cannot
enter loving Krishna as he
Reads and chants.

* * *

Right path not wrong.
This leads back to Godhead.

* * *

2:30 p.m.

The demigods say that the Supreme Lord appears as various *avatars* in transcendental forms for a variety of reasons, but ultimately to allow the devotees to enter "*samadhi*, ecstatic absorption in thoughts of You." (*Bhag.* 10.2.34) Srila Prabhupada mentions that Lord Caitanya appeared in Kali-yuga to teach us at a time when Vedic activities cannot be systematically performed. We are simply too fallen. Thus He asked us to chant *hari-nama* and assured us that there was no other way in the this age.

Everything in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* has to be accepted as it is. The Lord doesn't have a material body but is entirely spiritual. What does this mean? We can't analyze Him physically, empirically, or psychologically, because He is beyond our investigation. Yet He's not formless. He is inconceivable. What can we do but accept that and give up speculation?

"Only by Your presence can one understand the transcendental nature of Your Lordship . . . " The devotee has to himself be situated in transcendence by Krishna's mercy if he wishes to understand the Lord's transcendental nature. I'm satisfied with these explanations and pray to hold them in my mind awhile. May they become my memories, and the form of my knowledge and faith.

Madhu is chanting *japa* downstairs. I've asked him not to do that but to chant in his house or outside, but somehow he doesn't listen. His sound vibration is loud enough that it distracts me from my reading and writing. I *try* to make it blend in with what I'm doing "but I find I simply have to accept the intrusion. I just wrote a Post-it: "A discipline for Madhu: Please chant your rounds . . . " and floated it into the out-basket. Let me now take one more look at the purport.

Srila Prabhupada has taken it from his *Krishna* book: "The appearance of Krishna is the answer to all imaginative iconography of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." Lord Brahma's knowledge is *vijnana*, transcendental experience. If we receive it submissively, we get something more than speculation; we get the experience of Lord Brahma, the truth. Lord Krishna has a form, a hue, a flute.

With my window half open, I can hear the cows and oxen tearing grass with their teeth, a bee buzzing.

Krishna's appearance establishes God's real form. Lord Brahma witnessed and recorded it.

"But Lord Brahma has four heads," someone says. "How can we accept his testimony?"

When Lord Krishna appears, He takes different names "Krishna, Syamasundara, Giridhari, Nandanandana, Vasudeva, Devakinandana" all according to His activities. Here is the part where Srila Prabhupada addresses the idea that *Krishna-lila* is mythology: "Even big academic scholars, not considering the endeavors of the *acaryas* who have recommended devotional service in many elaborate commentaries and notes, think that Krishna is fictitious. This is due to a lack of transcendental knowledge and a failure to awaken Krishna consciousness. One should have the common sense to ask why, if Krishna or Rama were fictitious, stalwart scholars like Sridhara Svami, Rupa Gosvami, Sanatana Gosvami, Bhira-raghava, Vijayadhva, Vallabhacharya and many other recognized *acaryas* would have spent so much time to write about Krishna in notes and commentaries on *Srimad-Bhagavatam*." (*Bhag.* 10.2.35, purport)

* * *

3:38 p.m.

Choose the words. Or let them choose you. Butterfly bush, carnation, thyme, sweet marjoram, cotton lavender "yellow pom-pom. I know the carnation because devotees often use carnations in garlands, but I've never thought much about the plant on which the flowers grow. Thyme has delicate little stems and leaves and tiny blossoms. The bay tree is a nice waxy green with simple, oblong leaves. These are the plants closest to the bench. Sunlight cuts a path through yonder low hill where the hill is divided by borders of hedges. A farm machine running unseen somewhere. I also hear children's voices. Odd how crotchety I've become as a seeker of silence. I notice all sound. The wind in the leaves is pleasing.

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, crunch-crunching on the gravel path, then up a step and onto the planks. They have a bouncing sound as my boot heels strike them. The sound of the *maha-mantra* coming out of me. Once in a while I hear that too. A big fly or bee (sound alike) speeds by.

I was reading a book on the human shadow that a Godbrother recommended. It's by Robert Bly. He encourages people to work with the hidden, darker parts of themselves. I couldn't understand much. He says to neglect one's shadow is to put ourselves in peril, but I can't follow so many paths. I'll just have to trust that trodding the *bhakti-marga* will include work on my shadow if that's something I need to do. The finished product will

be me qualified to enter the spiritual world. If I'm unfinished or undeveloped in some way, it doesn't make much difference if it doesn't block me from attaining *Krishna-prema*. Work on the mind has limited value. We will be leaving the material mind behind anyway. Of course, unfinished karma is something else. But if we become a complete person yet lack devotion to Krishna, our development is like husking the paddy after the rice has been removed.

* * *

Robert Bly Intrudes Into My Story

Haladhara cannot understand the human shadow. Is a Hare Krishna devotee doomed? No, I mean you. Who? Me or Haladhara? The gentle reader?

Mr. Free-write and Mr. Pain "they think moving scenes around will do something. They criticize India's holy men: "What are they doing to help the poor?" Let the poor come and chant Hare Krishna. We have nothing else to give.

"Creepy, otherworldly types," said a poet, and I wondered if he was referring to me. Am I allowing my shadow to come out? The darkness?

Boy, this is my . . . my,

my. It was better this morning when Hal was so blithely in New Delhi. He escaped. Did he go to Vrndavana? It was hard to decide, yet he had to. He said he had already been there many times, but he knew he couldn't just stand there on a Delhi street in his white body. As soon as he stepped past the protesters, the taxi *wallas* began to hover like vultures, and the dogs, children, and beggars closed in. He had an hour at most. He could bluff them all by walking away, as if he were going to the airlines office or on some other touristy errand, but a Hare Krishna is not exactly a tourist. "Hare Rama! Hare Rama!" they called out after him, and someone beeped his horn.

He decided to think of God. Then he said, "The time isn't right for me to go to Vrndavana."

Then? He escaped into fantasy. I told you, he was a man with hair on his chest. His shadow was full of sexual things. That's why it was so well hidden. He was trying to develop in other ways. He was . . .

he was trying his best

to become a Krishna conscious

person hear

Krishna words

think of heaven and hell

and not everything between.

O Krishna, please help us all. Don't forget us. But we know that safety isn't always good for us "at least too much safety. If we actually sit down to figure it all out, we'll realize there's no better place to go. We will not find ourselves by leaving home and followers. Hal wanted to know who he was, was he guru or *ruru*? Warmth spread throughout the room.

He didn't search for himself by breaking the four rules, not Hal. Like all Hare Krishna men, he knew he was not the author of the *Vedanta* but the servant of its injunctions. He thought of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Although he sometimes found it boring "the prayers

that go on and on in technical verse "he was perturbed by Robert Bly's entrance, as if Bly were a guru in this story with his Jungian humanism and the stress on the shadow. Bly was intruding into his simplicity.

Hal pushed his way into a second-class railway car. He did well to get out of India and into one of Srila Prabhupada's books. Hal was a preacher, and should spend his time telling people about Krishna. That's how he should change his life "figure out who he is as a preacher, despite pain, despite loss, despite everything. He should discover what Krishna wants him to do.

* * *

The End of Myths?

Oh, there's a myth that Patrick slew a giant and that a beanstalk grew from that. They attribute more power to him than he actually had. In Krishna's case, His power is all true, all His. From the *Vedas* came all books. With fleeing *ksatriyas*, things got both spread and confused and lost.

It's a myth that I'm a caring, wise guru. I'm the Wizard of Oz, hiding behind a big machine "just a little guy.

Did you know the Hare Krishnas were mythical booksellers in the 1970s? There's a banshee that makes an eerie sound whenever death approaches.

Myth miss

lisps.

The myth of Stephen the poet
and all that.

I told you we have run out of steam, sure enough. Go back to mixing the world of self-myth with the otherworld of scripture "the mix to find truth. Do it on seven hills, in seven boots, and remember all those years you wasted to drive home truths that weren't true. Grasp at straws. What else can be done? rain beating on the windowpane, but I don't think I should worry about that.

July 28, 12:03 a.m.

"O Lord, Your transcendental name and form are not ascertained by those who merely speculate on the path of imagination. Your name, form and attributes can be ascertained only through devotional service." (*Bhag.* 10.2.36)

I'm thinking of stopping the Haladhara story and the attempt to write myths. They're bound to stop sooner or later. But I'll never stop reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. I will probably also not stop reading occasional books on psychology, mindfulness, or poetry, or considering for a while the concepts of the shadow, woundedness, or inner awareness. I always reach a point where I find such things foreign and intrusive, but I always seem to go back to such books. In the meantime, I also continue to try to submit myself to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and the other books Srila Prabhupada wrote, as well as the Hare Krishna mantra. They are the constant in every season of my life.

Sometimes I approach the *sastra* almost with a chip on my shoulder, sarcastic and ready to challenge. I am aware that there's a residue of skepticism within me, the weight

of all skeptical minds. The skeptical mind doesn't accept the *Bhagavatam*, although the rest of me is quite prepared to do so. Here Srila Prabhupada plainly states that Krishna can only be known through devotional service (see verses *atah Sri Krishna namadi* and *bhakti-mam abhijanati* quoted in his purport).

Earnest and faithful. The steady factor in our lives. Speak in favor of it. record it for the lean days ahead. If God says He won't reveal Himself until we surrender to Him, accept His logic. Why should He open Himself to inspection to those without love?

I find it appealing that God is absolute and that His name is identical with His form, but it's no surprise that impersonalists and other nondevotees won't accept that. Prabhupada said, "Try chanting 'mango, mango, mango.'" Actually there is one Latin American band that does that "is it Machito? It sounds clever for a few bars, but you couldn't make a religion out of it. "But the devotee who knows that there is no difference between the name and the form of the Lord chants Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare, and realizes that he is always in Krishna's company."

Pure devotees absorbed in Krishna consciousness are not really in the material world. They are liberated even while in this material body (*iha yasya harer dasya*). I say I'm not at that stage, but getting there is my goal. Sometimes it may seem that other devotees are also missing the point. That's because people are always so busy. Anyway, maybe they are not missing the point. I only know that I forget it.

I'm writing this, yet desiring to look at some of the letters that came in. As soon as I get a *little* surge of faith in my own Krishna consciousness, I want to give it out in letters. Confidence in the Absolute. Be able to speak it. Strengthen them. Work for Krishna. Be an instrument. I have done it, although sometimes unthinkingly.

Krishna appears in the world to give a chance to both the devotees and the nondevotees to realize the ultimate goal. Srila Prabhupada says when the Lord lifts Govardhana Hill, the devotees appreciate His inconceivable strength, but the nondevotees, even if they see His strength directly, regard His activities as fictitious. The Lord has many names to describe His wonderful activities. "These are all transcendental names that only devotees appreciate and nondevotees cannot."

"Srila Rupa Gosvami has therefore said that by affection and love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, devotees can express their minds to him with their words. Others, however, cannot do this." I pray to be able to use my words to express Krishna consciousness. I want to be counted among the faithful and loving devotees.

This weekend many devotees are going to the ratha-yatra in London. Devotees from Ireland are also going, but of course, I'll be staying here. Let me take this as an opportunity to celebrate my own festival of chanting and hearing. All I need is Krishna.

* * *

4:30 a.m.

All we need is Krishna. Let me see Krishna in the splashing of paint. I'm going to release my shadow and see Krishna there. All I need is Krishna. May Krishna be present in my words.

Krishna, give us poems that

have no homes like swallows
in a barn and me
the best man
at their wedding.

* * *

You mean Radha and Krishna's?
I mean let me be wed
to the holy name, no
one will see me nodding my
head happy and
dancing.

He thought he could be a devotee "get away with it. Then he reconsidered. If Krishna is known only to His pure devotees "the others thinking Him fictitious "then he had better find Him as soon as possible. Be strict. When He sees a tree starved, a pure devotee may think it is a resident of Vrndavana suffering separation from Kana. He may inject his emotions into nature and feel he has been neglected by Krishna, then ask Him to reveal Himself.

Be personal. Be personal. See your Lord everywhere.

He learned on a Tuesday morning that he did not need to be angry, that anger did not need to build up in him. He learned that it was better to be grateful for breath and *bhajana*. He also learned that any words that come are likely to be of help. He learned that by reading his master's exegesis on Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, where his master assured him once again that Krishna was the inconceivable person and that we are made in His image. After accepting Syamasundara as He chooses to reveal Himself, there is little else we must do.

Why is he a devotee? He can't really say always. He met a pure devotee and came under his wing. That's all. Of course, he knows he has to explain and stand up for his position, but he has to admit to himself that his becoming a devotee was simply a pure devotee's gift to him. Causeless. Not that he has received it placidly, with no desire to become what he is learning to become. He likes Krishna, and can find no reason to live in any other way but for His pleasure. Over the years, his loyalty and faith have grown, and he has received things that were important to him: the ability to live clean, free of sex desire, the opportunity to discover self-honesty and real humility, and to be able to write for God. He has also been given the opportunity to live with people who are not focused on money and power but love of God. A great gift.

Krishna, Krishna. Now death must be faced and crossed over. Yes, even death has a supreme meaning and challenge. As Krishna desires. He wants to be carried on the waves of the holy name's mercy, despite the dust and poverty and misuse of his life. He wants to hear Hare Krishna echoing in the rafters. This is the way a man grows in spiritual stature "by devotion and penance.

"Forgive me," he said. "I wish to be a teacher, but need to take it easy and enjoy the beauty of art and creative expression." He said this on the eve of St. Francis's birthday

while pilgrims walked in a candlelight procession while he and another devotee of Syama watched.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

Quiet morning. From a distance, I can hear the creek if I stop and listen. Distant birds, distant sheep bleating too. My own breath "let it sigh. They say in Taoism that the sign of a spiritually advanced person is that he has little effect on the world. They mean that he is no longer seeking power. He goes for a walk with an old poet friend among walnut trees.

* * *

5:40 a.m.

We are moving along with Krishna conscious intent. He said *andante* is for us old folks, fools, who can't move as fast as we used to. We risk our lives going out and through Heathrow or in the street "old people good targets for muggers, he said.

Krishna conscious always. I know a person who keeps up mental chanting especially during dead times, like when he's driving. He chants the Gopala-mantra. Chant when you look down the road or into a mirror. Clouds always seem to rest on hills. "You ought to be ashamed," someone told me, but I'm not. I refuse to feel shame for that particular reason. rather, I'll be with Krishna and rest in Him. *He* knows I try my best and want only now to hear of His activities.

Keep awake if you can and I'll give you a treat.

"You never gave me a present before, why give me one now?"

Because I want to "no strings attached. You could say I want to make up for what I never gave you.

The moment is with us.

He is like that "always like a bee returning to the flower of Krishna consciousness. He walked up suddenly to get a closer look at a seven-foot foxglove. He thought it was amazing. A woman nearby came out to reprove him, telling him he shouldn't come out so early, but no one could stop him from seeing a part of the world from wherever he was and remembering Krishna there.

Eyes closing, the old man. He reminds me of Mukhara or Jatila, neither of who could see well even in daylight. They were always going home to rest. Krishna smiled, ever-youthful, never dissatisfied "the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We follow Him.

* * *

8:36 a.m.

Playing quiet and a little neglected as M. and others prepare to leave for a four-day festival in London. When he's gone, I'll celebrate the longer silence and emptiness in the house by using the art room. The business of coming and going prevents me somehow. But for now, I feel the contrast between the hurried preparations and my own quiet routine. Perhaps I try to show them the contrast too. Is it to see if they can guess

themselves that if they were super-caring and interested in me, they wouldn't go off? After all, if someone is already at the center of vital, blissful service, what could possibly lead them away? It would be like leaving Vrndavana, leaving without being sent on a personal errand. And if you did go off, would you at least be thinking what to bring back as a gift?

The sheep are bunched into a tight pack and moving over a distant hill, with the herder behind them and his two black dogs running to the left and right of the flock, barking, probably nipping at their heels to keep them in their ranks. The sheep protest by bleating but otherwise move along as desired. The shepherd will soon be back next life, but as one of them.

I will go off to . . . I can't say "to that great party they are having with Krishna in the spiritual sky." I may have to come back too, and inherit something. A devotee told me that he's been practicing reciting a mental mantra in addition to Hare Krishna mantra on beads. He chose one of the *gayatri-mantras*. I thought of it today. Maybe I could pray like that? I doubt it. I'm doing enough mechanical prayer already, and that's what mental mantras would soon become for me. I don't know, because I won't try. I am more focused right now on the first signs of a twinge. A sailor-technician has reported it to our first officer, and they are studying and discussing the situation. They have sent the preliminary order down to the gunnery department to ready one red Esgic missile. It's likely, I would say. Just a matter of time, minutes even.

One headache sufferer was preaching to the rest of us on the Internet journal how she's learned to take control of her life. She's a positive thinker. She'll do something like take her children out to the beach or go see her mother, and thus distract herself from her pain. She's against drugs, knows in her heart that painkillers aren't good for her body.

I appreciate her ability to just do something else when a headache comes. I don't think I could. The headache demands attention, extra rest, and doesn't really allow me to do much. All power to this woman who can take her kids to her mother's. But telling us to stop meds is a bit presumptuous.

"Standby gunnery. Do you have Esgic Plus and drinking water in the firing position?"

"Yes, sir. Hare Krishna."

"Very good. Thank you for chanting the holy name. It makes it all a bit transcendental."

"Yes, sir. Hare Krishna. Should we ready the bedroom for an attempt at relaxing *before* firing the med "in an attempt to avoid using the med? Hare Krishna?"

"Yes. Hare Krishna. Do so. Thank you."

The first officer then turned to his aides and said, "I doubt that resting will do much, but we may have to use that bedroom anyway, even after we take the pill."

* * *

10:05 a.m.

Sitting in a window alcove outdoors. Water dripping from the leaves, but it's not raining just now, although in Ireland it could rain again at any moment. Someone wrote me from America that he took a nature walk and noticed that summer is over. The flowers and bushes seem tired. They've already delivered their seeds. It made him feel

sad, reflecting on the temporary nature of this world. *Sastra* reminds us that it's so brief! Philosophies and meditators which acknowledge this but don't give an eternal solution are useless. Srila Prabhupada said that everyone would *like* an eternity of bliss and knowledge if it existed, but somehow when they are presented with the truth, not all of them accept it.

Why *not* believe it? We have *Bhagavad-gita* and other books which assure us that the spiritual world exists. What is their proof that it *doesn't* exist? No real evidence. Only a predilection to suffer from the three diseases Prabhupada mentions in his purport to Bg. 4.11: attachment to the material conception, fear of a personal existence, and anger at religious speculation of all sorts. Let us cure ourselves of these diseases by associating with pure devotees.

A few tiny midges out here. If more come, I'll retreat. And they will come. Marigolds, hello! Bay tree, you have a good dose of water on your leaves. This garden never lacks irrigation. The tall trees in the yard are stately. I have to crane my neck to see their full height. I am fortunate to have such tall ones growing here, including the sycamore that M. deformed on the other side of our fence.

As I write, M. is making an infernal noise with an electric power tool, planing the front gate, which swells whenever it rains. The man who prints our BAF editions in America also reads them. Guru-seva told me that. He came to Gita-nagari to look around. She showed him the cabin. I have never met him, but from reading the books he asked her about my headaches, and "Who is this M.?" The low mist, palpable, obscures the hills. This is a gentle, quiet neighborhood, if you can shut out from your consciousness what's going on with the livestock.

* * *

"Even while engaged in various activities, devotees whose minds are completely absorbed at Your lotus feet, and who constantly hear, chant, contemplate and cause others to remember Your transcendental names and forms, are always in the transcendental platform, and thus they can understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag.* 10.2.37) A nectar *Sloka*. It describes the actual practice of *bhakti-yoga*. While busy in the world, the devotees think of Krishna. We're in this material existence due to a mistake on our parts (like Maharaja Bharata), but all is not lost. "*Bhagavad-gita* (9.14) therefore recommends that one always engage at least in chanting the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* . . . The most important process is hearing (*Sravanam*) from the guru and *sadhu* and *sastra* . . ."

"By fully concentrating on distributing books for Krishna, one is fully absorbed in Krishna. This is *samadhi*." (*Bhag.* 10.2.37, purport)

* * *

11:28 a.m.

Places to which I have noticed my attention going (seems good to repeatedly makes lists of this):

1. A *sannyasi* Godbrother who became an Indian citizen, giving up his U.S. citizenship. His behavior says something to me, makes me ask what I'm doing. Usually I feel good for him, but good about myself too.
2. Writing the way I do.
3. Art room. I'm feeling a growing desire to go there and work.
4. My little peeves with M. They don't amount to much, but they do make me less dependent on having him to validate my feelings all the time.
5. Headaches. Talking about them with whomever will listen.
6. This volume of EJW and the turn it made at midpoint (ten days). Okay, I accept it.
7. Writing to the music in my head.
8. Our Krishna conscious philosophy as good and right, and not boring or "dogmatic." I ought to stand up for it. Center on it.
9. New arrival: Could I pray a short prayer or mantra during the day? Not likely.
10. repeat: Pain and living with pain.

* * *

Happy Idea #34

Bhaktivinoda Thakura said "Difficulties
I meet while serving Krishna,
I'll consider the greatest happiness."

* * *

St. Francis of Assisi said, "Perfect joy
is to be driven away from
the monastery door on a rainy day."

* * *

I told you what Srimati
Radharani said.
Devotees asked Srila Prabhupada what
would make him happy.
He said, "If you love Krishna."
The preacher is unhappy seeing
the unhappiness of others.

* * *

Writing down these sayings,
and publishing them
like in my dream "
Krishna gives ability to man.

* * *

Happy Idea #35
Happy ideas
that could never happen:
all ISKCON members
become pure devotees by 1999 and
convert the whole world to
Krishna consciousness by the year 2000.

* * *

But there are facts:
the spiritual world where
all beings live in eternity bliss and knowledge.

* * *

Happy Idea #36
The cartoonist of "Peanuts"
coined many happy sayings like
"Happiness is a warm puppy."
And then there were parodies:
"Happiness is getting a new money-
making idea while on the toilet passing stool."
I have been quoting excellent
sayings from *sastras*.
But there are little epiphanies
and reliefs in striving for
Krishna consciousness.
I don't know if they qualify as
"happiness."

* * *

When the headache comes down,
the enduring, the waiting "seeing the
bright grass growing on the front lawn
and knowing all your work can be taken
away from you by a higher power.
How long is this going to take?
Is this a foreshadowing of death?

* * *

Cheering up a friend,
cheering up myself.
The truth.

* * *

12:25 p.m.

Looked at the first-aid book. I'll keep looking at it a little at a time. It's overwhelming "electric shock, heart attack. Unless the victim gets to an emergency room within a few minutes, he or she will probably die. Imagine me doing first-aid on Madhu or someone else. Imagine having to cut off a woman's bra to reach her chest or put my mouth on someone else's mouth to resuscitate them. I would have to act quickly. The worst thing a rescuer can do is nothing.

Then I (while crossing my fingers) turned to read an EJW manuscript, where there are no emergencies. rather, it tells of a world of trying to read *The Nectar of Devotion* and to write honest and interesting truths. I'm so much into a writer's life that other interests pale by comparison.

Anyway, how's that colossus dark shadow doing? Is he angry? Am I trying to stuff him into a bag or keep him wrapped around a movie spool? Does he pop up in other parts of my psychic town and wreak havoc?

* * *

4:15 p.m.

"O Lord, we are fortunate because the heavy burden of the demons upon this earth is immediately removed by Your appearance. Indeed, we are certainly fortunate, for we shall be able to see upon this earth and in the heavenly planets the marks of lotus, conch shell, club and disc that adorn Your lotus feet." (*Bhag.* 1.2.38)

Real devotees go mad with ecstasy upon seeing Krishna's footprints in the earth. As we have already read, the nondevotees consider Krishna mythological. They wouldn't accept that a mythological being could have footprints, or even feet. The mention of footprints would only give them more reason to assume that Krishna is mundane. Such reasoning leaves them bereft of worshipping the Lord's feet.

