

ELECTRONIC BOOK

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Originally published by

GN Press Inc. USA

Every Day, Just Write

Volume 23

Moving Into

A House

April 3 - 23, 1998

Also by Satsvarupa dasa Goswami

Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita

Handbook for Krishna Consciousness

Readings in Vedic Literature: The Tradition Speaks for Itself

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April 3, 1998, 12:15 a.m.

O Lord, You are in my heart. I am writing this not under the power of my own hand. You have given me everything.

Of the various voices clamoring in me, I assert that I want to read the *Bhagavatam* with faith. I am not rereading a book I have read for thirty years; I am reading again for the first time. Each time I read I ask this boon: Please give me faith. Let me bypass whatever distracts me from submissive aural reception.

Lord Svayambhuva Manu entered the forest and stood on one leg for one hundred years. (right away my mind balks. I mean, why perform such harsh austerity? I know I couldn't do it. But I don't have to "that was a different time.") He then prayed to the Supreme Lord. "Srila Vishvanath Cakravarti comments that the word *anvaha* means he chanted or murmured to himself, not that he lectured to anyone." (*Bhag.* 8.1.8, purport)

I do that too. But I'll tell of that later. Still, get the point now: face the Supreme Lord, speak to Him sincerely, and act in such a way that He will be pleased. Because we are spirit soul. *Mamaivam So jiva-bhuta jiva-loka sanatana*. Svayambhuva declares that the Supreme has created the world. "When everything is silent, the Supreme Being stays awake as a witness. The living entity does not know Him, but He knows everything." (*Bhag.* 8.1.9)

While reading I remember that Srila Prabhupada finished the Eighth Canto in 1976. I like to hear most from Srila Prabhupada in his earliest years in America, before ISKCON became so competitive and money-driven. We had so many manias in 1976, all of which would eventually lead us to fall down. It's not that Srila Prabhupada had such manias, but his mood did not seem the same as in those beginning days at 26 Second Avenue, before airport change-up was discovered, and before the anti-cult movement, before certain Godbrothers tried to conquer the world.

I don't want to be offensive, but these thoughts have come, and again I feel estranged from the movement. I don't advocate estrangement, and neither do I hold such estrangement to be truth, but I feel sympathy for this movement's suffering, for our own suffering, for *my* suffering. Is that wrong?

Or am I misled? They say I misled others as we followed the juggernaut of book distribution and money collecting down the road. If I keep thinking like this, will I find fault with Srila Prabhupada? I certainly don't want to join those who criticize him, or even those fanatics who say what appears to be the opposite of the critics "that Prabhupada is always and forever right, and his ISKCON is pretty much always wrong.

No, I want simplicity and truth, honesty and life.

Then read. read and live in the heart of ISKCON. Our heart is *Srimad-Bhagavatam* with Srila Prabhupada's purports. We can fight for that, even as we murmur prayers as Manu did.

Manu assures us that the Lord is the proprietor of all. "Although the Supreme Personality of Godhead constantly watches the activities of the world, no one sees Him. However, one should not think that because no one sees Him, He does not see, for His

power to see is never diminished. Therefore, everyone should worship the Supersoul, who always stays with the individual soul as a friend." (*Bhag* 8.1.11)

* * *

4:32 a.m.

Rukmini maintains Satyabhama in a subordinate position, but Krishna loves His Satyabhama, His Radha, the most. Rukmini is the most opulent; Satyabhama is the most fortunate. I am not qualified to hear these pastimes, but I want to hear them more and more. It seems safe to hear them while bathing and dressing Radha-Govinda. What else should I be listening to at that time? When I am doing Deity worship, I feel able to keep my mind chaste. That is Prabhupada's grace. May the seed of desire to hear of radha-Krishna grow in the healthiest of ways. All glories to the Lord of the universe.