"The marks [on Krishna's feet] are visible to devotees who receive the causeless mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So the demigods were pleased on at least two accounts: The Lord's appearance would vanquish demons, and by His presence He would sprinkle the earth with His worshipable foot impressions wherever He walked." I've read elsewhere that only in Vrndavana does Krishna go barefoot, not in Dvaraka or elsewhere.

The *devas*: "Your appearance or birth in this world has no other cause than Your pleasure potency." (*Bhag.* 10.2.39) This is a major point. Although Lord Krishna says He comes to kill demons and rescue devotees, and to uplift religion in its time of decline, He really doesn't have to come personally to do those things. He is in no way forced to come here, as we are. rather, He is free to choose whether to come or not. "It is only for His pleasure that He comes, although He does not need to come."

If we take shelter of Lord Krishna's lotus feet, we will become fearless and thus liberated. We should (yes, should) give up the idea that we can enjoy freedom without Krishna. It is that one idea that has led us into material bondage. When we forget Krishna, we are subject to misery.

* * *

4:49 p.m.

In a few minutes M. and I will read aloud from Rupa Gosvami's *Sri Hamsaduta*. We have already read part of it. We want to make a tape to which I can listen while I do my *puja*. Somehow that earlier reading seemed external to me. Our voices didn't do justice to the tender feelings the poetry expresses. It just means we're not eligible, I guess. We'll be starting cold again. Anyway, at least it will be recorded and I can work on my eligibility by continuing to listen to it "the poetic madness of Lalita instructing the swan how to fly to Krishna, and what to think and see on its way. It's very intense what Rupa Gosvami has written. How can I fill my voice with emotion that's up to the challenge? Just read it then, and let it speak for itself.

* * *

5:58 p.m.

Hare Krishna World arrived. As usual, I saw the customary, almost superficial stories meant to improve our public relations. Then I read that a devotee who has been gone from ISKCON for years is attacking the BBT in court and claiming that all the money from years of book distribution should go to him. It aroused my loyalty toward ISKCON. It also made me feel more kindly toward the events described in the pictures and articles. They are of real people practicing Krishna consciousness, trying to spread this movement on Srila Prabhupada's behalf.

Now in the garden. Pebbles and breezes. Get ready to be alone for a long weekend. Clear away the mail while M. is gone, and let me strain each day to reach my writing quota. I hope I will stay pain-free, but there's no guarantee of that. It's only Tuesday, and I have already used up two Esgics and one Naratriptan so far. It seems likely I'll be caught over the weekend with no resort to medication. Anyway, whatever happens, let me not regard the pain as lost time. Krishna wants me to experience this for some reason. Of course, I know the reason "to help me get out of the material world.

Swami, keep punching
away, serving your master.
All reason is right
and may you be on top for the
internal festival awaiting you
at the end.

A dead spotted moth on the ground. Bunches of clouds always on the move. I don't know the people around here, and don't have to live like them. I don't. I'm just a Hare Krishna devotee living sheltered in a world of private longings. May the Supreme Lord direct me as He thinks best. We should live for His pleasure, but we have limits.

Parsley, lemon balm, nasturtium. What about the myths? Oh, didn't you hear? They turned into "All I need is Krishna."

* * *

6:28 p.m.

A russian devotee wrote an article asserting that *Entering a Life of Prayer* and some of my other books are teaching *raga-bhakti*. She said she will describe the inner meaning of my words, even if I didn't make them clear. Thus she will save russia from downfall. She wrote to ask me for my blessings.

Far-off cries. Once upon a time, an elf and a giant met and said . . .

Once Lord Krishna lifted Govardhana Hill. He held it as if it were a giant umbrella, and invited all the Vrajavasis to step under and take shelter from Indra's storm.

Once . . . twice . . . the *lilas* keep appearing in different worlds.

Evaporating.

Insinuation.

"I know better than you did."

"I couldn't speak to you because you couldn't understand me."

Hare Krishna chant.

EW in dungarees. He said, "Pilot me home." I'm skipping over words and picking the best ones to render at a Krishna conscious picnic of elder stalwarts. Bless old men, living and dying, in ISKCON. And new waves too. But the old will die and will probably be reborn in this movement "likely according to the laws of karma. She asked, "Wouldn't you want to come back in another life to rescue me? Probably you wouldn't. But if you did, it would sure be noble of you." Do they think I'm a *bodhisattva* type? If I could go back to Godhead, I would, although it's obviously not up to me.

July 29, Midnight

"O supreme controller . . . Now please protect us again by Your mercy by diminishing the disturbances in this world." (*Bhag.* 10.2.40) We cannot order the Supreme Personality of Godhead. "We can simply offer Him our obeisances, as advised in *Bhagavad-gita* (*man mana bhava mad bhakta*) . . . and pray to Him for annihilation of dangers."

By Krishna's grace, we each have some peace and facility, even though the world is trying to defy Krishna's orders. Life in this world is dangerous. Here the devotees are praying to the Lord in His appearance as Devaki's son. I also think of Lord Caitanya, who came more recently. He asked us to chant the holy name. I would like to respond more to His order, and to feel more my eternal servitorship at Krishna's feet, His divine protection.

I'm up to "The Birth of Lord Krishna" in my reading. In one sense, I'd like to save this chapter for Janmastami and read it all in one sitting, but it's not likely I'll be up for that. I might have a headache on that day. In any case, my standard is three shots a day of twenty minutes each. So let me gradually approach this chapter and fill myself up.

One reason I like to read it all on Janmastami is that the *Bhagavatam* describes the night that Krishna appeared, what the weather was like, and how auspicious it all is. It's a good meditation. "Thus when the birthless Lord Visnu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was about to appear, the saints and *brahmanas*, who had always been

disturbed by demons like Kamsa and his men, felt peace within the core of their hearts . . . " (*Bhag.* 1.3.5)

I asked Prabhupada dasa in Dublin to research Meister Eckhart on the theme of Christ being born within us. I seem to recall Eckhart saying that the historical birth of Christ, as wonderful as it is for everyone, doesn't mean anything unless one "gives birth" to Christ within himself. I wanted to say something like that in my Janmastami lecture. There are many favorite sections on which I could speak and I don't really need a new angle, but this suddenly feels essential to me.

However, can I make it more of it than a clever viewpoint? How *can* Krishna be born in us? If I spring it on the devotees that morning, they'd have to first have some time to think about what it means to them. Isn't He already born in us? We say He is, but we don't think about it so personally. "Please appear in me" "who dares to ask?"

Here we read that Krishna appeared out of His own sweet pleasure, so what's the point in *asking* Him to come? Because He said in *Bhagavad-gita* that He wants us to think of Him. It all seems to dawn slowly in me, yet my time is short. We usually think a woman has to give birth before she's forty. What are my chances of a late fructification? Of course, many good things in this world takes years to bear fruit.

I am waiting for the fruit of Krishna consciousness to appear in me, more than it has so far. I don't want to peter out with less and less Krishna consciousness just because I'm getting old. I want my Krishna consciousness to flourish. A devotee should become more overcome by auspiciousness the older he or she gets. Then the devotee should go to Krishna, because there's no other choice left.

I used to try to visualize Krishna's appearance, what it means to have peace and prosperity in all directions, all those auspicious stars in the sky, everyone's mind restful and absorbed in the spiritual energy, directly or indirectly. For this to happen, many things have to change, and miraculously they do. Whether we know it or not, Krishna *is* about to appear. (But be careful of imagining that He's appearing *only* in you "as if you are some messiah, the only one carrying Krishna.) He appears before everyone on Janmastami. We all have access to His mercy.

The *brahmanas* had not been able to light sankirtana-yajna. "But just on the point of Krishna's appearance, automatically their minds became full of joy because they hear loud vibrations in the sky . . . " Although it's Kali-yuga and people are disturbed, suddenly the time is right and we are all peaceful. This is Janmastami, Krishna's appearance. Pray for it; prepare for it.

* * *

I dreamt I was Prabhupada's permanent personal servant. I had certain duties, but Srutakirti was actually in charge of the service. I was responsible for duties when Prabhupada went to the temple. At one point in the dream, I was with Prabhupada in a darkened theater. I asked him, "Are you all right? It's cold in here." He said, "Oh, that's all right," Then he looked down at his feet; he was wearing flip-flops. He asked, "Do you think they look nice?" I thought it was incredible the way he was asking me such a personal and sweet question. I told him that his flip-flops looked nice, but that when I wear flip-flops, they sometimes cut my feet. Then he showed me where his shoes were

also cutting his feet and how they were hurting him. I realized that Prabhupada was in his seventies and that I was only sixty. When I got to be his age, I knew I would suffer more physical pain than what I experience now.

This was an unusually good dream, so intense and loving.

* * *

4:31 a.m.

Who are you? I'm a devotee who dreamt I was with my spiritual master, a fulfillment of a wish.

I was once a choir boy in knickers. But that was over thirty years ago, when I was melancholy and allowed love and other feelings to go through me.

He wrote to me that ISKCON in his country was crazy, although he was aware it was sane elsewhere and he loved it. He said people would laugh if they heard some of the things that have been said on the *vyasasana*. I am reporting this just so you know.

Yeah, I know. We should be sympathetic about other devotees' suffering "and their material desires. Still, a guru disciplines his *celas*. The *celas*, for their part, voluntarily submit themselves. But people nowadays are so proud that they don't accept authority. (I heard Srila Prabhupada say that.)

What else? More of the same. She said the community wants her to be a *pujari* and a baby-sitter, but she's got a deep yen to be out in the world and follow a professional career. "Maybe my mission is to appear there as a devotee."

What did you say to her?

I sympathized.

Another person wrote that he has multiple diseases, his spouse died, and there are only several gurus left in this movement. Wants me to help him if I can.

Can I? Will I?

Yes, if I can. They are willing to tune in to what I say, but I can only take it from the same repository we all know.

Krishna, Krishna.

Drum roll, please. Make your heart a suitable place for Krishna to appear.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

If I'm really serious about the mix, then it's inevitable that the letters people write me will also appear in EJW, although in a disguised form. Life and writing are not exactly the same thing, but they do mix together.

This morning it was raining lightly when I started out on my walk, but then the rain became heavier. Puddles full of circles from the raindrops. The creek was loud, but I paid it almost no attention as I walked by. I couldn't see far, not even into my own thoughts.

Long grass wet. It is compared to the long hair of *yogis* and *brahmanas*. When the grass overgrows the paths, it's like the paths that are overgrown during *caturmasya* when the sages cannot go out.

* * *

5:40 a.m.

I misunderstood. I thought a nudist child . . . I was affected. I will write and tell him my impressions of Cassian. They had several chapters on nocturnal emission, which they consider a sin. I think that urge dies down when you get older.

Now I'm going to parade the mixture. The lead in the parade is a drum-majorette *risqué* risk. She will be followed by a brown tank "modern lines far advanced since World War II, but still, an armored tractor. Then comes a missile on a flatbed truck. That's so we can see that this country has nuclear power. Then girls bearing flowers.

What happened to Mr. Grimes and Henry Adams? Here comes the snowball effect, and the Napoleon and Spumoni and Henry of Berry. I stole and borrowed from the library of memory the card in the pouch which said, "return in two weeks so others can read this delicious time-waster . . . "

Krishna is the summit of truth, and *Bhagavad-gita* teaches us to turn to Him. I want to be there with Him just as it runs out, my finale. God said, "You write your twenty pages, boy." Or is that the sound of your own ego? God talks sweet. He doesn't order us to be Protestants or Catholics, but cloaks His original form in many incarnations and ideas so that we may choose according to our natures and at least get started on a path leading toward *bhakti*.

Pull the ropes! The ratha cart is ready, and the police want us to get this show on the road. Talking into his portable radio, one cop says, "They're under way." The cops don't know "the devotees don't either "how often the cart will stop and start. Such things are governed by higher laws, such as the *rasa* of Lord Jagannatha with His beloved servants.

* * *

8:30 a.m.

I meet with M. every day after breakfast. We mostly we go over the notes I wrote for him the day before. We are trying to keep me free of the ISKCON arena where controversies are discussed. He mentioned two this morning: (1) a temple presidents' meeting in India, in which a majority voted in favor of reform of the present ISKCON guru system. They want Srila Prabhupada to be the only guru; and (2) the continued personal crisis of HarikeSa Swami. All we know about that comes from a cryptic letter issued by the GBC saying that he has had a collapse, has "mental problems," and is no longer acting as the GBC's chairman.

And I think about myself "maybe I am too easy on myself in my decision to write this "mix" and to consider it okay. Maybe a sterner judgment will have to come sooner or later. I advocate improvisation, which seems to imply that whatever occurs to me is acceptable for publication. I mean, I say what I think.

Keep the boat moving under that wind, because these are the late-morning hours when headaches usually come. Today's strategy is to go for the Imigram. I will save the Esgic for an emergency. It would be good to know that I can use Imigram effectively. How many before rebounds occur? How do I know when I have a rebound headache

rather than a regular migraine? Who can say? Finally, I have to take charge of my own healthcare program.

I hereby declare that this is a good time to open the *Bhagavatam*.

* * *

The demigods and *munis* showered flowers. A very mild thunder came from the clouds, rumbling like ocean waves. "Then the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Visnu, who is situated in the core of everyone's heart, appeared from the heart of Devaki in the dense darkness of night, like the full moon rising on the eastern horizon, because Devaki was of the same category as Sri Krishna." (*Bhag.* 10.3.7 - 8) Lord Krishna and His entourage are of the same spiritual potency.

Therefore, pray not to fall down, not to be dishonored. Actively stay out of trouble. Now it's raining and the wind's blowing and the whole sky is gray here in rathdangan. M. goes on playing his melodeon regardless.

Some are surprised (doubtful) to hear that the Supreme Personality of Godhead can take birth like an ordinary child, but the Lord's birth is never ordinary. To think of Krishna as ordinary is asuric.

Vasudeva then saw the newborn child.

The front door is half open, banging in the wind. I will go down and shut it firmly now, but it would be good if I could just focus on this one description in the *Bhagavatam* "that Lord Krishna appeared like the moon on the eastern horizon, that He's not an ordinary child, that He's in everyone's heart. He did appear as a newborn child, yet He bore the symbolic markings of Lord Visnu.

They can never take *Srimad-Bhagavatam* away from us "no political body. We can believe it as it is handed down to us. It's up the individual to be steadfast in his faith.

Vasudeva mentally collected ten thousand cows and distributed them to the *brahmanas*. "If one cannot externally serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one can serve the Lord within one's mind, since the activities of the mind are as good as those of the other senses." (*Bhag.* 10.3.11, purport) I sometimes perform my festivals mentally rather than by attending them. It is nice. It is just as good as the external festival. But internal or external, we actually have to think of Krishna favorably.

Vasudeva was astonished that Krishna would appear in such a dangerous place as Kamsa's prison, but when he recognized Him to be the Personality of Godhead, he became fearless and offered prayers.

* * *

10:15 a.m.

There are so many interesting souls in the Krishna consciousness movement. One man chants all the time and likes to work alone. I read his letter and felt inspired by him. Not that I can do what he's doing, but I liked to hear of such a person. Then I saw the cows outside my window, chewing grass, steadfast. It makes me think the world will go on no matter what happens in politics and the ISKCON reform movement, or in the big, asuric, nondevotee world. Life does go on.

Of course, that also means that cruelty will continue. Still, there will always be pockets of people who pray as constantly as they can "who care about that "and who try to live as simply and steadfastly as the cows.

The man who chants all the time confessed that he secretly wants to be honored for his chanting. A young girl sent me an effusive love poem to Krishna. At least she didn't write it to a rock star. We each ask ourselves when we reach out, "How tested and true is my devotion?" Sometimes we find the answers in ourselves, sometimes in the outreach.

I've now answered most of my mail and I feel satisfied. My pulse still running along. Hare Krishna.

My secret "I mean, the secret I have yet to learn "may be to write joyfully but without attachment to the results. I may desire to use my writing as preaching, but I can't even be attached to that. Don't look for reputation but devotion to Krishna. real satisfaction is a simple thing and doesn't come from fame. It comes from knowing that we are pleasing Krishna.

At the same time, we seem to want to be respected. And we have other desires. I want to be left alone, for example. These things will never be the source of our satisfaction because they cannot be permanent. We can't expect to always have what we want. We want health, longevity, not to go hungry, decent housing. If we got everything we wanted, we would be satisfied to remain in the material world. We need some impetus to get beyond temporality. We need something to drive our spiritual aspiration.

The motorcycle race is about to begin. He chants Hare Krishna even when people talk to him. He has a reputation for being odd. Ah, but if someone can relish the holy name . .

The free-write man drives the bungalow bar truck slowly through the summer neighborhood and rings the bell. Kids come out and he stops the truck. More kids gather. He is selling well, reaching into the open back door of his refrigerated truck to get the ice cream each child wants, and he makes change on the chrome change-maker at his belt. All the while he chants Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare. He has learned to do that.

This is a story. I would like to be with Krishna when I write, either in the mantras or internally. I find that I want to think of chanting as an individual act. When I chant Hare Krishna, I don't want to be writing, and when I write, I don't really want to be trying to focus my mind on the holy name. But that man on the motorcycle and the other with the ice cream truck, they each remember their guru and stop and pray.

* * *

I am fortunate that the man who always chants writes me such humble letters. He thinks I am an important person in his life. Does he know I chant only eighteen rounds a day and can't pay attention to many of them? Why should he think I'm a special hearer of his cherished desires? I do honor his path and offer words of encouragement, although he and I never meet. Each person who writes to me enters a sacred pact (I was going to say tryst). That is, I honor their viewpoints and pray that we are working to come to an ever deepening understanding of Krishna consciousness together. There are others who may be against their particular approaches. There are also disciples who are against my

own approach. Few of those devotees write me. Anyway, I won't betray anyone's confidence.

Fog coming? Wind, the blessed wind. And silence. In silence I can whisper God's names. I can also read about Krishna. In silence I creep along.

It is hard, of course, to take into our hearts the vision of a newborn child wearing jewels in His hair and holding a scepter, conch, and lotus flower. Why is that? I tell myself not to try to see it only as it has been portrayed in our ISKCON paintings, but to try to open myself to the vision "how it wants to appear in my heart. Yet those paintings helped me so much in the old days. Prabhupada said they were windows to the spiritual world, and I accepted them as such. In the ISKCON painting, the baby was depicted lying beside Devaki while Visnu hovered in the air. The artist made her own decisions about how to paint some of the details, guided by guru and *sastra*. She sometimes asked me things like, "Do you think Visnu should hold His club like this?" I would say what I knew, then head for the kitchen in search of a leftover meal.

I'm trying to be more Krishna-centered. All I need is Krishna. I have His holy names and pastimes. I am expected to share them with the devotees, and thus help others become more Krishna-centered too. Sometimes they say honestly, "Krishna is not so real to me, except in the sense of my life force or a presence, a guide, a protector." Upon hearing that, I decided to discuss the six items of surrender.

O Krishna, I dedicate myself to the peaceful glance upwards toward Your trees in Your backyard, toward Your words. That man who always chants said he read in a Christian book that constant prayer is a gift from God; such gifts should not be repressed. Yes, but we must always practice discretion. Listen always to the music of God within you, to God speaking in your guru's words.

* * *

Let him eat, he's waiting
unless you want to do some
naughty trick on him "
Chinese torture "but let him
take *prasada*.

* * *

I bow down while offering the
food on those stainless steel *talis*
and hope to pray. I want Them
to accept the offering
and save this movement.

* * *

12:04 p.m.
Happy Idea #37
We will all benefit to hear that

there is one happy man.

* * *

"I'm the most happy fella
in the whole Napa Valley."

* * *

And what is it that makes you happy?
Can you be shaken from it?
You're afraid it's not enough?
Then how can you be happy?

* * *

Happy Idea #38
Turn on the radiator. rain
on the roof.

* * *

"But all joys want eternity!
Want deep, profound eternity!"

* * *

From sun up to sunset everything
is lost.

* * *

The world will end.
Souls shuffle off into
Maha-Visnu, then come out again.
Everything is under the control of God.
ViSvam purnam sukhayate:
the whole universe is happy.

* * *

The *maha-bhagavata* sees it.
I just see the tiny opening,
like a pin of light in the dark tunnel.
Overcoming fears, remembering
Krishna at the end is all I hope for.

* * *

Happy Idea #39

The rye grass starts
with a hard, long head and then flowers
into the plumes that give
solace to the soul.

* * *

Just now briefly the
sunlight is out. A rook
is croaking.

* * *

Coming to terms with my doubts
in guru, Krishna and myself,
I'd like to go into
the *Bhagavatam* often, each day, and then
come out fully believing.

* * *

Look at the rye grass and
Remember Dhruva and Narada
or Prabhupada saying the topmost
perfection is "what? Following
guru. Surrendering. Giving up all else.
It's pure devotional service to
the Supreme Person.

* * *

Going in and out like
the sun in Ireland.

* * *

2:32 p.m.

"Myth, myth, myth," intone the atheist armies marching at me with their spears raised high.

No, it's not true. I too can intone: *krsnas to bhagavan svayam andavajananti mam mudha*. I stumble on the Sanskrit, forget a word or two, but believe that Krishna is supreme. He appeared as a child. Vasudeva prayed to Him. Why is that so hard to love?

Vasudeva knew how the events had taken place, and *he* didn't think Krishna was an ordinary child. rather, he knew Him as the source of the *purusa-avatars*. He also knew Him as his son. Why do we struggle so much to accept that God appears in His name? His name is simultaneously one we can easily utter yet different from all material sound. The same is true of the *Bhagavata*. Why are we not *tattva-darSis*, those who have seen the truth about God?

Lord Krishna cannot be perceived by the gross material senses; He's revealed only to those engaged in pure devotional service. Although He is all-pervading, still He cannot be perceived. Although spread everywhere, He doesn't lose His personal existence. Examples make this truth clear. But if He is so great and inconceivable, how can He be born from Devaki? Why not? As the *purusa-avatara*, He can enter within each atom, what to speak of any place within the universe. If He chooses to appear through Devaki, He is free to do so.

That's about all I can read right now. I don't want the examples to start looking too much like academic arguments or theological axioms. I wish I could love all this more, but it's better to stop before I am distracted. Maybe I can repeat what I read later today to help myself deepen my appreciation.

HK Swami's case is serious. It keeps floating into my mind. I don't want to grasp at rumors, but neither do I want to hunt for reliable sources so I can get more details. Whatever is going on, it all sounds like bad news. Even if it's not as bad as I am currently hearing, the news is unsettling enough. His troubles will provide anti-ISKCON opportunists with another field day. I can only speculate on what causes someone in his position to have such problems, but I can't know for sure what's in his mind and heart. Better to keep apart from this and other agitating news. There's no profit in chasing it around. Let me study the *Bhagavatam* instead, and look at the nasturtiums. At least let me render myself harmless. I pray not to become a problem for those who have faith in me.

* * *

3:30 p.m.

Humble flowers never hurt anyone. "Death," he said, and again laid it heavily upon us. I felt annoyed "so much talk about death. He said we avoid and deny death, but we will all face it at some point or other. It is always painful and always ahead for each of us. We are all afraid of it. All right! I just wanted to eat my lunch in peace. Fallible soldiers can't help each other maybe, but this carob cupcake will. O Krishna.

I get headaches. I want a disability pension and someone to understand me, someone to write me prescriptions and to pay for them, someone to say taking the meds to kill the pain is all right. I need a doctor for mind and soul. I need a direct relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I need to uphold Srila Prabhupada's way.

And what is that way?

Different guys say it's this way, over here. "But *no*," others say, "it's over *here*. If You don't follow this path, you're attacking your own spiritual master.

M. (who is this M.?) is getting ready to go to his Wednesday night gig. I may get more mail tomorrow. All hail. O Krishna, please give me clarity in Your service.

* * *

4:35 p.m.

M. is supposed to leave at 5:00 p.m. As soon as he pulls out, I'll go into the art room and paint. I'll put on a Prabhupada *bhajana* tape and feel Krishna consciousness. I have some head fog, but maybe it won't get worse by painting.

I wrote a few sayings on cards to put up in the art room:

"What would I paint if I really let myself feel?"

"What would I paint if I were not trying to impress anyone with the result?"

Krishna consciousness can appear in the state of feeling. I don't have to deliberately make it appear otherwise.

Twenty ways to write a page
when you're a devotee in this life
ending in despair not
ever giving up and when
the time comes crying,
"Yadunandana, I'm Yours."

* * *

6:10 p.m.

Let go for about forty-five minutes. I painted six 20' x 26' pages and chased the fog from my head. It might creep back in, but it's interesting to think I can lure head fog away with things like painting. Maybe that means I identify too much with the invalid mentality and am wasting my life. I'm not saying I do that to a huge degree, but why not that some misidentification could be at work? A syndrome. "I'm sick, I can't work, I can't move or my head will hurt." I'm afraid to admit that, thinking that people will take advantage of me and force me to work in ways I no longer wish. I *do* get headaches frequently, and when they are sharp, there is no way to lure them away. I am not faking the pain. Anyway, today was good.

Despite the chased head fog, I wasn't so satisfied with the results. I found myself going through motions I can't break through, doing simple, childlike faces on top of painted, primitive forms. I wouldn't want to paint otherwise, can't take time or care "just a few bold marks and it's done" so I guess I shouldn't expect so much. The technical aspects of painting over wet paint still baffle me. Aside from that, I felt something more primitive in me that didn't get unleashed. If I could have kept going, it might have happened. The faster I do them, the more surprises I get too. The surprises usually please me.

While painting I listened to Srila Prabhupada singing "Jaya radhe, Jaya Krishna, Jaya Vrndavana," but I didn't add words from that *bhajana* into the artwork, as I sometimes do. I felt it was enough just to hear the *bhajana* while I painted. I focused on trying to be Krishna conscious as I moved my hand to choose the colors.

July 30, Midnight

Vasudeva's prayer is philosophical (as was his speech to Kamsa). rascals consider the body to be soulless, but both body and soul are energies of the Supreme Godhead. The Supreme Lord is known as the Supreme Brahman, and both the body and soul are Brahman. Vasudeva addresses Lord Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the controller of creation, maintenance, and annihilation. Everything works under His energies.

I heard an airplane during the night. I woke and slept and dreamt a lot. I was alone in the house, without earplugs. When I got up, I gradually began to remember what happened yesterday. I wondered how HK Swami is doing, and noted how his situation simultaneously affects me and doesn't. I pray for his well-being. I thought again of Hamsaduta attacking the BBT and hoped we could defend ourselves. Baladeva will be coming here this afternoon.

"O my Lord, proprietor of all creation, You have now appeared in my house, desiring to protect this world." (*Bhag.* 10.3.21) This is an astonishing combination "the Supreme Lord of all entering one's house and appearing as one's son. He is welcome. We not only philosophize but have personal needs. Vasudeva sought relief from the armies roaming the earth as demons in the guise of *ksatriyas*. "They must be killed by You for the protection of the innocent public."

Srila Prabhupada writes, "The Hare Krishna movement is also an incarnation of Krishna in the form of the holy name. Every one of us who is actually afraid of the asuric rulers and politicians must welcome this incarnation of Krishna, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare . . ." The only hope we have, he continues, is the Hare Krishna movement. He is referring to both the mantra and the movement that promulgates it.

Vasudeva is particularly concerned about Kamsa. He fears that when Kamsa hears that Krishna has appeared, "he will immediately come with weapons to kill You." Srila Prabhupada compares Kamsa to persons who try to stop the Hare Krishna movement: ". . . although the Krishna consciousness movement and Krishna are nondifferent and no *asuras* can check it, we are afraid that at any moment someone can stop this movement in any part of the world." Srila Prabhupada composed this chapter in 1977 while hearing both good and threatening news about his ISKCON society around the world. I believe ISKCON had been shut down by the government in Argentina at that time. Srila Prabhupada mentions opposition in Bombay. Opposition came from anti-cultists in America and from within his own movement as disciples fell away or quarreled. Srila Prabhupada was sometimes unable to sleep at night due to worry over his fledgling movement. His concerns were transcendental; he had the same fatherly anxiety that Vasudeva felt when he thought of Kamsa coming to kill His beautiful child.

Devaki was also absorbed in the parental mood. She recognized the symptoms of the Supreme Person on her child, but still she was afraid for His welfare. "Similarly, we are also astounded upon thinking whether this movement will be killed by the *asuras* or will continue to advance without fear." (*Bhag.* 10.3.23, purport)

Pause to drink water. Look up and see the photo of Lord Caitanya, His right hand raised in blessing. See the photo of Srila Prabhupada in his rocking chair in Boston, me at his feet?

I didn't hear M. return last night, only the comforting sound of the wind. Let me write a little more, then begin my *japa*. My *japa* is like the charge of the light brigade "on march the valiant one hundred, into the jaws of death. That is, I bravely and eagerly pick up my beads and begin, but the mind's attempt to hear is slaughtered by the powerful forces of *pramada*, inattention. That's expected, but still, I'll continue to execute my duty. I know that is the only way I have any hope of success. I feel like Hemingway's old fisherman, returned from the sea after capturing a huge fish, but with all its flesh eaten entirely away by a shark. Offensive chanting. People can see that I am defeated, humiliated, but in the end Krishna will save me.

Falldown is a real danger. I pray to Krishna to protect me. Also, I must use my own free will to carefully follow the rules and regulations, the *sannyasi's* code of behavior. I don't want to become another disappointment in that regard. Better to die first than betray the honor and trust others have in me.

* * *

4:28 a.m.

Hare Krishna world: if I didn't belong to it, I'd be in a zendo or a writer's world, the world of the dead and the reborn,

I'm about to conk out.

While finishing the *puja* this morning I thought, "If ISKCON calls me to the front line for battle, I could go. I have learned how to abort most headaches each week when I'm armed with Esgic and Imitrex.

Alas, it's not really possible. I keep telling myself to stay out of action if I know what's best for myself and others.

* * *

Trying to stay awake. The *cakora* bird delights in the lotus. Sanskrit language and images, just right for poetic descriptions of Krishna and the *gopis* in Vrndavana.

Krishna, Krishna. The rose and the thorn. The body is a machine, a car, but the driver is more important. The same example. We have heard it before. They don't know that the world's problems can be easily solved. We've heard that said too. Listening to Srila Prabhupada say these things and feeling my own desire to enlist in his movement rekindled. Do we doubt that it can take place? Or do we have no doubts but a weird kind of naivete? We are a mixed bag, we Krishna conscious persons.

What's happening? I hope to engage Bala in distributing my books. Don't mention to him the little I heard about HK Swami or the revolt of the temple presidents in India, the politics of power in ISKCON, and how it could affect us. Let's just assume there is enough value in my flawed books that it's worth trying to sell them and cultivate friends around the world for GNP. Let's assume that God is with us and that our hearts hold the life force. We can be sure of the *sastra*.

Stevie, look at your face! I saw an old, toothless, hag-male in the mirrored window this morning. He was jawing his Hare Krishna mantras. His face was framed in the same pane against which the moths were throwing themselves, trying to get in toward the light.

We each have anxiety and dislike with which to contend, and physical pain of one type or another. Where's the edge of newness? We are people for the future; what will we leave to others after we have moved on? Life is so fleeting. That vision of passing time "capture it in words.

Thought of this pen as a knife digging into the page, then got the image of Sri Krishna's initials carved into a tree in the Gita-nagari woods. They used to think of themselves as cowherd boys, those devotees running cows through the woods. O Krishna, You are the eternal cowherd boy and the best of rogues. You are a *lampat*, but innocent and sweet and all-good at the same time. Whoever takes shelter of You gains eternal life.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

I noticed that some tall evergreen trees were bent over at the top. That's the first time I have noticed that. Must be the strong winds.

Today is gray because of the rain. But the seasons also seem to be changing. No bright 5:00 a.m.s any more. When it was bright at this time, I used to feel I was walking at the bottom of a canyon. It was a psychological or spiritual state. I thought of myself as a marked man, a man marked by karma, which was tracking me down "me and the other last members of ISKCON's Old Boys' Club. Some people would be happy to see me knocked off. Ultimately, it's not possible. Even if I am knocked down, no one can take away the gifts my spiritual master has given me "his blessings, the sound of the *gayatri-mantras*. I don't mind being reduced, but I will always have these things.

* * *

5:40 a.m.

Drop of ink falls on the page like a drop of blood, only it's as black as the ace of spades. Ink stream. O Krishna, a tired man back from his walk.

* * *

Interreligious meeting where ISKCON made a speech but provided no beds for homeless and just a few meals. But plenty of words as to people's ultimate needs and what they should strive for.

Krishna walking with me. I am an old peasant. A devotee read *The Way of a Pilgrim* and couldn't get it out of his head or heart. He has molded himself after the russian pilgrim. Doesn't want to be kicked out as deviant or crazy. I say he's good.

* * *

8:45 a.m.

Took an Esgic half an hour ago upon rising from nap. Just as I rose, M. came in. He said, "I'd give anything for an exciting life," and proceeded to tell me how the van broke down outside Dublin on his way to the gig, and all the things that happened

subsequently. I listened, but I was savoring my own sensations and wondering if the pain would increase. It did, but now I'm a little better. I hope to be up to the meeting with Bala, who's stopping here to drop off medications sent by my doctor on his way to London ratha-yatra.

Yes, I want to be excited, but in my own quiet way. Like today when I was treated to the sound of rain pattering heavily on the roof. It's better than any relaxation tape.

Cows on top of hill look like toys. Tell Bala when he comes how often it rains here. The room darkened now, and Srila Prabhupada sitting in his brown *cadar*. Govinda carries a silver flute and stick. Radha-Govinda's exquisitely pretty Vrndavana outfits are a soft blue and a soft dark pink. No one can know my Radha-Govinda unless they come to see Them, and even then, they will need the eyes of love. Radha-Govinda are kind to me. They are my first-line hope in Krishna consciousness "that I might one day know Their forms. I pray that Their forms will be imprinted on my mind.

* * *

9:45 a.m.

Reluctant to do my late-morning *Bhagavatam* reading and writing. It's a little too intense, and I'm still recovering. I'm also anticipating this afternoon's meeting. But I can think of Devaki's prayers. She was astonished that the Supreme Lord should appear as her son. I know that Srila Prabhupada states that Devaki is not on Yashoda's level because Yashoda didn't think of Krishna as the Supreme Lord, and her love for Krishna is unexcelled among mothers. Still, Devaki is *almost* at that level. Her love is a mixture of intense affection and reverent worship. She wants to protect her son from Kamsa. I'll read more of it tomorrow if all goes well.

* * *

10:15 a.m.

Take four. Try to write something instead of waiting it out. None of us want to suffer. It's not morally superior to suffer physical pain. But if we can't prevent it, then we will have to go to the deeper level of understanding that the body is not built to be pain-free. Yet even when I have pain, and when I am facing the inevitability of the pain's presence in my life, I tend to plan for the next day to be pain-free. The nature of chronic pain is that there is pain, and then there is no pain. Chronic means that the pain is recurrent; it doesn't necessarily mean it is constant. I want to remain optimistic, hoping my body can serve as an instrument for active service in Krishna consciousness.

Then give us some Krishna conscious chatter, I mean, some serious talk to share with devotees. They don't want to hear *prajalpa*; they want to be uplifted. Can I take on their burden "even their contamination "and wash it away with something dynamic and realized, not only recited from a book? And while you give it, can you speak from the natural self rather than as a performance from a strict and upright persona? It is to stay in touch with the natural self that I write as relaxed and honestly as I dare. I don't want to be out touch with the actual imperfect being that I am. Oh, I know I am perfect and eternal, as we all are, but I am not presently liberated. I don't want to forget that and

forget my own personhood in the process. I need that personhood to practice Krishna consciousness.

ISKCON temple presidents met in India and proposed that the gurus be restricted. They said they should be under the temple presidents' control. They should have no separate bank accounts, do no independent traveling, and do only as they are told. They should also not have any big birthday parties. If everything is controlled, they can be cut down to size. Will such things become ISKCON law? More and more politics and infighting in this movement, and it's always one autocrat or another who wants power. Trying to live a life in an institution governed by law and have personal relationships with those we accept as purely serving Prabhupada creates tension. But if a person is not purely serving Prabhupada, they say, better you have the institution's protection. Is that right? Some say they want nothing to do with anything "either institution or gurus. They think the whole thing is based on others trying to control their lives. It sounds like some are saying we can't get Krishna's mercy unless we are told we are receiving it. All this can drive people away, make the relationships distant if only from confusion. Yet ISKCON is Prabhupada's "baby Krishna" and he its father. He gave it to us to care for, and I still respect those who fight to do so.

In this simple life in stormy Ireland, the storm is not between the people but the natural elements. Yes, the natural elements sure get stirred up around here. It's amazing how a natural storm brings peace to the mind; the pushing winds and slashing rains only serve to make us feel more sheltered.

* * *

11:50 a.m.

Falldowns of gurus exposed. Weakening of the overall structure of faith. Myriad of responses and opinions to this human phenomena. What's my position? I pray, "Please don't let me fall down." I also try to fix myself in the basics of Krishna consciousness so that if the society institutes changes regarding the guru-disciple relationship, I will (1) stay out of the proceedings where such changes are haggled over and voted; and (2) try to be detached and accept whatever ISKCON decides. I'll avoid becoming rebellious but keep my peace to protect the peace of those who consider themselves my disciples. There are few changes in conduct that could actually betray our long-standing relationship.

I would welcome less attention "less expectation on how I have to behave simply because I have disciples. I can't imagine getting less mail. Publish less books? It's possible, but we (the small band at GNP and its core readership) usually find a way around restrictions. We believe in freedom of the press. But if I couldn't publish "if it was outlawed "yes, that would mean something. I'd probably still make my writings available privately to whomever wanted them.

* * *

Loony lad hopes
under pressure that he won't
negate peace-seeking

Charlie horses. Spirit is okay
harm to head can't
make you less of a soul.

I know all this. These are just word pies. real.

I had better go to someone and ask for strength and forbearance. Which would you rather have, Esgics or disciples? Because there is no headache-free zone.

Seriously, these are times that require fine nerves, and we're only at the beginning. Become more honest. Search yourself thoroughly. Could your enemies be right? Would you consider switching to the Green Band Party in favor of "Love of Prabhupada," and abandon any long-term falsity? *They* will tell you when you may or may not write and publish and what it should say.

* * *

12:02 p.m.

Happy Idea #40

When I proposed
to our congregation that they should
simplify (quoting Thoreau),
one man objected.
He said, "That's
nirjana-bhajana. We need to work
and form a society." I said I'm
not against that, I'm just reminding
us not to leave out chanting and hearing
on the plea of money-work.

* * *

"That's good for you but not
for me." Or "Who is he to
tell others to be happy? He
chews his fingernails. He's a do-
nothin' worrier."

* * *

Say His names. Go ahead
say any name of
God you find in your
Religion. Say it with love.
Just say it.

* * *

Happy Idea #41
The rabbits go after the
green blades.
Ireland is cool
so the rabbits have a good coat
even in summer.
But they are tasty
to the carnivores.

* * *

Being alone is nice if you
have friends nearby. It gets
dry and you have doubts but
you reason it out:
I'm okay reading and
later I'll travel and be with
people.

* * *

What about NATO and African
countries?
If one person becomes
a pure devotee he could transform the
whole world.
Anyone want to go for it?

* * *

Happy Idea #42
There are many
spiritual virtues in the *sastras*.
How many do you possess?

* * *

You ought to be friendly, silent, poetic,
grave, attached to the Absolute,
tolerant, merciful,
a good preacher . . .

* * *

It's a good idea to be silent
sometimes, to pray, but later to go
out and tell people about Krishna.
Groping your way . . .

* * *

Take the remnants of the pear.
It's *maha-prasadam*. The *acaryas*
have given us these happy ideas "
if only I could feel them
as real as the pear.

* * *

2:20 p.m.

A slight sensation in the heart. Does it mean Clancy is near his end? Well, at least he may pass away before he falls down. Hearing of his imminent departure, no *rsis* gather nor does Sukadeva Gosvami appear. Yet if he wants it, Sukadeva Gosvami has appeared and is waiting patiently whenever Clancy opens his guru's books. That's the mercy.

But Clancy says, "Not right now," and opts for fresh air and exercise. "The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is too deep and intense for me right now. It "excuse the expression "brings on the symptoms of a headache." Clancy takes a deep breath and occasionally rubs his chest while he awaits the arrival of his friend from America.

* * *

2:53 p.m.

Waiting. Bala could arrive at any moment or not for an hour. His plane had to come out of congested Heathrow on a holiday weekend. Not much I can do as I wait. I recovered from my right-eye pain, then dipped again, then resurfaced. I'm in a "hold" position, waiting and protecting my energy for the meeting. Even when I meet a close friend, it feels like an extra exertion.

I have allowed cobwebs to grow in this room, but I've realized that there's a limit. I'll have to get out the broom.

I'm looking forward to introducing Radha-Govinda to my friend.

No myth here, just the sashaying of trees to a wild reel.

* * *

3:45 p.m.

Devaki praises the Supreme Lord, her child. She calls Him "my Lord." "Indeed, You are the cause of causes, Lord Visnu, the light of all transcendental knowledge." (*Bhag.* 10.3.24) Devaki understands that all the incarnations and expansions of Visnu come from Lord Krishna, or that the same Lord Visnu is her son. She also acknowledges that at the time of cosmic annihilation, only the Lord remains in His form as Sankarsana,

Ananta-Sesanaga. The element of total time is another form of Lord Visnu. "Let me offer my full surrender unto Your Lordship."

Now it appears that Bala won't be coming. Caranaravinda had gone to the airport to meet him, and although his plane arrived (half an hour late), he wasn't on it. No phone call explaining his absence. I turned to read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, but the pain increased and I had to stop. Just creeping toward the end of this day.

* * *

4:15 p.m.

I'm on the outdoor bench with my Ecology pad on my knee. M. is pumping away on the melodeon in his house. The wind is up. Some carnations knocked to the ground, while heartier plants and flowers remain flexible and upright. What can I make of what's left of this day? round and round I walk on the *parikrama* path with my *maha-mantras* coming out, and at one point, a little prayer pokes out of the soil of my chanting like a plant popping up from the earth. "Please let me . . . " What is it I want? Krishna knows.

I suppose chanting is the best and quickest way to achieve my aspirations, but it is not the only way. I mean, I have to live out everything chanting means.

I don't want a day like today wasted because I waited for someone who never arrived. I tried to put off the headache, but it was never fully banished. I feel like today was a day of living in the shadows of ISKCON rumors and me just hanging around.

They rot in this material world, Prabhupada said.

Who?

All souls "all material bodies. The souls don't rot, but neither do they make spiritual progress. They remain covered. This place is so temporary, but we can choose to stay here a long time. "O Supreme Lord," they prayed, first the *devas*, then Vasudeva and Devaki. They knew He would appear. "You are everything and the source of everything, and after annihilation only You remain. You are especially kind to your devotees. Please protect Yourself from Kamsa and his allies, and protect us too. We know, Lord, that You come here for Your pleasure pastimes with Your unalloyed devotees." While Krishna is in this world, He also picks up some practicing devotees who join Him to become as good as the eternally pure ones. Liberated. I wish to be picked up, so let me look down at the humble, soft-hued thyme. Hint of humility.

* * *

5:00 p.m.

Last part of this day. The free-write man speaks in a Krishna conscious way, as he intends. He's not a New Age roundabout but a Hare Krishna man. Feels happy in the society of like-minded devotees. They have annual or monthly meetings to support each other in this thing that only they know and do. No one else like them. They are followers of Srila Prabhupada. They want to live as devotees.

One group like that in an Eastern European country meet "they all live outside of a temple "and discuss how to cope with a full-time job, marriage, and how to find time

for *sadhana*. They relax, not pretending to be special devotees, and therefore not afraid of one another. No one acts as an authority over the others.

Then there's a group I know who used to meet in Northern Ireland to talk about their shortcomings in *japa*. Some had vowed to chant sixteen rounds but were no longer doing it. No one condemned them. Everyone simply tried to help each other. How to control the mind was a regular topic, and they always served *prasadam*.

Another group in the Caribbean reads the letters they receive from their spiritual master and then read from his books. Another group meets at the house of a devotee who is a professional counselor. They call it a prayer meeting. It's another form of Krishna consciousness with emphasis on the fact that we are all human beings. We have to help each other.

Again and again I open the *Bhagavatam* and move further into it. It is stately and philosophical. I'm only able to take a little at a time. There's nothing else like it. You enter a unique reality. Krishna science and Vaisnava *siddhanta*. Don't take it for granted. There are people all over the world who accept this world view, this absolute truth. Most of them weren't born into it but have come to it in their youth.

There should be education in ISKCON "from the cradle to *samadhi* (death)." They say education is now the most important form of preaching. But what is education? Is Krishna consciousness learned in a classroom? I thought real education was learned differently. Sometimes from a guru. The guru gives us instructions, we apply them, and from that we gather the experience that builds realization. Not that we are always in a classroom or reading a textbook, looking up at the teacher when we would rather be outside playing. Or reading something of our own choice. Prabhupada says we can even learn from a *sadhu* by watching how he puts his shoes on. And of course, we learn from Krishna in the heart.

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. Please teach me. Krishna is in everything, and as a person He is everything.

* * *

5:45 p.m.

O Krishna. I choose the yellow outfit with gold trim for tomorrow. Nice that many of my decisions are over such things. But a fighter has to decide more "how to kill, parry, and thrust. He fights for Krishna on the Lord's order. Krishna didn't approve, "Govinda, I shall not fight." May Krishna give us the strength to do what He wants.

* * *

6:15 p.m., Night Notes

Darker. Cows on distant hill. They resemble rough bushes from here. Still pain. The passionate thing with Bala is still going on. The devotee who went to pick him up has returned, but Bala just phoned from the airport. M. may have to go there immediately to pick him up, although he doesn't seem enthusiastic. I have to tune it out and find a few moments of calm in this darkened room so that the pain doesn't escalate. Eighteen rounds done.

July 31, 12:04 a.m.

"No one in this material world has become free from the four principles birth, death, old age and disease, even by fleeing to various planets. But now that You have appeared, my Lord, death is fleeing in fear of You, and the living entities, having obtained shelter at Your lotus feet by Your mercy, are sleeping in full mental peace." (*Bhag.* 10.3.27)

Everyone must die; everyone is afraid of death. The *kala-cakra* gets everyone in this *martya-loka*. It's interesting that this verse says devotees can sleep peacefully. Usually, Prabhupada criticizes sleep as a waste of time. But we do need it. So another symptom of a devotee is that he sleeps peacefully "knowing that if he does have to die (maybe even while he's asleep), he'll return to Krishna. He won't have to re-enter the limits set by time.

I read a wonderful promise or fact like this and think, "I'll put this into my lecture. This is strong and wonderful." Yes, but I shouldn't just file it away as preaching material. Live it fully: I won't die. I'll think of Krishna and always be protected. But I actually have to do it. Unfortunately, we're like the *karmis* to some extent in that we forget Krishna in our pursuit of selfish material happiness. Therefore, death makes us anxious. We've heard Krishna's promise (*tyaktva deham punar janma naiti mam eti sorjuna*), but we're not sure we qualify. Do we even *want* to go back to Godhead? Do we actually believe that every living entity is eternal?

Devaki asked the Lord to protect Himself from Kamsa. She thought it best He make his Visnu form invisible, because Kamsa would certainly recognize Him as the enemy. How sweet and noble she was to pray not for herself (although she was also in danger from Kamsa) but for her son. If Lord Visnu were safe and Kamsa came to harass her, "she would think of Him within her mind." If the Lord could assume the form of an ordinary child, Devaki thought she could hide Him.