Krishna plays tricks. He speaks in deceptive ways. Madhumangala gets hungry while looking at the paintings in the cave. One picture depicts the feast served by the wives of the yajnic *brahmanas*. Madhumangala recalls the *jalebis*, which he said curled like the tail of a peacock. It makes me think that I too would like tasty *prasadam* for breakfast. It's chilly in the morning, and all I'll have to eat is cold fruit. Maybe I will ask my Madhumangala dasa to warm up the juice.

Srila Prabhupada is wrapped in his *cadar*, scarf, and hat. Did they come from Vrndavana? Maybe. If not, they were knitted with devotion by Lalita-manjari dasi, who is herself from Vrndavana. Even if the cloth comes from the West, her mind was with Srila Prabhupada, and he lives in Vrndavana. One way or another, our thoughts will always come back to that central point: Krishna in Vrndavana. Sometimes it is better to turn our thoughts toward Vrndavana from outside the *dhama*. Such thoughts have the potential to contain more yearning.

Sir, can you sing a song for your Krishna?

Oh, I guess so, but don't expect it to be elegant.

Herod ordered that all newborn children in Bethlehem should be killed. Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt with infant Jesus. Later, they returned to Nazareth. It's almost Easter.

Why tell you that? Where does it fit in? Well, this is a diary. It's a place to note things down. Later, they will have some value. We know it when we read an authentic diary "we feel something universal. For the diary to have ultimate value, it has to be based on a life lived in truth. Even a sinner can write a diary based on truth, but it won't necessarily grant deliverance. Think of Kafka's diary, or Thoreau's. As devotees, we want a combination of the Absolute Truth as it is given in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and the individual voice of a person making an honest attempt to practice the *Bhagavatam* life. We want such a diary poured out and sung in faith.

In the bathroom this morning, I heard the lecture Prabhupada gave on May 27, 1972. It was Lord Nrsimhadeva's appearance day, and I was in the audience, sitting in the *yajna* arena about to receive *sankirtanam visnoh smaranam*, all nine items of *bhakti* connect with Krishna. Whatever we do, therefore, connect it to Krishna. Don't talk about anything else. There are hundreds of magazines all over the world, but our magazine should simply glorify Krishna. The lecture inspired me.

Radha and Krishna are wearing white dresses with pink, and gold trim. He wears a white turban, and carries a gold stick and flute. Radharani wears a gold headdress. They also wear peach *cadars* to keep Them warm.

Hear the wind and rain, and be guided by right behavior. If a headache comes, no pill today. regardless, write.

Write.

Krishna went for a walk with Radha.

Or, tell us how Krishna killed the demoniac washerman in Mathura, although He awarded His mercy to Sudama. Krishna killed Kamsa, then dragged him around the stadium as a lion drags its prey. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. Please accept the obeisances of a devotee. O friends in Italy and Spain, please forgive me for not coming to see you this year. Know that I am reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and writing in a quiet place. That is my contribution to world Krishna consciousness.

* * *

Sing To Anyone
& Sing a song to anyone
anyone at all you
don't have to be
an official minister just
tell us what you hear and feel.

* * *

I hear scratchings and wind and rain on
the attic roof. I saw an ad
for Thayer's Slippery Elm
lozenges and met a man in my
dreams who says we detected something
weird done by your followers:
you are responsible for that.

* * *

To anyone anything I sing but I want to
bring it to God in a tuba. I become
Restless anyplace where there are no
devotees of Krishna, and even with them I
become restless wanting again to be alone
(in a room with devotees nearby).

* * *

Sing to anyone but Krishna is foremost.
Sounds terrific sounds true

transcendental. Please give us
open approval because you are blessed
with contact with the Krishna conscious
master and long
practice. Tell us something worthwhile such as
you wrote his biography.
Is there nothing left to say?
Is it all in *that* book?