I'm writing this at my usual midnight hour, but M. told me that Baladeva will be here at 4:30 a.m. to spend a couple of hours with me before going on to London. I'll hope to meet him then. The meeting is on my mind. Still, it's midnight, so let me put that aside and read more *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

But I want to say something first: I like this life and want to continue it. This is still *martya-loka*, even within these walls, and I know that writing EJW doesn't mean I won't come under the influence of the *kala-cakra*. I can't say, "I'm still writing another volume and have another planned after this. Come back later." Even Srila Prabhupada left before he was able to complete the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. EJW has no set endpoint anyway.

"Although Devaki is not on the Vrndavana platform, she is near the Vrndavana platform." Her love is mixed with appreciation for His opulence, "but in Vrndavana the opulence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is not exhibited." In Vrndavana we see only pure love. Devaki is in *vatsalya-rasa*. Therefore she asks the Lord to withdraw His opulent (*aiSvarya-purna*) Visnu form so she can love Him as her son.

We don't belong in this world as long as we immerse ourselves in *Krishna-bhakti*. May we do so in fact, and leave behind the material concept with its attachments

to fear and anger. Let us go to Krishna by the simple act of chanting His name. We're such fallible beings, but we can protect our vows by turning to Krishna.

This is a pitiful scene "no, not pitiful, but touching" Devaki with her newborn son, asking Him to save Himself, and expecting Kamsa to arrive at any moment. The anxiety of love. Yes, Lord, please save Yourself. Don't let Kamsa kill You.

* * *

4:19 a.m.

Unusual morning from here on. But before this I performed the *puja* and it was sublime. Listened to *Vidagdha-madhava* in decent consciousness. I love the *gopis'* teasing talks when they are among themselves. I cannot repeat it all here, but I felt purified to hear it. A residue of the topmost nectar will impress itself on my heart forever, I hope.

Earlier in the bathroom, I heard Srila Prabhupada lecture and thought, "Listen as a disciple; everything he says is valuable." He gave simple examples to help us understand that there must be a Supreme God. The little son wants to touch fire, but the father tells him not to. If the son insists, the father says, "Go ahead, but at your risk." We are like that child when we try to remain independent of Krishna in this world. God is the supreme proprietor and master. Our work should be to please Him (*sam siddhi-hari-tosanam*). Accept these truths profoundly within yourself. They should shape our lives. It is *we* whomust please Lord Hari. Don't play with fire.

* * *

8:17 a.m.

Baladeva's visit is over, but I'm having a hard time getting back to the quiet routine of writing and reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. That's understandable, I guess. It shows me, however, that it takes private space to create quietness. Baladeva brought my medicine and some mail. Now he's on his way to sell GNP books at the London ratha-yatra and to show some of the devotees over here how to do it.

I need to keep writing to fill pages. I meet the quota only gradually. Writing is not like painting in that regard, where with a thick brush I can cover a page in a few minutes. Writing is more careful work with a pen "scratching and scratching until the page is filled. And I want to make it thoughtful Krishna consciousness. I may seem to write like a somnambulist, but I don't want to put the reader to sleep.

Baladeva wore a suit. He had a big white shirt over a big white belly. I have false teeth and ears that stick out. All the better to stay pure "no women want me. Anyway, I don't really need my ears for protection. It just feels too violent and tragic to want to fall down at this point. What little pleasure could I possibly get out of it anyway? It would never make up for the grief I would cause. To fall down now would be an act of madness, of suicide. I pray not to commit such *hari-kari*. The Lord doesn't want me to. May He protect my vows.

* * *

9:58 a.m.

Read Ravindra-svarupa Prabhu's letter on Narayana Maharaja. He quotes me as saying I wanted to get my Srila Prabhupada straight from Prabhupada's books and not have it filtered through other interpretations. Hearing this again makes me feel loyal. I want to approach Srila Prabhupada's books confident that they are the most expert teachings for bringing us to the highest position in Krishna consciousness. Ravindra-svarupa also said I'm honest, some say to a fault. Too honest?

O Krishna, I'm just trying to fill this space with words. I will not write a position paper before your very eyes. I am too lightweight and scatterbrained and overly honest to do that, right? I am James Joyce's successor but returned to the feet of guru and ready to give up all that literary crap too. I am the incarnation of nothingness. I am in severe need of mercy and attention from my spiritual master. I should do all in my power to serve his movement.

I mentioned to Baladeva that I live the way I do, in a "cave," not only because of my headaches but because it's what I want for myself. I want to stay out of the boiler room, as the Catholics say. Baladeva said some would call this "a friendly distance." Yes, I want to be at a friendly distance from ISKCON's boilings, but respectful to those who work in the boiler room or who command from the captain's bridge. I am down in some lower hold, back by the ship's rudder maybe, or in the PIO office in the disguise of a third-class journalist, writing to provide another resource for ISKCON's people.

The ocean and the desert, the naked and the dead, the living and the damned. Just go to your spiritual master's presentation of the *Bhagavatam* and read. There's no hurry to finish anything; I'm not going anywhere. Simply beg to be admitted into the ultimate purport of Srila Prabhupada's books. Never neglect his mercy.

* * *

10:25 a.m.

"From the very beginning of one's transactions in *bhakti*, one is situated on the transcendental platform." (*Bhag.* 10.3.31, purport) Srila Prabhupada is commenting on the *Bhagavad-gita* verse, *mam ca yo 'vyabhicarena* (14.26). We neophyte devotees *can* be described as on the transcendental platform. Srila Prabhupada says so. Of course, it's also true we still struggle with the modes, but it's nice to hear him say these words. Please, Lord, Lord Balarama, give me strong faith in the words of my spiritual master.

Without *bhakti* we cannot understand Krishna. There are different stages of *bhakti* ranging from mixed devotion to pure love. "Especially in the *madhurya-rasa*, one becomes attached to the Personality of Godhead. Then loving transactions between the Lord and the devotee begin." (*Bhag.* 10.3.31, purport)

Srila Prabhupada then describes the special significance of Krishna bearing a fruit in His hands in Vrajabhumi. This is the most attractive form, "and the one who is most sublimely attracted is Srimati Radharani, radhika." real nectar there. Maybe release it in the Radhastami lecture. Take your Prabhupada straight.

* * *

Just when I was sinking back into the quiet, a bulldozer pulled up outside my window. He's going to work there! I think I heard M. say that he is going to dig up the septic tank that we and Praghosa share. Will he be there all day? I can't even close the window, because the heater is pouring out so much heat. But I think I will shut it anyway "I'd rather tolerate the heat.

* * *

11:47 a.m.

He's digging deep with his digger. It's powerful and can pick up a scoopful of rocks in its bent arm and move them elsewhere. He has broken into a stone wall and is digging into the brown earth. I don't exactly know what his purpose is. Although he can see in the window if he wants, whenever I glance his way I never catch his eye. He's intent on his digging, so I ought to be intent on mine.

I told you I read Ravindra-svarupa Prabhu's article where he described me as coming back to Srila Prabhupada, as on whose *buddhi* had been bewildered. What if I had to go before Srila Prabhupada today? How would I explain it all to him? In the end, I could only ask him to accept me as I am now, older than I was when he was here, missing him. I pray that he trusts my love for him. I say that, however, after having made numerous mistakes "big ones, too.

Rain beating on the pane, and finally the bulldozer is stopping. Will he be rained out? It's hard to do anything in Ireland without getting caught in the rain. Krishna conscious comics and candies and children's coloring books and old people's home and child abuse investigators and classes to learn book distribution and so many things that weren't here when Srila Prabhupada was here "does he trust any of us? Our current leaders feel the strain of our credulity. Let's forgive them and forgive us all. We are only human beings, fallible. It helps if we can admit to that fact, then go on working to serve our founder-*acarya*. Maybe we have had a too-high estimation of a *sadhu's* perfection, thinking they can never experience any problems. Oh, but then *sadhus* should not demand much power and honor. Who can solve this dilemma?

* * *

Happy Idea #43
For the Grandchildren
They grew up and became angry
at what we did to them
in *gurukula*.

* * *

I can't write for them.
What about the new little ones?
They write, "We saw llamas in
a cage. I petted one. We stayed
at an inn because our van went

too slow. I didn't like the
prasadam at the Manor "too spicy.
Then we went back to Ireland."

* * *

For the grandchildren: please chant Hare Krishna.
We gave you the best thing, we thought. It
was what Prabhupada gave us. We were
immature and incompetent and very sincere, fanatical.
We're sorry.
Do you have a better idea?
Krishna consciousness in one form or another?

* * *

Happy Idea #44
Child abuse: I didn't know
anything about it in my office
on Gurley Street. I was happy because
Prabhupada was pleased with our
pioneering school.
I campaigned that parents should
stay away.
Left that place and took *sannyasa*.
Ex-kids are angry now.

* * *

That's another reason to stay apart,
watch the rye grass,
no choice but to hear the rooks
and the buffets of wind.

* * *

Spread Krishna consciousness. Like jam
on a piece of bread? Like pushing it into
their heads? No, by loving acts and
vigorous preaching "the holy names,
prasadam, sanctified temples and farms,
examples of elders and young
leaders too.

* * *

Go on your own, forward with friends,
don't unnecessarily kill
animals, read about Dhruva Maharaja and
everything in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*,
don't skip anything.

* * *

Happy Idea #45
Happy is the man who
dies, Gargi, knowing the eternal self.
Happy the person who realizes
his loving connection with Krishna "
bhakti.

* * *

Happy the conditioned soul who meets
the bona fide spiritual master,
who recovers his eyeglasses
after the monkey has
stolen them (provided they're still
in working order). Happy the
detached person who can accept
his fate philosophically "either
I get a house or I don't. The
main thing is to be able to chant
on my beads.

* * *

12:18 p.m.

It's like a marathon. I can read and comprehend pretty well, but I'm simple. My intelligence gets seduced by others. I have seen that happen again and again. There I'll be, going about my business, listening to this, reading that, writing, thinking, making cut outs for a collage, even smiling, then a big guy will come along and tell me where I'm wrong. "Will you walk a little faster?" asked the whiting of the snail. "There's a porpoise close behind me, and he's treading on my tail." Wonderful.

Analyze the nonsense. Is my *buddhi* still corrupt? Is it curling at that edges? Insects creeping into its house? Is it covered with tarantula hairs? What if I had to go to the hospital with a heart attack? What if I had to be someone else? No chance. I have to be myself. Fortunately, I have friends. I'm a risk. I want to be safe. Smack! He smacks my face. (Who? Ned Finley. And a Godbrother.) I said, "Thanks," but I didn't like it. No, no

...

* * *

2:45 p.m.

Sketched a man with head fog. Very few lines *a la* Saul Steinberg, but I indicated that he was Krishna's devotee by applying *tilaka*. right outside his window I drew a tractor with metal treads, the front digger scraping noisily against the rocks, the rear digger ploughing. He was reading, but his attention was not scanning the paragraphs with his eyes but the noise coming in the window. Does he look like he wants to be somewhere else? Miami or Vaikuntha?

No, thought he seems to want a different head. But that's not possible. Even he knows that. No, we have to accept the body we have been given no matter what.

Oh, don't worry. Getting rid of this head is not a real concern. I do accept what I have, and I am trying to feel grateful for the whole package. Anyway, right now I'm spent.

Baladeva brought some medication for me marked fine for anyone but those who are cads (I mean, CADS, sufferers from coronary artery disease). Not good for males over forty either. Then I shouldn't take it? If I decide to take it regardless of package warnings, perhaps I should live at a doctor's office so he can treat me for heart attack. People have died from taking this product, the manufactures admit, but on the whole, it's still worth selling. Some slobs "I mean, migraineurs by the millions "have appreciated it. Decide on the risk factors and how they weigh in with potential relief from pain.

Well, that sure gives me something to think about on this rainy afternoon between the tractor driver's pint break and his lunch. Why is he digging those holes?

Hare Krishna. Be sober and think about what will happen to this grand movement that stretches all over the earth. As long as we read Srila Prabhupada's books and perform the *yajna* "which reminds me, you haven't read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* this afternoon.

* * *

4:10 p.m.

The Supreme Lord tells how Vasudeva and Devaki performed severe austerities in a previous life with a view to becoming the Supreme Lord's parents.

That tractor finally gone. The silence is intense. I took an Imitrex tablet about an hour ago, but I'm still feeling shaky. I somehow need to feel the confirmation that Krishna and Prabhupada are pleased with me; it's not enough that I have my own perk of enthusiasm. I want the confirmation to come both in my heart (in the form of renewed enthusiasm), but in some other way too. It's not enough for me, however, to always listen to brothers defining how Prabhupada can be pleased. We've been over this ground before. I want to feel the confirmation in my heart, to have my own relationship with Prabhupada, make my own offering. When we eat, we should notice ourselves whether or not we feel satisfied.

By their austerities, including eating only air and the dry leaves that fell from trees, Vasudeva and Devaki cleared their minds of all dirty things. We're not asked to perform such austerities nowadays. We are simply asked to chant God's names.

And to serve. I want to serve. If I could just get a handle on the head pain, I'm sure I could do more. I say this writing is so important because it's all I have.

Srila Prabhupada mentions that our *tapasya* as "very easy to perform "the *sankirtana* movement" "simply by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra we can

become so pure that we can go back to the spiritual world. We may not immediately find the greatest happiness when we chant, but if we refrain from artificial happiness and go on chanting, we will find the path to eternal happiness. That's our *tapasya* "to refrain from other forms of happiness and strive to chant. Seek God in His name.

It's hard to get Krishna to come into this world as one's son. By comparison, it's relatively easy to join Krishna in the spiritual world. "In this age, we are all fallen, but the Supreme Personality of Godhead has appeared as Caitanya Mahaprabhu to bestow upon us love of Godhead directly." (*Bhag.* 10.3.38, purport) *Namo maha vadanyaya*: just chant Hare Krishna.

* * *

5:18 p.m.

The twinge went up. I took a newly arrived feverfew tablet, and that seemed to help. Therefore, I'm here on the page. Dear reader, don't think I'm a druggie. One has a right to experiment, within limits, to discover what meds work for him and allow him to attain the quality of life he so desires. Of course, that's always in Krishna's hands, but all I really want is to remain active and to turn whatever state I'm in into a Krishna conscious experience.

Ravindra-svarupa Prabhu's paper is a bombshell. Go ahead, say it, and don't worry about what ends up in print.

The devotees printing my books want to package reprints under series titles, "The Prabhupada Set," "The Devotional Practices Set." I don't like it. I like the books the way they first came out. I'll tell them that but try to encourage them to sell more books. Hare Krishna.

Krishna embracing the lost servant "you know that painting by Syama? The BBT had it in their 1997 calendar. Someone sent me a small reproduction of it and I put it on the wall, but it's too small to see well. I want to be embraced by Krishna one day, but I know I'm not yet pure enough to receive such mercy. First I have to learn more how to embrace others and to give them encouragement. I'm willing, but I can't pretend I'm doing wonders for others: "Just come to me and I'll take your anxieties away. I may be small, but the infinite is coming through me to heal you." Hmm.

Neither can I worry *too* much about those who have gone astray. I can't stop people from doing what they feel they must do. I can only warn them of the danger "point out that they are flying their kites near the edge of the roof. I can't make them listen to me, though.

My head clearing for a time, just like the Irish weather. I can go down to paint if I want. At least hearing Srila Prabhupada sing would be nice. Perhaps spreading paint would feel therapeutic. Who knows, some of the forms may inspire Krishna consciousness in myself and those who see them.

* * *

6:29 p.m.

What was it like? The painting? Good, physical, perspiring, moving, forgetting the head (of course, I could only do that thanks to the meds) moving, dovetailing emotions.

Srila Prabhupada was singing an early *kirtana*. I wrote '66 on two different pages, and "ISKCON" on one on which appeared a robot or a knight carrying a shield (depending on how you look at it). Also drew affectionate monsters, misshapen people dancing "yes, that was us "bent and elongated and myself the most primitive. Bring them out from hiding in the abstract slashes and colors. Don't be embarrassed that you seek forms, people with Vaisnava *tilaka* on their foreheads. I used to think a person with *tilaka* couldn't look "funny," but I'm over that. Tell the true story. The ISKCON story in my painting. I am drawing my generation and myself.

Hare Krishna. The earth is smoothed over where the bulldozer dug all day. I don't know if he removed a septic tank or what. I know he didn't plant a Sesa-naga *murti* with a jewel on his head. Now let me rest. I'll try to solace those who ask for it with their raw wounds. That will be my compassion "to avoid merely official replies.

August 1, 12:10 a.m.

"If one wants to go back home, back to Godhead, one must be *niskincana*, free from all material desires." (*Bhag.* 10.3.40, purport) There's no real contradiction between wanting to go back to Godhead and asking for the Lord's causeless devotional service birth after birth. Both are expressions of desiring to serve Lord Krishna on the spiritual plane, free of selfish sense gratification.

As always, I woke up questioning myself about how I'm using the meds "which ones to take, how much, and how often. I don't want to cause myself rebound headaches. It takes critical intelligence. I use the same critical intelligence to examine how I can dovetail my proclivities in Krishna consciousness, and when to refrain from something entirely. We have to think like that constantly if we wish to maintain the highest standards for our own lives. We have to keep our focus and examine our priorities. For example, it's important to read the *Bhagavatam* and to chant on our beads. Our service, which so often is our life, our propensities (the things we can't seem to give up about ourselves), our willingness to preach, our communication with devotees, all have to be lived out in the quest for self-honesty and spiritual aspiration. Such truth is the last leg of religion.

The Lord previously appeared as the son of Prsni and Sutapa as Prsnigarbha. In the next millennium He appeared to Aditi and KaSyapa as Upendra (Vamana). Now He is appearing for the third time, but this time He comes in His original form, in His full opulence, as Sri Krishna.

The Lord deals with His devotees as if He were a human being, but the result they achieve is not ordinary. They gain liberation and go back to Godhead. "A nondevotee cannot believe that simply by thinking of one person, one can achieve liberation from this material world and go back home back to Godhead. But this is a fact. The Lord comes as a human being, and if one becomes attached to the Lord on the platform of loving service, one's promotion to the transcendental world is assured." (*Bhag.* 10.3.44, purport)

I don't want my writing to be "my thing" in the sense that it's more important to me than pleasing Krishna. It should be the *way* I please Him most "if it's most important to me. My repertoire in writing, poems, free-writing, and the book publishing are all meant

as varieties of loving service to the Supreme Person. They are ways of fulfilling Lord Krishna's invitation, *man mana bhava mad bhakta*. Sometimes my writing is preoccupied with expressions of inability or the struggle to always think of Krishna, and that is its honesty. I don't pretend to be writing from the highest platform. But my struggles from the material world are still the struggles of someone trying to practice Krishna consciousness. I delineate the details of a struggler in his attempt to convert matter to spirit. He's not a hundred percent spiritual at every moment.

Does this surprise the reader seeking Krishna consciousness from a book? Does it disappoint or weary him? It may. But some readers thrive on honesty and take the sharing of another aspiring devotee's life as valuable in the pursuit of their own spirituality.

Ravindra-svarupa Prabhu cited me as one who wants to get his Srila Prabhupada straight from Prabhupada's books without interpretation. Of course, I know that I myself have to interpret (or understand) what Prabhupada has said in a personal way. I have to let it filter through me. We *all* must do that. Maharaja Pariksit felt so much ecstasy upon hearing the *Bhagavatam* because he received well. His heart was pure, his attention fixed. We too want to serve like that, but first each of us has particular impediments that block our full and ecstatic reception of the import of the *Bhagavatam*. In the meantime, we can only practice and pray to be accepted among Prabhupada's followers.

I particularly appreciated reading this morning how we should never think of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as an ordinary human being, yet we should always think of Him as a person, the most important person in our lives. "The Krishna consciousness movement, however, is fighting against the principle of regarding Him as a fictitious person." We have to know Him in truth. We have a right to pray to Him.

* * *

4:25 a.m.

Free-write man says whatever comes into his head. He thinks his private talk is not monitored by God and the Vaisnavas.

No, he doesn't. He *intends* it for them. He thinks he will find wisdom in the freedom. Doesn't have to logically address the issues. Goes wild. Cries.

Cries.

Because he wants to purge his demons.

In a nonpartisan effort.

Because complicated issues can be settled on one level by argument and critical intelligence and certainly by *sastra*, scholarship, and loyalty, but even after doing that sometimes the lad still isn't purged. He is still seeking his God from his human mind and heart. He still cries.

I think you know what I mean. Or I hope you do. I just hope Lord Hari doesn't banish me for my approach.

String the Hare Krishna mantra on a flower garland. No ghostly rites, nothing unorthodox "don't consort with anything but pure Krishna consciousness. Don't be so naive as to learn from those who do not really represent your spiritual master.

Free-write man is a dormant mouse. Ole! Krishna, I seek Your *darSana*.

The Lord appeared before Devaki and Vasudeva, and when their prayers ended, He expressed His appreciation that they had been His parents in previous millenniums. Srila Prabhupada says repeatedly, for us, that better than trying to call Krishna into this world to be our child, we should go to Him in the spiritual world.

We go there by repeating the mantra for all we are worth. I cried. I also wait. I have to be patient.

Hare Krishna. Where did he go in the darkest hour? He returned to safety. Later, he realized he had to become more willing to go where Krishna would send us. Don't claim we are beyond that. The same thing, the same thing, see the good and brilliance in our teacher's teachings. We can learn that from brothers and sisters. We *can* learn. Hare Krishna.

Please.

"I wish to love them, to care for them," she said, referring to her teachers and to the few who look to her for help. She asked me if I also pray to love those who look to me. Sure. Does she think I'm simply self-absorbed? No. I want the best for all of them.

It's definitely darker at this time of day than it was during the early summer. I'm going out anyway.

* * *

5:30 a.m.

Very cold for August 1, and the top (sky) is way down low, all dark mist. At least it's not raining right now. What's that sensation in the area of my heart? Walk by the creek. I'll die sooner or later. These low, stone Irish walls will outlast me, I'm sure. . . .

* * *

8:40 a.m.

Annoyed at having to write, having a quota, work, but once I get going it will probably be all right. Work is good for me. Was he right to criticize him with his intelligent arguments? Well, I suppose it's necessary for someone called the "Minister for Protection." If M. were here, I'd probably be letting the steam off about this so that it wouldn't find its way into my sacred writings. Srila Prabhupada said a person should only write on spiritual topics if he's authorized by a superior authority. He was speaking of Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, who was asked to write about Lord Caitanya by the Vraja Vaisnavas. The order to write was confirmed by Madana-mohana. Srila Prabhupada has authorized me to write. All glories to Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Patita-pavana. May He enable us to praise Him by citing examples of how He lifted fallen souls and engaged them in pure devotional service.

We have only so many breaths or pen strokes allotted to us. We can spend them in one way or another. I want to spend it reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. I don't want to waste it.

* * *

8:55 a.m.

Nothing is forced upon the Supreme Person. He acts freely in His spiritual energy. Also, as soon as He desires something, it is done immediately. So the *Vedas* say and I pray to believe.

Don't be a fickle hamburger, by which I mean, don't indulge in nonsense, in disbelief, in sin. Fight for right

against Kowit and Murray
against whomever it is necessary
to battle. Don't be weak-hearted.

Be as generous as a tree
and as tolerant,

Ready to give Krishna to others.

Why feel threatened every time someone approaches you, as if someone is coming to cut at your Krishna consciousness?

"Srila Jiva Gosvami says that unless we accept the energy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as inconceivable, beyond the conception of our words and mind, we cannot understand the Supreme Lord."

Follow in his footsteps. Srila Jiva Gosvami is another Prabhupada, like our Prabhupada, and Srila rupa Gosvami, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, Srila Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura.

The Supreme Lord can appear by His spiritual energy in a body made of wood, stone, or brass. The *arca-vigraha* is still Krishna. One who thinks that the Deity is made of material elements, that the Vaisnava guru is an ordinary man, or that a Vaisnava belongs to a certain caste, is a *naraki*, a resident of hell. Understand Krishna's appearance rightly and qualify to go back to Godhead.

Nanda and Yashoda accepted Krishna as their son and didn't regard Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Theirs is the highest form of Krishna consciousness (*kevala-bhakti*).

That ends the history of the first stage of Krishna's appearance. He is now safe in Gokula. Meanwhile, back in Mathura, we will hear what happened when Yoga-maya appeared as Devaki's eighth child and Kamsa came to kill her.

* * *

9:55 a.m.

I am easing around again this Saturday morning, enjoying doing small tasks, such as hanging up drawing sheets, something here, something else there. Deep ease may help me remain pain-free. Headaches are triggered by stress among other things. Maybe when I write, the burden of it "deep for me, issues I get into" also brings on pain. I don't know.

Remember when Srila Prabhupada flew to Boston and the devotees invited him to sleep for a while? He replied, "I am not meant to sleep all day." He was always ready to glorify Krishna in one way or another. As one of his many spiritual sons, I am also not meant to cruise all day. So I write.

It's a blessing that the tractor has not returned to dig outside my window, but I know that some other pain or curse will visit me. Krishna doesn't want us to think our needs for comfort and peace can be resolved in this world. We have to strive to get free from it.

A free-write man just grabs words and says, "Cock-a-doodle-do." remember the chickens in the villages and down that potholed road they call Prabhupada Avenue "the one where all Hindus live? I think they're raising chickens to make a few dollars. Have you seen the hammocks slung outside the garages and the groves of bamboo, coconut, and mango trees? The area is also full of *yajna* flags. The sun beats down, always tropical, not like in Ireland. I'll be going to that Caribbean again, mon, whenever the Lord decides.

Yes, well, I was saying that free-write man jaunts out to see what's on the road in his imaginary land. He's not in Trinidad because that would mean arduous plane travel and a heavy lecture schedule.

Try to make ISKCON a little more the way you would like it to be rather than putting it down. Is that how I advise them? Is my positive viewpoint outworn? Where am *I* at? I mean, the real me, the one not affected by the latest strong-worded article. I tend to swing and sway according to what influential persons say. Better I write and paint and listen to my spiritual master sing *bhajan*as.

From here I can't see too well the print of Krishna and the *gopis* spraying dyes. It looks like He's playing a violin. He could if He wanted to. He's always a person with inconceivable energies. To those who worship Him with love, He gives the understanding by which we can come to Him. Lord Caitanya says the same thing: chant Hare Krishna.

* * *

10:29 a.m.

I haven't typed in this bedroom in quite a while. Krishna is all I need. The typewriter cover has soft little mythic bears on it, young cubs that resemble human children. They even wear human clothes.

She asked, "Do you pray to God to give you positive attachment to your dependents? Or do you not care about them? I know you love them and they love you, but is that really the way it is?" If not, what the hell are we doing in a relationship?

Yes, I love my dependents, but it's not skin love. It's love of God, and we are all pointing in that direction. Let's help each other come to Krishna consciousness.

Madhu has a very busy schedule in England. So does Baladeva. One is singing and the other selling books. We each sigh and progress. How many books must a man write down before they call him an author? How many years must a man sing his songs before they give him an offer? And what's the use of that if we can't please Lord Hari? O Krishna, may we fight impersonalism and cold and too rough dealings. Hare Krishna. We're all on borrowed time.

* * *

Happy Idea #46

A little while ago I felt I was going batty

banging my mind again and again
on Svayambhuva's speech to
Dhruva, telling him how great
God is.

Thought I was loony,
spaced out, asleep or grogged
or just bewildered but
loving the doggedness of
the attempt and knowing
I won't give up.

* * *

Dhruva is a perfect gentleman, a
great warrior and devotee. He'll
stop killing the Yaksas.

* * *

Srila Prabhupada says, " We are absolutely
incompetent."

* * *

Happy Idea #47

It's a happy idea to think
at some point your mind will surrender,
and go along with devotional service.
Bhaktivinoda Thakura sings, "Then
everything will stop and you will
be eternally happy."

* * *

Struggling
with those little voices within.
Even as you bitch and
Raise doubts, you go on
applying your mind to
hearing from *sastra*, chanting
the names.

* * *

It will change
for the good. You'll become

a devotee without even noticing it.

* * *

Happy Idea #48

I should give out happiness.

Emanate, radiate, "I'm happy."

Brahma-bhuta prasannatma.

"If you are morose," Srila Prabhupada said,

"you can know that you are not

Krishna conscious."

* * *

Be happy.

Are you happy?

Yes, it's as easy as a morning walk
in a beautiful place.

* * *

12:08 p.m.

Sitting at top of stairs, waiting. Lunch should be here by 12:30. When lunch comes, I have to do everything quickly "put it on the plates, bring it upstairs, offer, then eat it (while listening to a *Bhagavatam* lecture). After that, I have to go quickly downstairs and put the pots in the hallway for when she comes to get them at 1:15 p.m. I'll have no face-to-face exchange. Will hear from her and others in the mail. After that little flurry of activity is over, I'll keep reading.

In the afternoon I aim to paint "feel solace in freedom, like swimming in Srila Prabhupada *bhajana*."

Hare Krishna. What about when I come to a fence? Is there an attack dog on the other side? If I do come back next life but don't remember this life (I used to ask), what difference does it make? Total amnesia "I already have that. Still, this person Stephen T. Guarino who became Satsvarupa dasa, he's dear to me. What will happen to him? Dust? I don't ask these questions anymore.

* * *

2:47 p.m.

Feeling tired on a Saturday afternoon. Don't have enough oomph to push for quotas or insist on going to the art room. Seems a virtue if I can just have a headache-free day and end the week with that. Don't have to think so much or even verbalize. There's a limit to the efficacy of writing twenty pages a day or else.

I'm tired of rigorous remedies and of grinding-down pain. I'm certainly burnt out on (yet still curious about) the world of opinions and crises in ISKCON, and its reforms and counter-reforms. Where will we be in two years? In five? In ten? In fifty? I won't be here

to deal with it, unless I am reborn in this movement. In that case, at least I'll be a new face. We don't get born with a tag, "He was a GBC member in his past life, so please give him a special place." No one knows that sort of thing except our friendly astrologers (*sarva-jna*).

* * *

3:40 p.m.

Little flowers have little bugs on them. A friend detected in my tone and behavior an awareness that my body clock is running down. She said I seem urgent to write, to get the work done. It's true. I don't feel I have the time to follow long, drawn-out health-care programs, no time to hope for a gradual recovery. My body no longer seems to me to have the limitless energy required to heal itself. Instead, I use painkillers.

But I don't like that word, painkiller. It's associated too much with folly and abuse. Still, my body can't be healed, the pain can't be killed. The non-drug path, they say, has few side effects, although it may not be effective.

Try listening to the wind in the trees. Lately, I've been getting headaches (and taking a med) later in the afternoon, like about now. Sukadeva Gosvami encouraged Maharaja Pariksit, because the king was about to die. The sage asked, "What is the value of living as long as a tree?" A tree endures, soaks up water, but has no higher consciousness. Better a moment of awareness in God consciousness.

Airplane above the clouds. I could be up there on my way to a preaching mission. Walk a little now. Hear the mantras and the wind in the leafy trees. It's August in Wicklow, and it was never summer here.

* * *

4:47 p.m.

Tried the feverfew so I could be up and writing fast, then go to the art room. But something is holding me back. Maybe I'll have to spend an old-man end of day, just taper down and go to bed. What does it matter if I do "more"? What does "more" mean anyway? Who will even notice?

* * *

6:09 p.m.

I bounced back and I'm glad I did. Six handsome paintings to tell for it. One of a bemused Vaisnava. roses or carnations on a high-stemmed plant. Words appeared from the *bhajana* sound vibration to the painted page, "*Bahu dvijana*." Hare Krishna, Hare rama. A big herald bird. Go ahead, make a bird on behalf of Krishna conscious tradition. Go ahead make a face and body with many left arms and one twisting loopy right arm with no hand (he looks like a Durga doll). Thank you, Lord. This is an offering to You. I'm going ahead, daring to live.

* * *

6:30 p.m., Night Notes

To encourage Maharaja Pariksit further, Sukadeva Gosvami gave the example of King Katvanga, who was informed he had only a moment more to live. He at once departed from the alluring heavenly planets and descended to the earth where he absorbed himself in thought of Krishna. We need reassurance that we will be able to do the needful ourselves, but all we can do is pray and cry.

August 2, Midnight

Dreamt I was living with outcastes in the woods. We were always trying to disguise ourselves so people wouldn't harass us and think of us as foreigners. We had our own little enjoyments "made musical instruments, remembered better times "but we weren't given any space to enjoy them. We were also hunted like animals.

Now I'm awake and remembering that Krishna was born in a prison. He too lived in disguise, in a sense, and was hunted down by Kamsa, whom He later killed.

When Kamsa heard that Krishna had just been born, he got up from bed thinking, "Here is Kala, the supreme time factor, which has taken birth to kill me!" Yet he foolishly thought he could kill Kala, which is the name for God in His capacity to kill all beings. If I sometimes think of my own death, I should not forget that death is a feature of God. When death comes, we must submit to this Kala, who takes away our possessions and forces us to take our next bodies. "Without Krishna consciousness, one is condemned to continue wandering in birth and death, not knowing what will happen in one's next birth." (*Bhag.* 10.4.31, purport)

The child, Kamsa discovered, was a girl. Devaki pleaded with him to spare her life, but Kamsa was too cruel. He snatched the newborn child from her hands and was about to smash her on the stone floor when the child slipped upward from his hands and appeared in the sky as eight-armed Durga.

Take this day as it has been offered to you, to serve Krishna. Use your time to progress toward freedom from rebirth. I'm well situated now, but crossing from one life to another can be precarious. Not only is it painful (and I've shown my predilection to avoid pain), but it's risky; we don't know where we will end up next. Pray and cry.

Durga's appearance shocked Kamsa into giving up his cruel nature, at least for the time being. He asked Vasudeva and Devaki to pardon him, and to accept his atrocious deeds in a philosophical way, as fated events. Of course, we find Kamsa's preaching ironic. He killed each of the children and now speaks of the higher natural laws, which cause families to be destroyed. Still, we can read his statements as an accurate description of the law of transmigration. Even a demon in those days knew what happened when body and soul combined.

I will soon go to worship the holy name. I hope it will be ultimately good for me, but little hope that this session will be the one in which I break through. I'll chant anyway, and I'll be grateful.

In his commentary on Kamsa's remarks, Srila Prabhupada states that only a person in his original, spiritual status can feel transcendental bliss. When we're in the bodily concept, we suffer from the material conditions. Srila Prabhupada then raises the question, "Why does a person who is spiritually engaged still suffer from disease?" "In

fact, however, he is neither suffering nor diseased; otherwise he could not be engaged twenty-four hours a day in spiritual activities." (*Bhag.* 10.4.20, purport)

Here I am exposed as not liberated, because I *do* suffer. Yet I do wish to be engaged twenty-four hours a day in quality devotional service, and that's why I'm fighting for it. That's the quality of life I want, and I'm willing to take meds (but not to the point where they become ineffective) to get it. The appearance of disease in a devotee is like the appearance of dirty foam or garbage in the Ganges "they don't prevent bathers from dipping in. It's my spirit self who wants to serve, despite the physical pain. My use of pain relievers is *yukta-vairagya*. But sometimes Krishna says, "Never mind, I don't want them to work for you; you don't need to be physically active. I'd rather you learned to express your Krishna consciousness in a more inward and confined way." Modern medicine cannot give us freedom from disease and death. Face reality. Learn how to think of Krishna even in difficult situations. Pray for spiritual strength to do what must be done.

It's interesting that Prabhupada gives the example of the Ganges with garbage in it. The example in *UpadeSamrta* speaks only of foam produced by the mud on the bottom. In other words, we appear diseased, yet because we maintain our spiritual consciousness, we shouldn't be seen as fully identified with the disease. Even a so-called diseased person can still become Krishna's servant, whether he gets relief from the temporary disease or not.

* * *

4:30 a.m.

KeSava dhrta narahari rupa. Confused? Then stay simple and don't fight or judge Vaisnavas.

But we can't give up our critical intelligence.

Shining periwinkle. It is quite dark at *mangala-arati* time in August. Let us go to the *kadamba* trees. They do so; all exit. I'm not qualified to hear radha-Krishna's intimate pastimes, so I should just hear of Their simple essence. I don't have to demand more.

I have to change my life to write better as I grow older. Or to stop me from growing stale and deteriorating. My mind full of jumpy music at this still hour. Hare Krishna. No owl screeches. Midges and bees plague us at midday, not now. The cattle get a respite from the flies while suffering through the overnight cold.

We like free spirits who are empowered by Krishna. Now I have forgotten how I wrote poems and how I was able to relish Kana's pastimes and jokes in the past. At least I will perform my prescribed duties, and perhaps Krishna will favor me. Yes, He may. When He plays His flute, all the universes are enchanted. The pastimes of Krishna and the *gopis* create waves in the ocean of devotion. If you want a smoother life, don't come to Krishna consciousness.

* * *

A big bee flew in the window. I must drive it out. "Madhusudana is gone." Bring the mind back to Vraja Krishna if you want to become a true devotee.

There was a riot in Brookfield and the police were called out. I remained in my house. I couldn't believe anything bad would happen to me. I mean, in my soul. This is the assurance Krishna gives "that the soul can neither be cut nor dried. It doesn't even get headaches.

Krishna plays the piano, drives the car, and what about the bad things people do? Does He cheat the man and actually pull the trigger? No, He tells us, "Don't sin." It's we who insist on using our free will in useless ways. Hare Krishna.

And we do that while Krishna is playing on Govardhana Hill. We have only to hear from our spiritual master to understand our own foolishness. If we become confused about how to hear and serve purely when so many of our spiritual master's disciples are in disagreement, then go for the most primary orders. No one can deny that he asked us to hear and chant.

"The handmaiden of the Lord" "that phrase is used sometimes. I felt a little pain in my heart, then realized it felt a little like heartburn. I don't think I'm going to die of it, but I don't like living with the pain. O Krishna, please don't forget me. I can't relax. Let me pick up my energies and call out to You. You are giving such a gift of beauty.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

Lord, how foolish I was to take one of these bodies, the network of paths leading to death. I know that's what I should be reading when I tune in to news of pain instead of becoming absorbed in the latest miracle drug "the one that doesn't cause rebound headaches, that can be taken by those over sixty, the one that doesn't have side effects that are worse than the disease itself. No, turn to *bhakti-yoga*.

Summer fading.

* * *

5:38 a.m.

You want to walk among the trees with a poet friend, savoring the "man of no rank" wisdom of Chuang Tzu? I want to be willing to do whatever Krishna wants of me. They would become famous for Him, but they would prefer that Krishna became famous. The *devas* know Him in the upper worlds, but in this world and among these Kali-yuga entrepreneurs, Krishna is not much respected. They know only that He spoke *Bhagavad-gita*. Not much more than that.

Let me go downstairs to prepare breakfast. When it's ready, I'll offer it and gobble it up with the ever-present sense of disappointment, because food is just not the be-all and end all of my existence.

* * *

8:30 a.m.

Feeling sincere regret, Kamsa came to the transcendental stage of knowledge. Vasudeva and Devaki forgave him and admitted that everything had taken place due to providence. One who knows that Krishna is the cause of all causes doesn't become

disturbed by immediate causes. When a devotee suffers he realizes that it is due to his own misdeeds. By the Supreme Lord's grace he is receiving only a slight reaction. "Although the disease of a devotee is due to mistakes committed sometime in the past, he agrees to suffer and tolerate such miseries and he depends fully on the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag.* 10.4.27, purport)

Unfortunately, Kamsa couldn't maintain his realization. He is another example of someone becoming polluted by bad association. I have had so much of that experience. I accept the blame for my own mistakes, but I often made those mistakes by following the advice of others rather than my own intelligence. I have had to withdraw from such strong association to find myself and my own will.

Kamsa told his ministers that according to the goddess Durga, Krishna had already been born elsewhere. His demoniac ministers advised him to kill all recently born children. They also advised that he fight the demigods without fear. They asked Kamsa to order them to kill *brahmanas* and cows. Srila Prabhupada states that our "Krishna consciousness movement" is meant to serve Visnu. Therefore, the *asuras* attempt to suppress it.

* * *

Thanks, folks, for all the support. I tried that new drug Zomig and it worked great. So say the participants in the on-line migraine journal. Some frankly ask for support. They're working jobs, going to their emergency room treatments, suffering in dark rooms, and sharing their experiences. Some are taking too many narcotics and they know it. Some preach that no one should take meds. Some say they have found just the right med (for now). right now, the feverfew nasal spray seems to be working. I have come to know all the drug names. I've tried a number of them, most to no avail. What I like about this journal is that all the sufferers tend to have a common ground upon which to share experience, and they tend to bless others to become free of their own suffering.

The chapter "Krishna Begins His Persecutions" ends with a warning not to blaspheme great souls. If we do, our life span will be reduced and we will suffer a number of other punishments.

I don't really blaspheme devotees, but sometimes I minimize them in my mind. Sometimes I may think someone a phony who is not a phony "who am I to judge? Krishna doesn't want us to speak against anyone. We have no business adding our voice to the criticisms others may be making. Once we're out of the front line of the Green Beret, we no longer have to volunteer for missions, and neither do we have to say so much about what they are doing or how they are doing it.

ISKCON SWAT teams. Yeah, we need them sometimes. We also need some folks to stay home, trying to maintain their spiritual vision. I mean, devotees have different ways of looking at life, different services. That's how it is in the world where the modes hold sway. All of us, however, can follow the basic vows, even if our services differ, and even if we can't find enough taste to execute simple Krishna consciousness.

* * *

Don't forget that the Krishna consciousness movement also has websites where we distribute Prabhupada's teachings. I don't think many new people are flocking to ISKCON, but perhaps I don't know. Questions and answers. Sometimes fighting and insults exchanged on the web. I don't see much of that firsthand. The proliferation of messages is too overwhelming for me. You could spend your whole day reading all that stuff, and if you wanted to taste poison, you could also spend time with the anti-ISKCON sites. What a way to ruin your day. Often the debates are not well thought out "the replies by one party to another "and the careful essence can be lost in the multitude of exchanges.

Kamsa told Vasudeva and Devaki not to consider the immediate events and their causes "that he was the killer of their children and that their children had actually died "but to consider the will of providence and the reaction to karma. He encouraged them to live always on a philosophical platform.

He should talk. But Vasudeva and Devaki agreed with him. They knew he was ultimately right.

But it's hard to always think on that level. We get so caught up in immediate situations and can't think things through.

* * *

10:17 a.m.

Hare Krishna chanter jumps from building, said he was trying to enter the blue spiritual world. This proves these people are crazy and that it's a dangerous cult. New strictures on their activities being considered. The victim, Steven T., interviewed in All Souls hospital, where he's recovering from mild shock (LSD withdrawal) and broken heels, said he confused the material world's falsity for an immediate nonexistence of matter. He also said that he'd been under the influence of devilish association in recent months. He considered the jump an act of bravery that tested his convictions.

But it was a sorry act. He wouldn't have the courage to do it again. He would look out the window first to see if there was a safety net below. He would also want to know the statistics of who else has made the jump and what was the record of survival.

Oh boy. Nasal spray Imitrex for would-be cads and *mudhas*. Give me just a little to distract the pain and to allow me to concentrate on spiritual life. I promise not to become absorbed in the *mahat-tattva* at the time of universal destruction.

I saw that Muralidhara Prabhu is selling his best paintings for several thousand dollars each. He had them advertised in *Hare Krishna World*. Anyone interested?

Mild Sunday today. Unusual patches of sunshine in this room. I'm taking my sailboat into the harbor and hoping for no storm.

* * *

Happy Idea #49

The heavy, cold wind

chills the house,

seems strange or wrong for almost-July.

But it's normal for

Ireland, especially rathdangan
in Wicklow. The house is
Rattling with the buffets.
The pine trees nod.
Rabbits have buried themselves in
the grass as if to keep warm,
wind ruffling in
brown-gray fur.

* * *

Life is not an idea only.
Neither is it only happy.
It's a mixture of body and soul,
misery and illusion of happiness.
That's what the *sastras* say.
We're each a spiritual spark,
eternal servant of God who
invites us back to Godhead.
You can take it or leave it,
you've got that free will.

* * *

Happy Idea #50
It was good to honor the
dream and let the conscious
self go with it.

* * *

He can give a million happy
ideas and their consummation
in a moment.

* * *

God is Truth,
Love, Beauty.
All fear and bad comes when
you forget Him, when you
doubt and disobey.

* * *

We're each

persons, not impersonal.
We differ.
Let us not fight,
or kill, hurt.

* * *

Many admissions
come out
in a poem of happiness,
and I hope
something useful to
the solitary reader.

* * *

12:08 p.m.

The cows and oxen fight off flies and hunger until finally the man comes to truck them to the slaughterhouse. So many "nice" people think nothing of eating their flesh. *raksasas*.

Clear still. Someone recommended plenty of drinking water to cleanse the system. He said I could call him for more details. But I have found a way to be happy even when I'm in pain. I tell him, "Please write me and I'll tell you *my* secret."

What?

Chant Hare Krishna.

If my secret got out, I'd be banned from the migraine site. They'd think a Hare Krishna was trying to horn in. They prefer I was just another regular migraine sufferer experimenting to find the right medication. They don't want to know too much about my private life.

* * *

2:47 p.m.

Now it's afternoon and I'm living the usual "I can't charge forward because there's a little red signal light flashing behind my right eye. It's not my imagination. I've been tracking it for a while. In the meantime, dare I read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*?

I wanted to give you an idea what it's like, because I need to account for these blank periods of time. A great Vaisnava might go ahead anyway and do what he has to do in Krishna's service, but I have to acknowledge that "going ahead" means staying in Krishna consciousness, not doing it in any particular form. One man might stay on the front lines with his allopathic medications "he'll do anything to avoid being knocked out of ISKCON action. Others have a different approach. The first man might think the second man is whimpering, because he listens more to the pain and doesn't quite ignore it, but it's not really so black and white. Both of them have to realize that their bodies are the instruments given by Krishna by which to engage in His service. Haven't we learned

that from all those whose health (and sometimes minds) have collapsed in this movement?

* * *

The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* describes the ceremony known as Nandotsava, Krishna's birth celebration held by Nanda and Yashoda. (In ISKCON, we observe Nandotsava as Srila Prabhupada's appearance day, because he was born on Nandotsava in 1896.) On this day, Nanda Maharaja gave away huge numbers of cows, and heaps of grain, cloth, and jewels in charity. The beautiful, happy village women brought gifts for baby Krishna.

I love reading the verses and purports, contrasting the original Krishna conscious civilization with today's impoverished situation.

At lunch, I heard Bhurijana Prabhu speaking on the Second Canto. Sukadeva Gosvami told Maharaja Pariksit that he should not be afraid of death; he should be detached from all material things, because he had to leave them anyway.

By the way, the radar technician has just returned to my room with his report. He says that red signal we noticed is persisting. I examine his findings. Time for action. I consult today's strategy and decide on one feverfew capsule. If that doesn't work, I have a backup.

* * *

4:50 p.m.

Come on, baby, take the cuddly-bear-cub cover off the typewriter and write. I have at least a little space right now, and the coast guard has declared they have their pain cutter in the water. Is my imagination up to it? Is Berryman's Henry around to see, and my own Haladhara? Is the prince of matches and madness about? MacBeth's ghost? Here we go .

..

Krishna appeared, and the next day they held a great ceremony. We can't even imagine, according to our present standards of poverty and wealth, how wealthy Nanda Maharaja was "and he was only a village king. He gave away a million cows with gold ornaments. Don't doubt it. I know an intelligent Godbrother, or several of them, who have Ph.D.s, who believe this. God has inconceivable energies and can do anything. He could expand the village of Gokula and allow Nanda to have all those cows and all that gold, and even leave him room to give them away. We can't measure these things materially.

To be honest, I've never had much problem defying the material measurement of the spiritual, so I'm certainly not going to get hung up on it now. There is an active spiritual realm, and it works in wonderful ways. God arrived, lifted Govardhana Hill, and was both God and loved as an intimate in Vrndavana "loved just for Himself.