* * *

Sing to anyone and it goes to Him, He
owns it all. Proprietor, the boss.
I sing in a manhole the truth
is Krishna the pivot and should
be approached by the book. I do
chant *gayatri*, *maha-mantras*
exact *Slokas* translated
in company of devotees in temple,
release me from the too
stiff and orderly. I need to relax my brain
and limbs no matter what they say.
I write this for relief

* * *

but it is for Him and
no one else. "

* * *

Visnu-smaranam
& Krishna science socks it to 'em and I'm
writing rather than sleeping doing math
on grids or attending *arati*. I'm not
even talking in the kitchen or worrying my
brow, fixing the oxen's yoke
or forming political strategies with bros
while thinking of women and
followers. I never stare
at a computer
but walk in the forest
watching hawks.
Someone is splashing at the sink as
I try to read and think of
Therese of Lisieux splashing at *her* sink

or Sharon Olds
or Mary Oliver
and then remember I'm neither married nor
divorced, and don't want to speak of
silly little people
who refuse to bow to the Giant.

* * *

O Krishna, where are You?
I want
only *visnu-smaranam*. "

* * *

8:15 a.m.

Why can't we see God if He actually exists and is so great?

We're not qualified. Not everyone can see a great person, although in the case of God, we can see His energies working everywhere.

No, I want to *see* Him! After all, I can see any great person on television.

So watch the television in the heart, with devotion. When the guru opens our eyes, we can see the Supreme Lord everywhere.

* * *

10:08 a.m.

Krishna consciousness is for the simple, but not for the stupid. Don't get splayed out. Up and down time, T'ai Chi, yoga "sounds from the pain management book. "We're going to come down hard on those pain provoking thoughts now," one author says. He adds that we shouldn't procrastinate but prioritize. Of course, he fails to mention God in any of his sentences. They don't want to think of Him, because He might be punishing us for something we don't even remember doing. We don't need His health to solve this problem; we have our clinics. The authors of these books usually want readers to follow their words wholeheartedly.

It's raining. By the way, they finished building the chimney. Now they have turned the heat on in the house and are trying to dry out the walls before painting them. He figures he'll get me in there by April 12 or so. In the meantime, I'll read the Eighth Canto, think about Krishna, and hanker for Vrndavana. O man in the moon, I can take no workplace stress. I need to be free, but not of *sadhana*.

Srila Prabhupada says that everyone has to work. My work is here at this desk "here, facing renunciation; here, freeing myself from the modes of passion and ignorance. My work is *bhajana*, and I live by my quota and my routine because they help me to preach Krishna consciousness. I'm not really a *bhajanandi*; I preach every time I pick up my pen.

Fog rolling in inside my head. Don't catastrophize, the doctor says. This man looks out his window and says to himself, "No, I'm not ready to go to India."

* * *

2:40 p.m.

I've got formats and plans for writing sessions and poems, but today is already over for me.

Then accept it. This life-offering, like a narrow but deep stream "to write, to read Srila Prabhupada's books, to chant *japa* early "all other offerings are blocked or dried up or directed to this one current. And on days like today when even that one stream seems blocked, I pray to let the water seep through into my consciousness and to escape into my expression. I am forced to be almost silent when I have pain, but that doesn't stop me from desiring to serve.

April 4, 4:07 a.m.

I still have a sharp pain behind my right eye "it's been there all night. My task right now is to get through my sixteen rounds.

Let me tell you what I dreamt last night. I felt the pain, even in my dream. I was in the Philadelphia temple. Ravindra-svarupa Prabhu was there. At one point I told him I needed a place to lie down while I had this headache. I was speaking without my dentures in and felt embarrassed, but he revealed to me that he wore dentures too. I said, "When we were young, I never thought it would come to this." He asked me to tolerate the pain, because that's what he was doing.

* * *

9:18 a.m.

The headache has finally gone down. I know it can flare up again. It's my cross "it's not such a great one "but I have to bear it.

I have eight more rounds to chant.