My ears perk up whenever I hear anything that sounds like a car coming up our road. Usually the sound turns out not to be a car, at least not one that stops outside our gate and rings the too-faint bell. Anyway, let me remain absorbed in this page. How else will I feel the sense of urgency if I am unwilling to keep my attention fixed on my reading even when a car comes up the lane?

Urgency. Yes, I sense my body clock running down. I want to accomplish my work before the end, my merry, jolly, relaxing work.

Hare Krishna. A crinkly man came down the hill. He had collected blueberries. He gave them to the children to take home. Is there a village anywhere that can remind me of Vrndavana? Is there a way I can remember Vrndavana while living in Ireland? Can I help others to do the same? recommend a way? Yes, I tell them to read Prabhupada's books. But if they say they have tried and it's too tedious because they have read them too many times already, then what? My experience tells me (and them) to go on reading anyway. They should do it when they can be most attentive. Use the words of scripture to encourage a prayer of the heart. Try for that.

* * *

What about the confidence I seem to have that if I write even when there's nothing apparent ahead, something will come? From the blank, substance will come?

This is based on the fact that Krishna is the substance and that we have been trained in substantial Krishna consciousness. We have heard a substantial amount of Krishna's teachings and have a substantial amount of experience trying to apply them. We even have a substantial amount of frustration in not being able to overcome *anarthas*, and this information also tests our basic determination. As Srila Prabhupada says, as long as we don't resent the Lord's injunctions and we go on trying without defeat or hopelessness, we will eventually arrive at the right standard. Hare Krishna.

The bull charged and roared. The simple heart grabbed the master's daughter and put her over the fence first, then jumped over herself, barely missing a goring. She was a brave and sacrificing woman. I told you before about "*un couer simple*" and how she worked so humbly and believed in God. I mention it here because I remember the story from my college days. I read the story in French. Such a memory is not in itself substantial, but a wisp that comes and connects in my mind to Krishna consciousness. Otherwise, it only reminds me of my life in this body and my contact with the world of culture and literature. Prabhupada has given me the way to link it and to make it ultimately meaningful, and for that I am grateful.

Aside from the fact that it's a memory, Flaubert actually used the story to mock those who were religious. I resent that now and want to counter it. So many anti-religious people make their points through art and literature; I want to make points for the other side. It's like a contest.

O Krishna, You are a beautiful bluish boy, and I love You even through the rigors of life in an institution and through the headache pain.

* * *

6:38 p.m., Night Notes

Car sound far away. Cozy to bed. Hare Krishna. Krishna smiling and playing in Vrndavana "may my thoughts turn to Him.

August 3, 12:05 a.m.

June marches on (I mean, August), and I still feel that tightness in the region of my heart. A man my age should probably be concerned about such things. Is it the Depakote? What the heck. rain beating on the skylight. I dreamt of my struggling Godbrother. Because I've been curious about what he's going through, my dreaming mind added in all the drama. I could live, I realized, in a totally self-created world without every really contacting reality. Ha!

But it's sad to think of that Godbrother.

Anyway, let me turn to the *Bhagavatam*.

What does this heart-tightness matter? I have so little time now, and if it's the medications creating this tightness, what will I do about it anyway? I have no doctor here to explain it to.

Nanda Maharaja gave charity to the devotees of Lord Visnu as a way to satisfy Him. *Mad-bhakta-pujabhyadika*. The Lord says, "Worshiping My devotees is better than worshiping Me directly." If Visnu is pleased, then everyone will be pleased, because He is the root of all existence. In particular, our family members will be pleased. "Nanda Maharaja wanted to see his newborn child happy. That was his purpose. Therefore, he wanted to satisfy Lord Visnu . . ." (*Bhag.* 10.5.16, purport)

I like to write with a pen. Does that mean Lord Visnu is pleased with me? One woman I know keeps wanting to be assured that God loves us and that we should love each other, that we should make gestures of that love. No, I can't claim that because I feel good, God must be pleased. Krishna consciousness is not as blunt and self-serving as that. He may be pleased while I'm suffering. Anyway, He's pleased in all cases because He is the Supreme Enjoyer. I cannot know His mind. But He is well-intentioned and has a good feeling toward the *jivas*.

Nanda Maharaja's home is eternally the abode of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and it "became the place for the pastimes of the goddess of fortune." (*Bhag.* 10.5.18) Srila Prabhupada explains, "The chief of the goddesses of fortune is Srimati radharani. Therefore Krishna's appearance in the land of Vraja indicated that the chief goddess of fortune, radharani, would also appear there very soon."

After Nandotsava, Nanda Maharaja went to Mathura to pay taxes and to offer a presentation to King Kamsa to satisfy him. It was another way that Nanda hoped to protect his transcendental child, Krishna.

I think I'm going to call out a little to my Lord in my *japa*. That's the idea. I'm not self-sufficient. In any case, I can't continue living. I'm already seeing the yellow warning light. Srila Prabhupada observed these things nobly and courageously in his own life. On one level, he ignored the symptoms and went on traveling and preaching. Medically, some say he shortened his life duration by so much work and anxiety as he conducted his worldwide movement. He didn't stop to rest, didn't retire.

Dear Srila Prabhupada, what can I do? I mean, I don't think I can do more than I'm already doing. Maybe I'm asking whether I can make more of an outward surrender than what I'm already doing. If not, can I do *something* to gain your favor? Can I enter the chanting, hearing, and preaching more substantially? I'd like the reassurance I used to have with you, that I was your son and that my only purpose in life was to satisfy you by working in your mission. This new "freedom" since your disappearance can be confusing.

Nanda Maharaja and Vasudeva met in Mathura. Visualize the two "stepbrothers" and friends, Krishna's two fathers, meeting in a room in that city, both with Krishna on their minds. They wanted to protect Him. They both loved Him in the *vatsalya* mood. They kept His existence a secret from Kamsa. All glories to the Lord of the universe.

I talk wildly sometimes. rain is conscientious. Why can't I be too as I chant? The fathers of Krishna love Him and protect His interest. Can I also? As I live and write and think of You, Lord and spiritual master, I know your interests must prevail.

* * *

4:24 a.m.

I must write to you, folks, and tell you that I'm feeling all right. Of course, the body always gives trouble, but the spirit can transcend it. Our spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada, has given us the direction. We simply have to follow him. Yes, I have heard of the recent tragedies within our family and of all the latest controversies, but you know, such things will always be. We don't have to respond to them at every turn. When we do respond, we should respond with *siddhanta*, not sentiment. Ultimately, we have to pray and cry.

Yeah, Krishna is giving us a chance to serve. Just by saying "This is for Krishna," may we not offer Him many excellent things? As long as what we are offering is not something obnoxious. Offer grains or worship with *arghya*. Use natural substances and craft good articles. That's what they did on Nandotsava "brought Krishna the best of everything.

Each artist stands and takes his turn at heart-felt offering. Padma, Saibhya, and Candravali's other *sakhis* tried their best, but they were outdone by Lalita, ViSakha, and Vrnda-devi, Radha's *sakhis*. We know very little about this, but we try to hear respectfully. Hare Krishna.

Dear folks, this morning it's raining so heavily that the sky is quite dark. Soon I will have to adjust my schedule and go out on the morning walk later than usual. That will also make breakfast later.

Padma, Saibhya "words
come free
loose did I
forget their special
quality

* * *

given by Krishna to poets?
Pegasus, a clumsy horse with
wings is not my muse
but I think of rupa Gosvami under
a *kadamba* tree and my own master
writing alone in Vrndavana
laughing at the list
of names, all that was left

of his family and friends.

* * *

Just a laugh and I too must
go like the froth on a wave
in the sea of *samsara*. Please
let me give my attention
to Krishna. If
I'm going to prepare for
my next life in *any* way, then
why not prepare to return
to the spiritual sky?

* * *

Haribol, folks, this is me alone in Krishna's shelter in Krishna's land
where the goddess of fortune
will soon be born.
This is Krishna's radha "radha's
Krishna, Yashoda's child,
Nanda's pride.
Two fathers met in Mathura but
Kamsa did not know.
When he discovers
our Krishna in Gokula he
will send wizards and witches
in gigantic sizes for Krishna to
break as children
break toys.

* * *

Dear folks, we must not forget the raindrops and our desire to worship. I'm just a pious mouther, an opposer, perhaps. I wince at pain. Having pain is a hard job. Let me sit back and wait to hear M. tell me how the festival was, the one I didn't attend but during which I spent my time measuring pills and trying to figure it all out.

Boy Scout. Monk measure *merdre* sounds make them please divine. Is that a spider creeping soundlessly across my desk? Is that an iron meteor or a fist on the door? Was that a poltergeist thumping about? In any case, best to chant Hare Krishna.

You're not going *out* in that downpour, are you?

Yes, I am, because my rain suit is guaranteed to keep me dry, and I don't think I'll find anyone else abroad on this holiday morning, except an occasional all-night reveler still careening about.

In that case, I'll stand to the side and depend on Krishna to protect me and my scheduled return back to this house.

My schedule is simply another way to think of Him
one way
or another.

* * *

5:20 a.m.

I've never seen the road so flooded "not just our rocky lane but the actual road. It was covered in sheets of water six inches deep, all of it running quickly, carrying objects along with it. If this rain keeps up, it will only get worse. I walked to the bridge, by which time I usually chant fifty-four mantras, but the bridge was so flooded that I decided not to go further. I didn't really want to wade through it. I thought the water would top my boots. No car could cross the bridge in this condition. Once it stops raining, it'll calm down, I'm sure. The Irish soil seems to absorb unlimited amounts of water. But it's so wild now!

* * *

5:34 a.m.

I'm back inside where it's safe. I was surprised to see the van parked outside the wall. I didn't hear him come in. He'll probably sleep in late. Krishna on the cover of the book appears fully grown, as Visnu, and at the same time as the seemingly ordinary but wonderful child Krishna. The artist had a simple and worldly conception, yet painted according to *sastra*. Who could see it actually unless he had transcendental vision?

Those torrents of water on the road! That water could wash the road away, and it certainly could wash away cars or cattle if it got any deeper. It's still raining hard. I imagine people fearing the flood and leaving their homes to find a dry spot. We devotees would go around in boats bringing blankets and food to the flooded Irish villages.

The rain makes me want to go to the bedroom to hear it better. This is just a fragment of my energy, Krishna says. Hare Krishna. My socks got wet, and the tape recorder, but otherwise my rain gear kept me safe and dry.

Indoors to chant. I can't give my whole heart in an expression, because it is scattered between past and future and the multitude of ideas and worries that fill my mind. O Krishna.

* * *

8:45 a.m.

Took an Esgic at 7:50 a.m. M. said the weekend was "brilliant" "his singing and Baladeva's GNP book table. I sat in the dark, listening to him recount it all, waiting for the pain to go down.

Yes, let me stay here and they can sell my books. Hare Krishna. Fly into the wheel of as few fracasas as possible. Sitting in bed, I thought, "How to make my writing more readable?" I myself, with frequent headaches "or more specifically, nearness to headaches "find it difficult to read when there are long blocks of print. Maybe I could

break it up into shorter blocks and intersperse the prose with fragments of poem. Drawings too. But no pretense at "easier" reading. Write what counts.

It's still the spinach fast, but someone cooked spinach for me yesterday. Lord Caitanya liked *Sak*. I offered it to Radha-Govinda, who today wear white and pink. It's probably too late to ask Maha-mantra dasi to make a Janmastami outfit for Radha-Govinda.

M. said he has a report on HK Swami. It affects me, and that's why I dreamt of it. I shouldn't be afraid to mention the anxiety his situation produces in me here in my EJW. This is my "on-line" journal. I don't know exactly what computer people mean by "on-line," but for me, it can mean our line, our *parampara*. Also, it means "put it on the line," talk straight. And it conveys the sense of a live broadcast, something ongoing. For example, in French, a diary is called *un livre en temps*, "a book in time." This is my on-line journal written in the present.

* * *

9:06 a.m.

Kierkegaard says subjectivity is important. We are the ones who must believe in God and make Him the center of our lives. We are the ones who must die and take a next life. Even if we say we should live for others, work for our spiritual master, etc., we are the ones who have to do it. Therefore, we have to care for ourselves and our spiritual needs.

Garbage men ride on the backs of the trucks and jump off when the trucks slow down near a garbage can. They grab the full-sized cans and throw the contents into the eating machines, which munch it all up. They then drop the cans a bounce and jump back onto the trucks while the truck moves down the road to the next customer. I used to watch them from the window at Katan Avenue. They wore gloves and dirty uniforms, these Department of Sanitation "engineers," as they are called in America. Home owners were always concerned that the job be done well, their garbage emptied on time, and the cans returned undamaged. The city provided the service for a fee. Why mention it here? I don't know. A memory that just popped in, I guess. It's something subjective "that experience of watching garbage men at work "and it lives within me still after all these years.

Sukadeva Gosvami said, "Maharaja, you have less than seven days to live, which is a lot more than Katvanga Maharaja had, so you should be bold enough not to be afraid of death and detach yourself from material life." Maharaja Pariksit had already said, "I want to know the duty of a man who is about to die, and I want to continually hear about Krishna. I am prepared to sit here and hear from you, O great soul, as you narrate the *uttama-Sloka*s of the Lord who personally saved me and who was the dear friend of my grandfather, Arjuna. Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead." That was the setup. We hear it today with great profit to ourselves.

I mentioned that I'd like my writing to be easier. I'd also like to find a way to make reading easier. Imagine reading index-card fragments of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, or willingly picking up any volume and reading only one verse and purport "any one that suits my fancy? I could also read those wonderful first-edition volumes. I could look at them and see what verse popped into my mind, then go for it. Some Christians have a

concept of reading the Bible like that. They turn to any section and consider that God has told them what to read. Maybe I could reserve one reading session a day for that, or do it when I feel physically weak. Easy reading, easy writing. That's what's necessary for me now.

* * *

10:30 a.m.

So word has reached me: HK Swami wants to marry his therapist. He says, "HarikeSa Swami has died and is not coming back." I'm not responsible here for an in-depth report, but here are some selfish responses: Now I have more reason (right, ammunition) to stay in this Irish house. It's every man for himself. Survive however you can.

One Maharaja says that this case teaches us foremost that we must be "more loving and caring toward one another." I don't know exactly what he means by that, especially in this case, but I would add that we have to be more forgiving.

What's next?

That Esgic didn't banish the pain. It used to be that I wouldn't consider taking something else on such a day but would "hang in there," as the migraineurs are fond of saying. Lately, however, I've been trying more to eliminate all pain. Today, though, I think I will live with this. It's not so bad yet. Don't freak out just because a little pain is present.

* * *

11:45 a.m.

How do I digest the news? I don't. I can't. I can only express a little of it here, and perhaps discuss it with someone who cares. I don't want to get stuck in buzz words or clichés. Let's be caring. He did so much good. The gurus in general shouldn't have accepted so much responsibility and honor. We need to get back to basics, especially worship of Srila Prabhupada. Some say, "I've had it with ISKCON." The spiritual master has to be a pure devotee of Krishna. So-and-so was right.

Too much talk. I can't dismiss it all, of course. I feel more drive to protect my *sannyasa-aSrama*. Does that make me self-righteous: "At least *I'm* an honorable *sannyasi*"? Maybe everyone needs to get married and stop pretending, stop leading others if they can't be honest with themselves. No, he was working for others and neglected his own needs. Study the fascinating character of the case. He was never impressed with any devotee. They say he has delusions about himself.

Now will they see what a good fellow I am? Little Jack Horner sat in the corner eating his Christmas pie. He stuck in his thumb, pulled out a plum, and said, "What a good fellow am I." Yep, that's me.

"They were all wrong and need to be whittled down to size." Someone said that. "How can we believe anyone now?" One wiped out after another. Give us wholesale reform so when these gurus fall, it doesn't create such a landslide.

* * *

12:28 p.m.

I thought I should look at books like *Tropic of Cancer*, Durrell's *The Black Book*, Celine, *Cain's Book* by Alexander Trocchi, and write like that, but when I picked up *Cancer*, within minutes I knew I didn't want to write like that.

What else? Hare Krishna. HarikeSa. The world upside down. Hang on. Listen to this, you won't believe it. And these are just the facts. What about the repercussions?

Lunch is munch
unless your needs are met
no GBC committee can send me to
China or Japan. I'll say
tell HarikeSa Hari
Sauri, I'll say

I know what I need to do and nothing is in my name exorbitant, just this house which isn't mine, and a van that isn't either. Nothing is mine, *nirmama*. Even my passport is owned by the U.S.A. Of course, the Esgic is mine, and so are the headaches, but then, I am not this body.

For hours I've been watching a tan fox in the pasture. It's digging up something "worms come up from the rain? "but all over the place, digging with paws and teeth. At first I liked the sight of it, but now I realize how disgusting it is to watch a creature kill another, even if it's only a slug or whatever between the fox's clacking teeth.

* * *

2:34 p.m.

"Vasudeva warns that all of us, even if intimately related, are carried away by the waves of time according to the results of past karma." (*Bhag.* 10.5.25, purport) Even he and Nanda Maharaja, although intimate friends, were unable to see one another for years. Vasudeva inquired about Gokula: "The place must be full of water, grass and other plants," just suitable for cow protection. Nanda consoled Vasudeva, saying he shouldn't be unhappy over the loss of the children Kamsa killed, because destiny is responsible for everything. Destiny has been mentioned repeatedly in this section. Vasudeva uses that word to convince Kamsa to let Devaki go, and Kamsa later uses it to say that it was destiny that killed Vasudeva's children. Destiny refers to the law of karma, which is ultimately governed by the Supreme Lord.

Now I've finished the Tenth Canto, Part One of the old edition. Do I want to start the practice of choosing verses from anywhere in the *Bhagavatam* at random? Why not?

In the Sixth Canto, after being saved by the Visnudutas, Ajamila repented. He said, "Now I shall give up all lusty desires and free myself from this illusion. I shall become a merciful, well-wishing friend to all living entities and always absorb myself in Krishna consciousness." (*Bhag.* 6.2.37) Srila Prabhupada states that this should be the determination of all Krishna conscious persons "to free ourselves from *maya* and to "be compassionate to all others suffering in those clutches." (*Bhag.* 6.2.37, purport)

Sunshine beating down on my face. Let me move to another chair. HarikeSa Swami's situation dominates my thinking right now. Thinking of the players in it "Monika, the therapist, the GBC men, his disciples "and what has been said. He wants to marry her

and live in a house. He said he's horrified by the prospect of living alone in a room. But she doesn't want to marry him. His intimate disciples say he needs time, patience, and privacy; we who are listening in shouldn't expect different news or any immediate breakthrough.

But how to think and be now? If his life was false, what is real? What were we told? Now we are told something else.

Listen to me, I didn't fall down. "When it comes time for me to have to face unresolved material desires and transcend them," says a Godbrother, "I hope I will have someone to help kick me through the crisis, someone who has experience in compassion from having passed through his own 'dark night of the soul.'" (Is he comparing this to what St. John of the Cross speaks of?) Let's be simpler and dimpler, that's my advice.

But yeah, each of us is bashed in turn. The test appears in different ways, according to who we are. Let's help one another. That comes first. Help the needy. Isn't that what Srila Prabhupada is saying here?

But he's saying it a little differently, or so we always took it. He says we should go out and preach. We're already fixed up by virtue of chanting the holy name; we've already been saved by the Visnudutas. Now help others. Don't let *maya* lead you around, or them either.

"One who is interested in his own salvation isn't as advanced in Krishna consciousness as one who feels compassion for others and who therefore propagates the Krishna consciousness movement. Such an advanced devotee will never fall down, for Krishna will give him special protection." (*Bhag.* 6.2.37)

That's it, huh?

Ajamila, now detached from material life, went to Hardwar. Srila Prabhupada said ISKCON has centers in Vrndavana and Mayapur, where people can go and retire. "One is welcome to live in those holy places for the rest of his life in order to achieve the highest success by the very simple method of chanting the holy names of the Lord and taking *prasadam*." (*Bhag.* 6.2.39, purport)

* * *

4:53 p.m.

Six days in a row with headaches and my arsenal of meds. Why don't I just stop the meds and spend the days in bed doing nothing? No.

Zomig, I hear, is another Triptan and can cause chest pains for people with a history of coronary trouble. Of course, a healthy young lad like myself, so rosy cheeked, needn't worry.

What kind of hats do Hare Krishna people wear? Do they bandy about? Do they draw pictures? Do they allow women to become temple presidents? Tell me about the theology of Srimati radharani and *raganuga-bhakti*. What is the cause of . . . let me rephrase that . . . who is the spiritual master of all the world? What is the *Vedanta-sutra*, and what is the difference between *Sruti* and *smrti*? Cite six *Bhagavad-gita* verses and tell where they come from. Did you pass the *bhakti-Sastri* test, and I don't mean the one you took in 1969, because that was too easy, even though Prabhupada himself gave it.

But do tell memories of the founder-*acarya*. Are you fond of him? Is he a charterhouse sort of guru who insists you live alone, like the Carthusians? Or is he more like a Jesuit, sending you out to preach?

Wanting to get away from these questions, I walked faster. The fox has finally stopped digging and eating whatever it was finding. M. said he remained sympathetic to the fox up until the end, but I didn't. We hold different opinions on other matters too.

* * *

Henry and Mandala and Mandira and Haladhara returned home from a picnic. It was a bank holiday, so there was no mail. I did not get any Buddhist books from Waterstones. No dirty looks, certainly. All I need is Krishna. I don't need other things. Cast off doubts. Think of a verse and purport you want to read and why you want to read it. Then go for it. Be intuitive. And stay away from women. You *sannyasis* seem prone . . . of course, not me. Anyway, I have no teeth. Who would want me? I'm almost sixty.

Bandir and Madhava and Olive and Haladhara returned from the beer garden. Haladhara said, "I did not go to the beer garden, so stop spreading this rumor around about me. It isn't true. Anyway, people don't call them beer gardens anymore. We went to the hair dresser and dyer." He did get his ear pierced. He also bought a CD reissue. Then he went to the wrong place in his dreams.

Open the book at random. Say you opened the Sixth Canto and land on the verse, *Narayana parah sarve* just because it is famous. You wonder if it will touch you.

I want to be considered a devotee. I have been taking seven-and-a-half minutes to chant a round. It doesn't matter how long it takes; the prayer state is missing, in any case.

O Krishna, why do I always say these things about myself? I am trying. I just want Prabhupada to see how needy I am. If I need him so much, and am so hopeless, then Prabhupada will be kind enough to keep me in a corner of his heart.

August 4, 12:05 a.m.

Srila Prabhupada dedicated *Krishna* book to his father, "a pure devotee of Krishna, who raised me as a Krishna conscious child . . . He was kind to me, and I imbibed from him the ideas later on solidified by my spiritual master, the eternal father." I don't have a similar memory of my father, but I remember Srila Prabhupada from 1966 on. He was a pure devotee of Krishna who raised me as a Krishna conscious young man, accepted the donation of my pay from the welfare office, and allowed me to type for him. He sent me to preach in Boston and was kind to me. Now I live in the throes of his disappearance, watching some of his beloved disciples fall or rule his estate, quarrel or sue his movement, yet still seeing the many who carry forth what he asked them to do.

"Who is Krishna?" Prabhupada asked.

He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We know that because He conforms in exact detail to descriptions of the Supreme Being, the Godhead. He is all-attractive. Srila Prabhupada presented reasons (logical arguments) why something must ultimately be accepted on the basis of Sastric authority. He developed analogies from worldly experience, and wanted us to accept them, to be convinced, "Try to understand," he

would say, and, "What is the difficulty?" Sometimes he admitted that his analogies were crude, but we knew, as he did, that it was not a matter of analogy of axiomatic truth.

Thank God for the moment's peace and quiet. I didn't get up early to cast doubts on the Vedic scriptures. I wish to make it clear to myself what I have to do. That's all. And to imbibe transcendental sound from my spiritual master. The mind *is* rankling.