I wonder why I dreamt about the Philadelphia temple last night. Besides the incident I told, I heard about my Godbrother's accomplishments in his academic preaching. The Philadelphia temple represents to me a steady place in ISKCON and a home for devotees (although not for me). As I listened to all the human and variegated goings on of that temple, I felt sympathetic to the devotees' struggles. No one seemed to wonder why I was there, though.

Now I'd like to return to my quiet but eventful routine here. I can't expect to write or read much today; I just want to stay steady and recover. I am grateful I have my life to myself, although of course that's temporary, as is everyone's life in this world. That seems especially poignant when I compare my own fragility with the *Bhagavatam's* description of the Supreme Person's eternality and bliss.

The Supreme Lord does not suffer the dualities we suffer; for Him there is no beginning or end. He doesn't belong to anyone or any nation, He has no inside nor outside, and the entire universe emanates from Him. "Therefore the Supreme Lord is the ultimate truth, and He is complete in greatness." (*Bhag.* 8.1.12) This verse described Krishna's *aiSvarya*; by reading it we are meant to appreciate His greatness. Those of us

who desire to favor His humanlike sweetness (*madhurya*) in Vrndavana need to feel the security of and the devotion to the all-great, all-powerful Lord. Because He's not an *ordinary* cowherd boy. He is both Bhagavan, the Absolute Truth, and Gopinatha, the Lord of the *gopis*. He is the *vidagdha-madhava* and the *dhira-lalita*. He is Krishna present with Radha, and together They have agreed to appear in my room in Their Deity forms.

"He is self-effulgent, unborn and changeless . . . " He creates and maintains the universe, yet "He remains inactive in His spiritual energy and is untouched by the activities of the material energy." (*Bhag.* 8.1.13) Krishna is free to play always in Vraja because, by His energies and expansions, He maintains all the worlds.

Krishna's potencies appear in His names. God cannot be understood while we remain absorbed in the material energy or by the material methods of understanding. We can understand Him only through devotional service (*bhaktya mam abhi-janati*).

* * *

11:26 a.m.

Read this in a book on prayer:

* * *

If you just read this book, you will doubtless gain something. But your effort will produce fruit a hundredfold if you pray deeply over what you are studying. The rule of St. Benedict, which has guided thousands of people toward a deeper life with God, strongly advised a life of balance between prayer (the first priority), work, and study. Everyone wants to engage regularly in all three activities. The three-point balance provides a strong foundation for . . . spiritual growth.

* * *

Prayer. When *I* try to pray, I usually space out. I seem to have better luck by writing, at least a few sentences, in a prayerful spirit.

This prayer book is a Christian book, and the author writes with faith in her chosen deity. She says the Gospels are not intended as objective reports on the events in Jesus' life; they were written decades after the fact, and the persons who wrote them injected into them their own spiritual experience and meditation.

"A Gospel, then, is a composition of memories, reflections, understandings, messages, and convictions centering around Jesus, his life, his death and resurrection, and his teaching."

This seems to make the Gospels different from the Vedic scriptures. We accept the Vedic scriptures as the absolute word of God. Vyasadeva is an incarnation of God, and it was he who compiled the *Vedas*. Many of the statements in our scriptures are made directly by Krishna or one of His Visnu expansions. I find it interesting that the author doesn't see the fact that the Gospels were written by persons who included their own viewpoint as a weakness. rather, they give those authors respect. We in Krishna

consciousness can learn something from this attitude and respect one another's sincere, if fallible, meditations as attempts to glorify God.

* * *

12:15 p.m.

Writing In Time

And so, here we are again, writing in time, brethren, with our tongue firmly in cheek. Hail to the prophet, who knows the way. Now calm down and speak for twenty minutes.

Breathe easy, breathe deep "once, twice, three times. Even if a twinge comes we'll limp through.

Oh, that pain last night. At its worst, it limits itself to a small but sensitive area behind my right eye. It's been with me long now, and will probably remain until death. Who knows exactly why I have it or what it means? My companion "it's like an outdoor cat that sometimes meows around the door and sometimes wanders for days.