Now a random selection from the volume of *Caitanya-caritamṛta* on my desk:

"In the age of Kali, intelligent persons perform congregational chanting to worship the incarnation of Godhead who constantly sings the name of Krishna. Although His complexion is not blackish, He is Krishna Himself. He is accompanied by His associates, servants, weapons and confidential companions." (Cc. *Adi* 3.25)

I was going to write M. a note asking, "What can I do to help you write songs?" But why push him? He will write them when he can. Might as well write myself a note: "What are you doing with your headache medication? Did you notice that you've been getting headaches every day?" Or, "What are you doing about our living ISKCON?" Something. I can't just float along toward death, I have to swim. Lord Caitanya is God. Krishna is God. The holy name is God. At least chant without offense.

Lord Caitanya chanted and showed the pure devotee's great bliss and conviction. He was an ecstatic preacher, a loving spiritual master, a beloved Lord. "Lord Caitanya taught Krishna consciousness and chanted the name of Krishna. Therefore, to worship Lord Caitanya, everyone should together chant the *maha-mantra* Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare." This will fulfill the highest purpose of satisfying the Supreme Lord.

The one who was going to take care of everything, lead everyone, didn't take care of himself. An argument in favor of caring for ourselves, perhaps allowing ourselves a few spiritually harmless, human concessions. So we can survive. But they say when we fall, we can burn in a crucible that makes us even stronger when we return to the great tasks we have to perform in Krishna consciousness.

* * *

4:30 a.m.

I sometimes worry about how much medication I seem to need to take, especially when I hear how much service my brothers and sisters are doing. Anyway, let me praise Krishna in my own language and love Him despite my condition. A bro says pantheism is to see Krishna in everything. Nondevotees don't say that. But we may. Perfection of monism. Dovetail "the blues, the honking music with beat usually associated with material enjoyment but with the animal propensity dovetailed into pure Krishna consciousness. release yourself from all carnal desire. Have a strong spirit. Each of us can show love for the Lord.

Swami said the chemicals come from some place, and they work in a combination we call life. When death occurs, scientists can't restore life merely by injecting chemicals into a dead body. The important thing is to find life's source. We have to search for Him. I find that to be a good argument. Find the person who brings life to matter.

What is my Godbrother saying today? Is he still deluded? Where are we? How do we interpret this latest crisis? We first mock psychoanalysis for twenty years, then decide to undergo it to free ourselves of childhood and ISKCON traumas. It doesn't make sense.

Prabhupada said that all he had to offer us was the Hare Krishna mantra. I think it's all there is now.

The words don't mean blues don't
mean God is pleased.

Just if you're officially right.

The most prominent soldier got wounded, they say. He's not talking now, and had to give up his duties. We didn't expect it. He was such a tower of . . .

It's the shadow, the
Jungian shadow.

It has leapt out and assumed its way.

No more denial.

When it gets us, we weep and

leap and

cry in joy

and sorrow

and insist, "This

is what I must do now. I am dying repressed."

We give each other a break. But it's painful

too painful.

Do we all have

such ordinary needs?

Yeah, well, forgive. Don't harbor resentment. Don't say, "I told you so! I was right all along." A person like me had the right idea when he resigned from the GBC.

No, don't say that. Because

I'm only venting.

M. said that if only one person really appreciates ("digs") his singing, it will be enough for him and he will be ready to go on.

Okay, God,

God, we put down Christian saints

who at least remained absorbed in God consciousness

and needed nothing else.

But this honest age is something too. Loving, caring people have to help one another out. You, Sats, may pride yourself with your artless art therapy "your secret satisfaction" but blow a compassionate tune

because there's no way out of this world

or even out of the next desire

unless you become fixed

on Krishna.

* * *

O Krishna, please bring us to You, Lord. You

are the supreme and for You I renounce
intellectual deviation called
doubt and
sensual lust, begging You to let
me in. Because we either bite the bullet
or the dust.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

I'm surprised to see that the roads are completely dry after yesterday's flood, although there seems to be a lot of sediment left behind. Otherwise, nothing has changed. It's the same serviceable road.

I notice that I've been less sensitive to my surroundings lately. I guess I'm living more in my own thoughts. This may be partly due to the fact that I can't see as clearly in the morning as I used to. It's already staying darker longer. That tends to make me stay in my own head rather than to go out with my senses ready to perceive all the details.

The seasons change here more gradually than they do in America. I tend to think I'm seeing the same old thing "the same wonderful, muscular, almost imperceivable clouds. But the dandelions are all puffballs now, and the weeds very tall.

I left a good handful of Post-its this morning for Madhu. That's because I'm thinking about what we went through in this volume of EJW, especially with the shocking news from Germany. My books have no shape other than the shape of life itself, so everything is included. I'm like the road that floods then fills with sediment until the next rain, but which remains basically unchanged. I say "basically unchanged," because what really has changed is that I have less time to live. I still feel that burning sensation.

* * *

5:45 a.m.

A man wants to be a Hare Krishna. He goes to school for it. He dozes in a chair and can't remember what was on his . . . Give credit to those who achieve a semblance . . . Ink on fingernail. Totally tired after midnight-to-now *bhajana*. Why don't I just relax? My hands aren't working right. I'm a-slippin' and a-slidin', a-peepin' and a-hidin', a monk making bread. He wants to live like a millionaire on a mountaintop, but his servants would desert him in a minute.

* * *

9:30 a.m.

Practice virtue until you have to strain. Work done for Visnu has a purifying effect. All else binds.

Work is play for those who are fortunate. They do what they like and make money at it, although no one avoids the crunch forever. We have also heard about sages from the Orient who do nothing, yet they too work, if only by sitting down and trying to concentrate on one thing. Because they don't work like *karmis*, they must accept the lack

of material facility, and often, the loneliness. They usually also have to accept insults. Without suffering humiliation, they do not do the work that leads to humility.

Prabhupada wanted us to work for Krishna. He created the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and asked the devotees to maintain it with their work if they wanted to please him. This has proved difficult. Our movement is full of politics and impurities, but that's inevitable in this age. We can become purified by following his order, the essence of his order.

Hare Krishna. There, I tricked you into the work of writing another page. Whoever reads it will also have to work. The saving factor will be the appearance of transcendental words on the page and thinking of Krishna within. If you can help even one person in his or her Krishna consciousness, then the endeavor is not made in vain. Otherwise, *Srama eva hi kevalam*. If work doesn't please Lord Hari, it is a waste of time, a use of breath for no account. Try chanting Hare Krishna mantras and bring your attention even once to the holy sounds. That is work in devotion.

* * *

A free-write page is a different kind of effort. I am lax in preparing a fax, for example. A brother wrote me a card and said, "I have been traveling, preaching, and experiencing the changing winds of ISKCON." He must have to answer difficult questions from those who have lost faith. On whose behalf do we answer, and what do we say? Perhaps he says he just wants to speak *Bhagavad-gita*. Or he may answer the questions as best he can, exhausted from repeating himself and from the weight of the questions themselves.

A free-write gets a perk and keeps going. It answers the pines with its left hand. It tries to think of one thought per word and pays for the ad. It ignores what would distract, or incorporates it into the writing. Maybe the free-writer is like a fox digging for clams or a man who puts on his sandals and disappears. He veers away from distraction or anything that would make him sick. He fears he will be shut down by pain. He doesn't want to answer so many questions. They are all too painful. But he answers them here anyway.

"There should always be fresh challenge and enthusiasm," Srila Prabhupada wrote in one letter. He said it would come from the struggle of the individual temple, which should not be subsidized and controlled by a central authority. The individual free-writer is like a non-hired gun who doesn't hurt anyone and doesn't blow up his own foot either. Put him out to pasture?

Dear alone horse, you look weary. Has some demon in the dress of a king come to mistreat you? Do you look so tired because no one gave you grain to eat? Is being outdoors all day long wearing you down? Do you yearn for a mate or for a home in the country? Do you need a scripture to read or a prescription from your doctor? Why are you lamenting?

Decadence. It's inevitable the old horse will echo scripture. Don't be disturbed by it.

The free-writer investigates a crime report. He pulls up in a car and opens the door, emerges bravely with a gun on his hip. At least in his mind, he prays to God in His holy

name. He wants to do his work without attachment, fear, or lethargy while simultaneously giving his whole heart to Krishna. That's all he wants. Not much.

* * *

10:05 a.m.

When Lord Caitanya entered the assembly of *sannyasis* at Benares, He offered obeisances, washed His feet, "and sat down by the place where He had done so." He was strict and humble. *Sannyasa* is an honorable *aSrama*, and *sannyasis* are given honor because they restrain their sex lives. As part of their code of honor, they are not supposed to abandon their vows. "Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is an ideal *acarya*, and those who follow in His footsteps should practice the methods of devotional life that He teaches us." (Cc. *Adi* 7.59, purport)

The Mayavadi leader thought that Lord Caitanya must be aggrieved, since he chose to sit in the place where people wash their feet. "In the material world everyone wants to introduce himself as very important and great, but Caitanya Mahaprabhu introduced Himself very humbly and meekly." PrakaSananda Sarasvati then asked Caitanya Mahaprabhu, "Why do You not associate with us? Why is it that You avoid even seeing us?" (Cc. *Adi* 7.63, purport) Avoiding Mayavadis is bona fide for a Vaisnava.

Srila Prabhupada writes that a Vaisnava *sannyasi* doesn't waste his time talking with those who argue. PrakaSananda Sarasvati asked Lord Caitanya why He chanted and danced in the company of fanatics. Lord Caitanya replied, "My spiritual master considered Me a fool. and therefore he chastised Me." (Cc. *Adi* 7.71) In this way, Lord Caitanya indicated that we are all fools in this age and that we shouldn't attempt self-realization by reading *Vedanta* and meditating.

" . . . and therefore You must always chant the holy name of Krishna. This is the essence of all mantras or Vedic hymns." (Cc. *Adi* 7.72) Since his spiritual master asked him simply to chant the holy name of Krishna, Lord Caitanya had obediently done so. These are the two prime lessons that apply to Srila Prabhupada's followers: obey the spiritual master's orders and don't give up chanting the holy names in favor of some other method of spiritual perfection, and remain a fool before the spiritual master. "But if a disciple, thinking himself more advanced than his spiritual master, gives up his orders and acts independently, he checks his own spiritual progress. Every disciple must consider himself completely unaware of the science of Krishna . . . " Thus he will be prepared to carry out his guru's order.

We all accept this, at least theoretically. It has been more difficult to admit that we cannot continue to follow everything within the institution, or in the renounced *aSrama*, or according to our narrow definitions of what the guru's order is. We admit we don't know the science of Krishna and that our spiritual master does know, but we say that we do know ourselves, our needs, our shortcomings, our personal grief. We can't discount all of it. We ask the spiritual master to forgive us and to accept us as we are. We ask the same of our Godbrothers. Even if we admit we're fools, we still have to learn to live with ourselves and improve our lot. Furthermore, Srila Prabhupada has left the planet. Who will guide us now? Who will give us that same individual attention we received from him and which we could trust implicitly? We grow older without any

answers to these questions. It comes down to faith. Prabhupada cannot merely be institutionalized. We have to find our real relationship with him and face it with courage. Institutional leaders shouldn't deny us that right in the name of loyalty to the institution.

* * *

2:55 p.m.

"Simply by chanting the holy name of Krishna one can obtain freedom from material existence. Indeed, simply by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra one will be able to see the lotus feet of the Lord." (Cc. *Adi* 7.73)

M. told me about a show on Irish television about the soprano saxophone player, Sydney Bechet. Apparently, they also interviewed Steve Lacey, another soprano sax player. Lacey said, "I have been playing for forty years, and believe me, it's not easy." Yet in those forty years, Lacey achieved considerable musical mastery. Well, I've been chanting Hare Krishna for over thirty years, and believe me, it's not easy. There's that apocryphal statement by Srila Prabhupada that he chanted thirty years before he began to chant with success. Success in chanting can take millions of lifetimes, so we should be humble and never give up. Also, don't resent the Lord, or doubt Him, for giving this process. When you read statements about how easy it is to chant and how quickly it brings symptoms of transcendental love, think, "Yes. Not for me yet, but I'll keep trying. It sounds wonderful. This is the way."

"When one realizes that the holy name of the Lord is identical with the Supreme Person, he becomes completely eligible to chant the holy name of the Lord. Such an ecstatic chanter and dancer must be considered to have a direct relationship with the Lord." (Cc. *Adi* 7.73, purport)

"By thus addressing radha and Krishna, one directly engages in His Lordship's service." Everything in Vedic knowledge and practice can be attained simply by chanting.

But we should not imitate Haridasa Thakura and chant a hundred rounds a day in a solitary place.

Then what should we do to fully accept the great gift of the Hare Krishna mantra? Should we not pray constantly with this name? We could pray if we can actually pray. real prayer is the activity of a liberated soul.

Chanting is what Lord Caitanya's spiritual master told Him to do, and it's why He didn't study *Vedanta-sutra* all day, especially with Sankara's interpretation. Materialists can't place their faith in chanting, but "it is a fact that simply by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra offenselessly one can be freed from all subtle and gross material conditions. . . . Unless one properly takes shelter of the holy name, he cannot be relieved from the offensive stage in chanting the holy name." (Cc. *Adi* 7.74, purport)

It does sound nice, but "believe me, it's not easy." We have to keep trying and trying. We may lose our stamina and ability to put out the energy. Few of us can probably claim that we are trying harder to chant today than we did yesterday. If only Krishna could make it even easier. But we shouldn't ask for that. Just go on chanting, aspiring to be a devotee as long as we live. Chant and hear.

We hear it so often, so why don't we gladly face it: in the age of Kali, no other religious process will be successful. *Only by chanting the holy name can we come to know Krishna.*

Unusual sunshine beaming in through my window. Let me open the doors and windows to get some fresh air in here. Peaceful afternoon. The chanting will deliver us. Bechet and his fellow musicians put their hearts into their work hour after hour. Why can't we do the same? Oh, to be an intoxicated chanter. Then we would care for nothing else.

But perhaps it's unreal to say we want *Suddha-nama*. We seem to only want it if it's handed to us on a silver platter. But that's not how the best things are given. We have to show Krishna our earnest determination.

* * *

4:15 p.m.

I heard that Sydney Bechet was brusque and put-offish, displaying the *amour propre* of a star even in his obscurity. Why think of him? I want . . . green trees, blowy air, to sit in a patch of not-too-hot sunshine outdoors near the marigolds. I want to accept what comes to me. I'm hanging onto life itself. They might say of me, "In his later years he became obsessed with headaches and pain control, lived in a house with a brass bell at the front gate that wasn't quite loud enough to disturb him, and his writings were full of repetitions and flashes of . . ." They might say I didn't care what was raging outside my wall, or perhaps that I did care, but tried to avoid it anyway. He let it beat on his heart from a distance.

The marigolds are a bright gold, and why shouldn't they be? The front door creaks back and forth in the wind. M. is mysteriously quiet behind his closed door. Do I expect people to read all the stuff I write? What do I give them in return?

At least I didn't become a popular entertainer or compromise in some other way. A white cloud so distinct in the bright blue sky is advancing toward me like a huge, slow airship. The train of the leaves is becoming louder. The front door still creaking. Try a few more mantras. I might hear something. Then Krishna would respond, "I'm in your heart, you foolish boy. Hear My names . . ."

* * *

5:25 p.m.

Hare Krishna. It's getting late. Better get my quota of pages in before it's evening. It was such a nice sunny day today, the wind rustling the August trees. I am currently pain-free.

Reading aloud *Sri Hamsaduta* with Madhu. radha suffers separation from Krishna in this book, and Lalita explains it all to a swan, who is supposed to carry the message to Krishna in Mathura. It feels strange to be pain-free and to sit in an easy chair to read a book like this, so full of despair.

Hearing of Her suffering serves to underscore whatever separation we can ourselves experience now. Our separation is the dull separation of a conditioned soul. Our grief is covered. We don't even want to discover it. We prefer to be happy in relative

forgetfulness of Krishna. But it's just not possible. We have to feel intense emotion when we come to know God. He requires it.

Remembering Srila Prabhupada also requires feelings of separation, so I think it will be good for me to repeatedly hear this sad tale. It may open up my heart. I will also grow in respect for what Sri radha goes through, even if I can't really understand it. Her separation proves Her true greatness, and all other definitions of greatness must be measured against her pure love for Krishna.

What does M. have for me? Is there any late mail today? He brought a hundred-watt light bulb and a new desk lamp. The lamp is a shiny black. Like a new toy, it sits on my desk. Will it make it easier for me to read? Make me a better student? We'll see.

Hare Krishna. One person and all the persons "we're each part and parcel of Krishna. He is *ekala iSvara Krishna*, the One who upholds the rest.

Did the Lord hear what the swan was told? I don't know. I suppose as we're reading the story, we don't really expect the swan to fly to Krishna. It is only transcendental madness that makes Lalita talk to the swan. We are fortunate to eavesdrop. Even if the swan doesn't carry Lalita-devi's words to Krishna, we will hear and cherish them, and thus develop our love for radha. Nothing will be lost. We too will turn to Krishna and want to know when He will relieve the burning fire in radha's heart.

August 5, Midnight

"Since I received this order from My spiritual master, I always chant the holy name, but I thought that by chanting and chanting the holy name I have been bewildered. While chanting . . . in pure ecstasy, I lose Myself, and thus I laugh, cry, dance and sing just like a madman." (Cc. *Adi* 7.77 - 78)

We don't have to speculate on the philosophical aspects of the science of God if by chanting we feel ecstasy. Yes, that's what we want "taste, an ultimate confirmation of success. I keep telling myself to be patient. I somehow cannot control my mind when I chant. Since I don't offer an offenseless residence for the holy names in my life, how do I expect the Lord to manifest His ecstatic presence? He knows best. He's treating me with the same neglect I show Him. (Last night I had a fearful dream. Fear might drive us to depend on God, but that's not pure love, is it? Pure fear and a desire for protection are useful, but not if when the danger has passed we sink back into complacency.)

Realistic assessments here. What am I hinting at?

I'll tell you. Last night I asked M., as usual, to give me my average daily page count for the weekly writing. It came to exactly twenty pages, and July's whole month average also came to twenty. M. smiled and said there was (I forget the word he used) something wrong in the way I expect a twenty-page quota from myself even on headache days. I admitted that I try on pain-free days to go for more than twenty. That's how I hope to keep up my quota despite the days I have to do less. The conversation ended there, but I began to consider possible changes. I like my methodical quota-keeping, but it *does* emphasize writing as more prominent than reading or chanting. Even on pain-free days I have to keep going throughout the day to make sure I reach the quota. Whatever I do (chanting, reading, and writing), it comes down to the dutiful (*vaidhi*) level. Writing is most natural to me, perhaps easier than the other two, and provides immediate help

even on the psychological level. It accepts me as I am, whereas reading and chanting demand more of me "that I become "spiritual" or "offenseless."

One may say that writing is not as absolute or potent as reading and chanting, but it is my life. I also hope it is my preaching. That's important too.

Or course, someone could also say that if I spent more time and attention on *japa* (which could only be done if I dismantled my twenty-page quota), I might find Krishna more directly and might please Him more. As for preaching, it seems that if an ISKCON guru can simply survive without falling into *maya*, then he is exemplary. So chanting is safe.

Perhaps. But chanting higher quotas can also be done with the wrong motivation. Ultimately, an increased quota becomes just that "another quota."

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu saw that He had become mad by chanting the holy name. He submitted His condition to His spiritual master. "Thus in any condition, even when liberated, we should never think ourselves independent of the spiritual master, but must refer to him as soon as there is some doubt regarding our progressive spiritual life." (Cc. *Adi* 7.80, purport) Nowadays we pray to Prabhupada to guide us from within, and pray to Krishna in our hearts. Perhaps we can trust that when we feel driven through our prayers to offer a particular service, we are doing the right thing.

"It is the aspiration of a devotee that while he chants the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* his eyes will fill with tears, his voice falter and his heart throb. These are good signs in chanting the holy name of the Lord." (Cc. *Adi* 7.81, purport) Srila Prabhupada indicates that such ecstasy comes due to feeling Govinda's separation. Caitanya Mahaprabhu links these ecstatic symptoms with *govinda-viraha* in His *Siksastaka*: " . . . he becomes so eager to meet Govinda that without Govinda the entire world becomes a vacant place."

Srila Prabhupada states that when one develops *bhava* in chanting, he is fit to make disciples. All his disciples will then manifest increased attachment for Krishna. The guru and the disciples chant and dance in ecstasy. Prabhupada mentions how his own disciples astounded people in India. "As explained by Caitanya Mahaprabhu, however, actually this is not due to practice, for without extra endeavor these symptoms become manifest in anyone who sincerely chants the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*." (Cc. *Adi* 7.83, purport)

I seem to be looking like a sad hound dog toward Krishna. Ain't I doin' enough to please You? I do love You. Won't You manifest *bhava* in my heart? Please let it come without extra practice on my part, because I cannot see the hope for that "and in my headachy state, my days are already shortened.

* * *

I had two horrible dreams. When I awoke, I thought, "We can't escape our fate. We can't even escape the memory of what our fate has been." Then I woke up more fully and realized that dreaming and waking life are like going from one life to another. Already I can barely remember the horrible things that happened, but I have the feeling that they could happen again, if not in my life, then in my dream state. If only we could save

ourselves from such suffering by taking more shelter of Krishna. If only we could brave enough to do that.

The dreams also made me think of the importance of being compassionate to one another. We never know what will happen to us in another life, and we certainly can't understand the karma of another. There are many potentially horrible situations. The world is a jungle, and we shouldn't judge others as they try to make their way through it.

* * *

4:34 a.m.

We can see Krishna in all places, but best we go to Gaudiya Vaisnava places, to temples, holy *dhama*s, to the guru's *darSana*, and so on. Even in the odd places and moments where we dwell, contact Krishna there. Krishna *hari-nama*.

This morning's Deity worship was very nice. I dressed Them in grape with silver trim. The folds of Their clothes seemed to fall just right, and my fingers cooperated. I listened to the end of *Vidagdha-madhava*. It's such a charming play that I find it easy to hear, especially the part where Krishna, disguised as a beautiful girl, pretends He's the goddess Gauri. Abhimanyu and Jatila swear that they will never take radha out of Vrndavana. A blessing is given to all devotees that they may attain Vrndavana and love of Krishna.

Come on, find your Lord. He's here. May we all awaken and receive Him. "Don't be afraid," He says, "but surrender to Me." Predators closed in on me in a nightmare, but if I remember Krishna, then even if my body is destroyed, I will go to Him.

Srila Prabhupada told us that *vani* is more important than *vapuh*. He always felt that Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura was with him. When our Srila Prabhupada arrived at the Boston Pier, he felt his spiritual master's presence, even though our Srila Prabhupada saw how different the Americans were from the Indians, and how unlikely they were to give up their sinful ways and take to Krishna consciousness. His Godbrothers had not been able to convince anyone of the truth of Krishna consciousness, or even that they should restrain their senses. The Earl of Zetland said, "Impossible!" Our Srila Prabhupada said, "Let me try." Then speaking to the blissful-to-be-with-him disciples in Atlanta 1975, Srila Prabhupada said, "You're all so nice." We had taken to Krishna consciousness on his request. That's how it goes.

Times are harder now, but Krishna will save us. Each one of us has to link with Him by linking to Prabhupada, and thus to the previous *acaryas*. Hare Krishna mantra, guru, the spreading of Krishna consciousness "none of these can be stopped. reform as you see fit.

Hare Krishna free-write is a bee-bop in socks. Put on green rain suit and go out, eyes stinging, body decaying, living only a little longer. It doesn't all end at death; a devotee's future is brilliant. A devotee has faith. Lord Caitanya taught immortal and personal love of Krishna, the cowherd boy who wanders in Vrndavana with His friends and cows. Yes, our future is brilliant if we will only wake up and realize it.