Srimad-Bhagavatam, propped and ready. I compose myself and read, waiting for a phrase to speak to me. If it does, I repeat it, savor it, pray it, then write it out, or write what it brings to mind.

Well, the door seems shut. Then keep going anyway.

Hare Krishna dasi gave me a vase with a snake's head flower, which has square markings on its petals. But the vase leaks, and there is now a puddle around its base.

What else? Yes, we can know Krishna "or the science of Him "if He desires. The *bhavas* and all that. Want to learn more? Not a scholar? Then how can you become immersed in Krishna consciousness? Some immerse themselves by scholarship, study, teaching, preaching, and some manage ISKCON projects. Some do it by chanting a hundred rounds a day and living in Vrndavana, some worship the Deities. Others work in the kitchen.

Do any of these models describe you? No? Then what?

My way is to write the one big book of my life. "Life" for me means to be free of all obligations except the early rising to read Srila Prabhupada's book and to chant Hare Krishna. And the other things I do, of course, including playing with color, writing poems, and taking a recluse's walk.

What were you saying? That you want to be absorbed in Krishna consciousness? I seem to have found my way, but have you found yours? Ask yourself. Whichever way you choose, be prepared to face the struggle. Sometimes devotees feel their way is to struggle against themselves by working against their natures; sometimes they feel their way is to struggle with themselves by working with their natures. Either way, be prepared for struggle. Don't become restless. Live with routine and be satisfied with the daily deepening of the offering process.

Of course, routines are almost always broken, and usually not by choice. My headaches smash my schedule, but they make me aware that I *want* routine. Yes, I want to keep at it, to flow as long as He lets me. I haven't yet found my very best offering and I have so little time left to do so.

Hare Krishna. roller-skating Jo, Henry Adams, and Mary Smith went to Govinda's restaurant. "But you ought to love others," they said, "because that's what Christians say.

It goes along with loving Christ." I thought that statement was appropriate, since it's Holy Week. Devotees seem to show love by preaching to nondevotees and by associating humbly with devotees. Yes, let us give ourselves to God by working to help others in Krishna consciousness. Anything we are doing could be selfish, unloving, if we don't have that focus to serve God by helping others. Hare Krishna.

Letters to answer. A man is talking below. The purple veins in my hand just under the skin carry the echo of the precious thump-thump of my heart. While life lives on in this body, do what is important for when it stops. The soul is eternal, and our good or bad deeds will carry us further into that eternity. Go ever deeper.

Thinking again of the Christians. Perhaps I'm looking over their shoulder to see how they offer devotion to their Lord. We don't have the equivalent of Christ's Passion. Krishna is spiritual and never suffers. His *nitya-siddha* devotees don't suffer either, although that means something other than it seems to. I can't understand it completely.

* * *

5:40 p.m.

Letters piling up and time running out. Today I am healthy, but I don't have the energy to tune in to all my activities. I'll go to bed on time tonight, and hope for a better tomorrow.

* * *

Pegasus. Flying horse. Krishna conscious poet of infamy. Allows anything to come, yet tries to shape it also. Begin, will ya?

Pegasus

Now take a turn and be happy at it, this
moment lived under a bright desk lamp, Krishna
not etched so deeply perhaps but
Krishna, like a tattoo on the heart. Are we
committed? Will we pass the test or
fail like Christ's disciple Peter?

* * *

"I do not know the man," he said, and
I don't go on *harinama* because
I get headaches and my ankle starts to hurt.
Maybe I even think
I'm too old for it. These days I show commitment
by writing odes, wearing faded saffron,
and shaving my head
which I keep free of schisms.

* * *

Now a poem series begins without fear.
I do this instead of braver acts
but I'm not wasteful
and I avoid bad company. I keep my
temper cool, this boy calm and
quiet, like a flower preserved in a damp pot
we hope will bloom
when its day comes.