The beautiful and madly ecstatic *sannyasi*, Lord Caitanya, and our own dear spiritual master who took up the mission and spread it all over the world "think of them. We are tiny devotees, so we should stay in our place and actively seek His blessings and

direction to know that the Lord is everywhere for His devotees. Hare Krishna Hare Krishna.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

Stream cuts down through the earth. Over the rocks, the man on the bridge looks down at his life and at thoughts he wants to keep private. He thinks he's the son of his father, now dead, then shakes that off. His real identity is spirit soul. But what *is* that? Looks up and sees something moving like smoke from hundreds of chimneys, but it's mist moving over low hills. The bridge's iron rail has rusted over the years. Things change. Paths fill with clover.

* * *

5:47 a.m.

We don't have to feel guilty to see Krishna in things we enjoy, but we shouldn't forget Him in our euphoria or want the material pleasure more than we want Krishna's association. How to remember Him? Vibrate His name: Hare Krishna, Krishna, Krishna. Krishna is not an abstract concept, as He once was when I was a Catholic boy growing up, a coping high school kid with no real concept of heaven. Krishna has come close to us in our lives. Worship Him. Become pure.

* * *

8:17 a.m.

Krishna shouldn't just be another person in your life but the Supreme Person. If He's the greatest (*param brahma*), then why is He not the greatest to us? We say it's because we don't know Him, whereas we know our wives, friends, and neighbors. We also think we know ourselves.

Dwindling. Yarny spun. The Krishna conscious content mixes and comes out as strange as a dream. Yes, we are dreaming when we are still on this side of the river Styx.

I have been reading of Lord Caitanya as a disciple of ISvara Puri. He describes Himself as such.

Don't resent the fact that M. is often not here anymore. I am grateful that I'm not in touch with Germany or called in as an expert witness or advisor. Live this life in peace.

A big tabby cat of Jello proportions lifted out by its hind legs. They said, "You may have several health problems, but remedies are risky for a man your age."

The Lord knows. Could I please sit at the desk and prop up a book? No cheapened versions, please.

A beautiful, ungainly bird "loves itself yet knows it's not its body" rose and transferred itself. I hope you'll appreciate the risk it took, flying over the knots of wood, like little islands, the isthmus, the cracks between the boards. It landed in the other chair, reached its arm over to the wall switch, and adjusted his bifocals. I offered it some water, a sigh, and saw its merit.

"It is the nature of the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* that anyone who chants it immediately develops his loving ecstasy for Krishna." (Cc. *Adi* 7.83) One who chants develops *bhava*. *Bhava* is the almost-successful stage, just prior to *prema*. (By *bhava*, you no longer chew gum or keep scum in your brain. Your limbs are clean and you wash away new impediments. Old *anarthas* are already gone, along with the desire for distinction, duplicity, and so on.)

While chanting and dancing, the sincere performer remembers the Lord. People oppose such a guru, but he continues in his empowered mission.

A devotee attains *prema*. Compared to *Krishna-prema*, the four goals of religion appear insignificant. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* teaches this pure goal, and from the beginning it kicks out lesser religion. A devotee at *prema* experiences his eternal original function. "At that time everything is automatically done by the mercy of the holy name, and the devotee automatically advances in his spiritual progress." (Cc. *Adi* 7.84, purport)

I mentioned this morning the concept that I might write less and chant more in order to become more Krishna conscious. But I don't think chanting more would help me. In writing, I at least have a function which preaches, gives immediate support to myself and others, and catches my own interest. I pray it will be accepted. Hare Krishna. I chant in this writing. But still, I hear my own desire to increase my chanting. It has fallen into the earth of my mind as a few seeds of hope.

ISvara Puri told his prize disciple that He had developed *bhava* and that that was why He had bodily symptoms, why He was "more and more greedy to achieve the shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord."

We should never imitate the symptoms of *prema* or even aspire for them cheaply, our greed being nothing more than spiritual sense gratification. An advanced chanter is no longer under the material energy's jurisdiction. rather, He joins Krishna in the spiritual energy and floats "in an ocean of transcendental bliss while chanting the Hare Krishna mantra."

ISvara Puri stated that he was very pleased that Caitanya Mahaprabhu had attained *prema*. "The spiritual master is not actually happy if the disciple brings him money, but when he sees that a disciple is following the regulative principles and advancing in spiritual life, he is very glad and feels obliged to such an advanced disciple." (Cc. *Adi* 7.91, purport)

"My dear child, continue dancing, chanting and performing *sankirtana* in association with devotees. Furthermore . . . "

More later. My mind just skipped to the story of a Godbrother who lost millions of dollars in speculation. The folly of delusion. The GBC is dealing with it. I'm a pip-squeak, safe on this side of the Irish sea, but of course, that could also be delusion. Anyway, so far today, this ship is plying smoothly.

* * *

10:40 a.m.

Sri Hamsaduta is too heavy to read unless you're entirely pure, yet the concept is so appealing "sending a message to Krishna through a swan to describe Sri radha's *viraha*. rupa Gosvami describes radha's state, saying that She is almost dying in separation from Krishna. She is surrounded by Her *sakhis*. She even dreams that Krishna comes to Her, and insists that some of these experiences are not mere dreams.

M. is playing the melodeon, and the sounds float in the window. This world can be nice, but nice or horrible, we will have to leave it. Therefore, we should remind ourselves and others of our spiritual purpose, and chant God's names.

M. said that since he's been mixing more with his grown children and hearing about people "out there," he's aware that some really are looking for spiritual life. One obstacle they find is that there are too many choices among the mainstream and esoteric groups. Why would one choose ISKCON out of all the rest? It would have to actually offer something better. (A number of groups offer the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra.)

* * *

11:45 a.m.

As M. was pouring the hot water into the bucket for my noon bath, I mentioned that I was chewing over the crisis with HKS. M. said he had met Sacinandana Swami in London, who said he'd been to visit HKS and had seen a copy of my book, *Memories*, there. I wondered what HKS saw in it at this time in his life. Then I thought of the specific nature of that book, how it was such a concentrated effort and how different it is from the endless EJW. *Memories* could help a person who had a too-stiff idea of what it means to be a devotee. Who will be willing to go through all these volumes of EJW for the same purpose? The editor says that each volume contains a lot, and even if we don't interest everyone, the core readers will go through it from beginning to end.

One way or another, I have a responsibility to give something. In what form? I have not been writing down memories but what happens each day throughout the day. right now, I'm occupied with a tight sensation on the left side of my chest or another behind my right eye. I think of the antidote for worry. I also push out the quota.

I resented M. for not taping up drawing sheets as I requested, but without my mentioning my resentment, he went and taped them up. Therefore, my resentment was wasted energy, a little poison in the blood. Even if he didn't tape them up, because he had to get his show on the road, it would be better not to resent him for it. I'm trying not to worry even about death, so why worry about such lesser things? Krishna will take care of me, and that includes weaning myself from this world and the illusion of permanent settlement and happiness here.

O Lord, please give me Your shelter. Hare Krishna chant startles men and boys. The ship began to sink but recovered. They towed it home. Was it worse than we thought? What actually happened? First news of the Titanic was that it was being towed home.

Then we heard worse "that some people had drowned. Later, the full story came out. It was too much to believe all at once.

I have to go on writing, trusting the process. The process will tell me when to change. I don't want to become an artificer building my wax-held wings to fly at the sun. That would be nonsense. I want to write honestly from here on the ground. I'm simply trying to live out a gift that was given me.

Such an inspiring lecture Srila Prabhupada gave on Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati's appearance day in Atlanta. We need to feel renewed inspiration and accept that he is our spiritual leader. We can't live only on old commitment. Take what nourishes.

The Hare Krishna movement is based on love and trust. It's also meant to facilitate our becoming mad after Krishna. Our legal formulas won't help. The founder-*acarya* gave the word, and we had to follow it. We vied for his attention from around the world. We all wanted distinction in his eyes.

* * *

12:25 p.m.

Mr. Sandman, I hope I can nap before that farmer-slaughterer comes back with that tractor to fluff or pick up his mown hay. Hope I don't have a heart attack, or if I do, that I remember Krishna. This might be a good moment to break all my attachments. They say it's hard; I might fail. If I'm not one hundred percent successful, I'll have to come back to enact my lust and so-called *joie de vivre*. The horrors of this world "predator and prey, barbed wire, teeth on flesh "all lived out in a body that's a network of paths leading to death.

M. got the judges' written statements from the semi-finals. They said his timing was good on melodeon, but "bring out your notes clearer and use more ornamentation." He was glad to hear a learned opinion, just as he's also glad to hear an uneducated but enthusiastic cheer. He likes anything genuine that will impel him to play. He wants to know people are listening, and that his playing matters to them.

Yeah, I'll keep digging the earth of this one big book that stretches out to the horizon. In the dug-up earth grass is growing, and hills and vales forming under the sky. This is Krishna's world of here and there.

* * *

2:53 p.m.

Don't take a Triptan if you think it will lead to your . . . death. He sent word. I have a sensation in my chest. Should I still take them? What do I expect, that he'll say, "Yes, the soul is eternal. Don't worry if the heart speeds up or stops. These are only external symptoms of the body collapsing and may be ignored. We are all spirit souls flapping around in bodies for a short while. We want to see the movement of the soul"? So saying, I am rubbing my heart some more. "No way you should take them," said the nurse. She doesn't want an unintentional suicide on her hands.

* * *

"My dear child, continue dancing, chanting and performing *sankirtana* in association with devotees. Furthermore, go out and preach the value of chanting *Krishna-nama*, for by this process You will be able to deliver all fallen souls." (Cc. *Adi* 7.92) It is the ambition of the spiritual master to see his disciples following the regulative principles and preaching. Srila Prabhupada quotes Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, "Those who are not advanced prefer to chant the Hare Krishna mantra in a solitary place."

Srila Prabhupada: "A devotee gives the nondevotees his association but is not affected by their misbehavior." Thus the nondevotees get the chance to become devotees.

Caitanya Mahaprabhu: "I firmly believe in these words of My spiritual master, and therefore I always chant the holy name of the Lord, alone and in the association of devotees. That holy name of Lord Krishna sometimes causes Me to chant and dance . . . " (Cc. *Adi* 7.95-96)

Srila Prabhupada then cites the verse, *yasya deve para bhaktir, yatha deve tatha gurau*. He says that he had faith in his spiritual master's desire that he preach all over the world and has tried to fulfill his order, " . . . and now this movement has become successful all over the world." Faith in the Krishna and the spiritual master's order is the secret of success.

* * *

5:35 p.m.

Paintings:

One showed a highly respected person who ruled a lot. He wore red-rimmed glasses and looked somewhat ashamed but still prominent. I wrote the word "fool" on the page.

Two other faces, each responding in different ways.

Another rained droplets of light blue and pink. He said, "Nitai-pada" and "Nitai-pada save us." I got physically excited while painting him and had to calm down. I wrote the word "peace" (in vivid pink) to signify that I had.

Then I thought of my *gurudeva* and wrote, "Please trust me," after the song "*Gurvastakam*" was playing on the tape recorder. He replied on my painting, "Okay, but be KC."

Then an explicit KC face of blue (the color of Krishna) with *tilaka*. Yes, if I want to paint in an experimental way, I need to be Krishna conscious.

How? Imagine going before Srila Prabhupada in your present state. What would he say? ISKCON debaters sometimes use this device to load their arguments with fear. Is it true that if we go before Prabhupada, we'll always have to agree that others are right? I go before Prabhupada in my mind and ask him to both guide me and trust me. How do I dare? But I do. I know we don't usually think about the spiritual master like that "I mean, our relationship with him. Usually, we think that we are not to be trusted, and that's why we have to go to the guru for guidance. We make that assumption about ourselves. But I'm not sure it's true. The spiritual master may call us fools, and fools we may be, but at least we are trustworthy fools, always wishing to surrender at his feet.

One painting was obscure, but it contained loops and strong, well-balanced poles, and it had a strong foundation the way you would like a ladder to have a strong foundation: fixed firmly on the ground. It seemed to be saying something too.

Each painting expresses feeling. They are not decoration. They also express the process of making form from chaos, the act of creation, of making sense of randomness. The lines became an owl, then the familiar Jagannatha face and chest, but with wings.

Another was of a man telling another (through actions "there were no words), "Get out! Leave through this door!" He was standing the way a cruel husband would stand when sending his wife into the cold, telling her never to return. He was like a GBC man driving someone away. The man who was leaving had a more powerful body than the one driving him away, but he had no facial features above his well-built shoulders. Still, he shouldered his defeat well and willingly struck out into the world, although heavy on his feet. Actually, he was so heavy on his feet he looked like a deep-sea diver wearing those heavy, weighted boots that help him sink. Will he ever come back? Was there another way to handle the conflict?

That's the story in words of what I painted with the window cracked and the breeze cool and pleasing on my newly-shaved head. My head was clear too, for the second day in a row. I made enough of a mess. Please trust me, Gurudeva. Yes, but be Krishna conscious.

The tractor man is back, and I'm working in the room nearest to him. He's got sunshine and an hour and a half before I go to bed for the night. Even if he's still there in half an hour, I'll stick in my earplugs and go on with my rest. Please, Lord, let me live forever in this body. No, I don't mean it. Why pray an impossible prayer? Pray, "Let me die an easy death"? No, not that either. It has no benefit. Simply ask, "Lord, let me think of You now and at the end of my life. Let me go to You in the spiritual world or wherever You wish to send me according to Your infinite and caring wisdom. I want only to be brought to You in the best and quickest way. You know best how to do that. My eternal guru wishes me well, and I want to be worthy of his trust." I am a tiny, weak servitor only.

When I went to type "tractor man," it came out "tarot man." Free-writers use words in jurisprudence. He fears any place where *karmis* dwell. But the lord guru says an advanced devotee goes to preach where nondevotees congregate. He is better than the one who stays alone to chant. Am I prepared to face the implications of that? This thin face that has suffered "I will show it again. This thin-happy face that has eaten and enjoyed, who plays rich uncle while sporting in an art room, who writes for himself but for others "he aspires only for Krishna consciousness.

August 6, 12:10 a.m.

From "The Advent of Lord Krishna": "Once the world was overburdened by the unnecessary defense force of different kings, who were actually demons but were posing themselves as the royal order." (*Krishna*, p. 13) ready to hear it again? Sure, why not? How many times did Maharaja Pariksit hear it? He might have heard it during his life, but the last time he heard it, it was spoken by Sukadeva Gosvami. At that time, Maharaja Pariksit was most intent. He wasn't at all distracted. One must be very fortunate to be able to hear *Krishna-katha* so seriously.

"He was especially intent on the subject matter because he was expecting death at every moment. This life is not at all assured. At any time one can die. It does not matter

whether one is a young man or an old man. So before death takes place, we must be *fully* Krishna conscious." (*Krishna*, p. 10)

Just a week left before the our annual observance of Janmastami. I want to be in the mood. I also want to be able to say something relevant when I lecture on Krishna's appearance at Inis rath.

The dream source sent me two dramas or mystery stories last night, but I'll probably never stop to develop them into stories. I don't write that way. rather, I disassemble stories and tell what actually happened.

Yes, we all know that's true of you.

But I sure got a full dose of "stories" during the night. After the first one, it was well over an hour before I could get back to sleep. The second one "about whether or not I sent out a letter telling devotees that Srila Prabhupada was going to arrive at a miniature golf course "lasted right up until it was time for me to get up.

Krishna book, Krishna's appearance, rainy nights in late summer. Young devotees fasting until midnight "no headaches, or at least they aren't stopped by them "and no awareness of how "everyone" would fall down in the future. Who could imagine ISKCON would be what it is today? Still, Janmastami rolls around and we will observe it as long as we live.

And as long as we live we will hear the wonderful story of Maharaja Pariksit's last seven days "how he sat to hear *Srimad-Bhagavatam* without interruption. We don't know how long we will live; we assume we have another seven million years. Therefore, we usually decide that we don't want to hear the *Krishna* book yet again. After all, we can always hear it later, closer to death.

But it's nectar, and good for the heart, so here I am, begging for attention again.

Bhumi assumed the shape of a cow. Why? Radhanatha dasa might ask that question, or anyone. There's a reason. The cow is special.

But let's just hear. "She related the calamitous position of the earth" with tears in her eyes in order to invoke Lord Brahma's compassion.

A tiny spider on my head. Brush it off "it's just a bother to me. How did M. fare last night? Is he back yet?

Lord Brahma and the demigods went to the Milk Ocean. This is how the Tenth Canto begins. It's Dvapara-yuga, just before the beginning of the present Kali-yuga. They chanted the *Purusa-suktaprayers*. They couldn't see Lord Visnu, just as nowadays we pray and must listen for His response in our hearts.

Just to let you know, M. will probably have a stack of mail for me to answer when he gets back from Dublin. Come with me a little longer to hear of Bhumi and Brahma and Siva. This is 1998 and it will be even later when you'll read this, but let's pray to KsirodakaSayi Visnu with the demigods.

"After all the demigods offered the *purusa-sukta* prayer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they apparently heard no response." Only one heard in his heart: Lord Brahma. Therefore, they decided to hear from him. It's not that every time we pray together, we will collectively or individually hear a response from God. Therefore, we hear from guru, who has heard from his guru, and we humbly follow the *parampara*. In that way, we awaken spiritually and prepare ourselves to carry out the order.

* * *

A dream: I had a plan to hold a secret worship of Radha-Krishna Deities while the queen was away. I started something "it was partly a literary idea but partly a bringing back of tradition from the old days "and there was a secret involved. Then I forgot what the secret was and who else knew about it. I decided to call several of my friends together to discuss it. As I began to awake, I wondered why the worship should be secret. Why not simply worship Radha-Govinda so all the people can see them as They are?

The dream had a wonderful sense of intrigue in it, and it gave me a nice idea for a story. But there were deceptions in it "that was part of the secret "and I became confused. Maybe I'm not such a good man for such tricks. The dream promised a nice surprise ending that would increase everyone's devotion to Radha-Govinda, but perhaps I couldn't be trusted to keep the secret and carry it out.

This was a charming dream, certainly different than the dream I had last night of being the victim of predators. This dream seemed to talk to me about my writing too "the idea of creating a deception involving the worship of radha and Krishna in hiding to present a surprise started as a literary idea. Perhaps the dream suggested that I should write with more cunning and artifice, more like a novelist than a diarist. It doesn't seem to work for me though. Everything I try breaks down and flows back into EJW. Perhaps the dream was indicating that I have many great ideas but can't sustain any of them. I can't be "trusted" to write with artifice but keep returning to nonfiction with touches of art, like a poet trying to be true.

* * *

Another dream: We were driving home but had to stop outside a miniature golf course. An old, ex-*sannyasi* Godbrother came up to us and said, "Is it really true that you sent out a letter last March telling everyone that Prabhupada was coming to this golf course and that all his servants should meet him here? It sounds psychopathic."

But I had never sent out such a letter and could prove it. Within the dream, however, I began to feel that that letter sounded like something I might have done in a dream. I couldn't imagine how a dream could turn into reality. My Godbrother said, "Some devotees took it seriously and are beginning to gather."

From a distance I began to hear the sounds of a big gathering. Everyone was expecting Prabhupada to come. He was supposed to arrive the next night. It seemed so ridiculous. Can you imagine Srila Prabhupada going to a miniature golf course? He would stay there one minute and then want to leave.

Toward the end of the dream, I told someone about my dream turning into a reality, but the part that caused the most emotion for me was this ex-*sannyasi* Godbrother, who hurt me in real life, showing up dressed as a clean *sannyasi*. Of course, he has actually left ISKCON. I thought later that I should have grabbed him by the neck and said, 'You betrayer, you betrayer! Who are you to come around now as if you were a *sannyasi* and tell me all this?'"

* * *

4:25 a.m.

Krishna consciousness is a medium for exploration. We have to admit who we are. I preached quickly in a letter to a man, agreeing that hankering for distinction (fame) is not conducive to spiritual life. I quoted *tmad api* and a comment on it by Bhaktivinoda Thakura, but how to actually practice these things? Passing the quotes back and forth is not enough. I don't know. When the other man admitted he couldn't maintain his *sannyasa* vows . . . that is a giving up of distinctions, because honors are burdens. The fact is, however, that giving up distinctions usually has to be done without abandoning responsibility. How to be ourselves yet live for guru?

He described a whorehouse from Paris in the 1920s. Instead, we describe the ISKCON scene or the quiet-house existence of a man living mostly alone "his bodily aches and pains (hypochondria?), his thoughts, and those worries he maintains.

Krishna in the spiritual world. Got nothing to say. They flew through space somehow. Don't ask how they did it, I mean, materially, or how a cow (the Earth personified) was able to fly millions of miles. *Yogis* don't need fuel-powered rockets. They know how to take advantage of higher material powers, light beams, mind power, the psyche, etc. So many wonders.

So they flew through the sky.

GBC committee talking with a Godbrother, and we are all waiting to hear what they will decide. His enemies gloat and rub their hands, but even loyal devotees, unless they are completely pure, take *some* pleasure when a great figure becomes bewildered (as long as it's not themselves). Who doesn't like to see an icon topple? But his disciples will suffer. remember that. The irrevocable act of accepting a disciple prevents one from nonsense. How can someone who accepts disciples dishonor his end of things? Becoming guru doesn't mean you have to pretend or sit on a big seat; it simply means you continue to serve in a life of peace and Krishna consciousness, and that you give the flute-breath of your spiritual master to others. That's what the disciples want. You keep alive. Hare Krishna Hare Krishna.

* * *

Free-write down the fast lane. Cars careen. White van parked close to the wall. Look out and see something in the night. One lone star. Where they moved hay. Sir, Sir Sam Johnson, sirrah. Surrogate husband I am not. A tired eye, hog or toad in the road, smashed. Unsmashed slugs. How do you want your cow or lamb served? Kill 'em ripe and serve them hot, charcoal-broiled, with beer and cigarettes. They think it's quite all right for a human.

Dublin bones. Don't defy the Krishna conscious spiritual master; Srila Prabhupada is our guide. What he said and how we understand it in time and place. I've stretched out about all I can.

The demeters deemed their
overalls and I said let's all
do devotional service the right way it's
dawn and first birds, *parikramas*,
soft, sands, stones, Vraja,

in the version of a man can walk
even in this place and be on guard with a Krishna conscious
mouthpiece. *Krishna* book, *Bhagavad-gita*. Mismatch. Let all men get
married. *Sannyasis* may declare any desires they have. Let's clear the house in some
radical way, then onto everybody behaving rightly "shocked by self-truth into
submission.

* * *

5:20 a.m.

I'm holding out, still walking at this time, even though it's darker now. As usual, the
sky is in an overcast mood. The air caresses my face. I don't need another person's
caresses until I qualify for Krishnaloka "and even then, I want only to serve radha and
Krishna.

Prabhupada told the devotees in his arrival talk in Dallas in '75 that his father prayed
to *sadhus*, "Please let my son become a devotee of Radharani." Become a devotee of
radharani, and play the *mrdanga*. This is what a Krishna conscious father wishes for his
son.

* * *

8:05 a.m.

As usual I feel weak at this time. The new desk lamp seems too bright just now. Lots
of mail to read and answer, but I had better take it easy. A harsh letter from a disciple
"he's a cow that gives milk but kicks. I went downstairs to splash my face with water
after I read it. While down there, I also decided to release myself from the twenty-pages-
a-day quota. And a further idea: Why not just do "writing practice" and forget EJW?
Since beginning EJW in November 1996, I almost haven't had a single day off.

But earlier today I was thinking just the opposite "that I have found my life's work,
that one big book, and I should just keep working it.

Well, a vacation won't hurt. Maybe during my time at Inis rath I could do something
different, just write whatever I want.

I'm already doing that! This is a jaunty dance!

No end of violence and hatred in North Ireland "setting fire to churches, killing
children.

Too hot in this room.

More charges against Clinton for sexual misconduct.

That disciple wrote, "Why not admit you don't know? Don't say you won't argue for
some other reason "that you are a *sadhu*, etc." I feel like an old man screaming at a
young hoodlum, "Leave me alone!"

Now let me be serious. I want the genuine article; that's what I know.