* * *

Night Notes, 6:50 p.m.

Madhu is on a marathon to finish the house. He came back to see me, took some bread and a banana, then went back to work. He misses playing his bouzouki and melodeon. "It's good for me to play music," he says. It makes him forget his problems, takes him to another world. We agreed I should try to move in by April 13th, even if only one room is ready. I'll have to be prepared to live in a construction site.

I told a few devotees how I have decided to follow a way that is different than that followed by most ISKCON devotees. I can't expect much support. So, I will look to Krishna for signs. He seems to be giving me both permission and facility. I am going to take them.

But I worry. I *always* seem to worry. Madhu says, "Don't worry. Just *do* it."

Okay, I will. At least for as long as Krishna desires. I will do it, but with detachment. Nothing is forever.

Say goodnight to fourteen generations of relatives: I wish you all God's speed. Hare Krishna. May Krishna speak to me at midnight when I try to pray the *Bhagavatam*. And to Srila Prabhupada through his purports.

April 5, Rama-navami, 12:10 a.m.

Srimad-Bhagavatam says that active persons should engage in Krishna conscious activities. The Supreme Lord is actually the enjoyer. We become frustrated when we try to omit Him from the picture and enjoy the fruit of our work without Him. This is an inconceivable (one could say mystical) conception. Everything about God is mystical. Only Krishna has the potency to enjoy. We can only experience enjoyment, therefore, in connection with His enjoyment. By serving and pleasing Him, we too will taste happiness.

As I began to read the verse describing this point, I didn't know what to expect. At first I thought, "It's about *karma-yoga*, work in this world, not really about pure *bhakti*." I even thought I wouldn't be interested. But I stayed with it, and it led me to understand something crucial about pure devotion. Descriptions of how to *attain* pure devotion are as important to me as descriptions about the goal itself because I'm still journeying. Now meditate a little, if you can, on Krishna as the only enjoyer.

And think of Srila Prabhupada "how he is able to make the science of *bhakti* so clear and direct our understanding of Krishna, His will, His transcendental nature, and our relationship with Him "understandings we never found in Christianity or any other religion. Even without saying that Krishna consciousness is a better or more complete

path, we can admit that it certainly states things differently than others. I don't want to miss the unique flavor of this path. I don't want to screen it through the theological terminology of another path any more than I want to screen Srila Prabhupada's way of teaching Krishna consciousness through another Gaudiya Vaisnava guru.

"Everyone should progress towards perfection by acting in such a way that Krishna will be pleased (*samsiddhir hari-tosanam*). One cannot please Krishna by sitting idly . . . " (*Bhag.* 8.1.14, purport)

Sometimes Srila Prabhupada's statements are so uncompromising as to be overwhelming: "Nothing should be performed for sense gratification, but everything should be done for the satisfaction of Krishna." (Bg. 3.9, purport) How is it possible? What a demand! "Should-should." One gets angry within, wants "what? An easier path? Of course, Srila Prabhupada acknowledges that surrender may take time. If we can somehow stay under his guidance, however, we can do it.

I keep coming back to that same point "Srila Prabhupada is my guru, and Krishna is the only enjoyer. I know what my duty is, what aspiration I want to possess. May I possess it for His pleasure.

O Krishna, You tell us that mundane work will bind us to one body after another. You are not bound by Your actions, and You also protect Your devotees. Dear Lord Krishna, please allow me to follow the Vaisnava way. That way is for those who are willing to humble themselves before the all-great. I try and I fail. Then I try again. My ego is strong and proud, even rebellious. I wonder, "Why should I bow down before my guru? I always bang my head against the table on the way up." O Lord, please preserve me.

Dear Lord, is it that I am afraid to surrender? What is it I think I have to lose? I have worked so hard to create a sense of self, to foster my proclivity, to protect my privacy, and I have already spent years surrendering all those things in the name of ISKCON service. But I did it for pride. I wanted people to think I was a good devotee. I don't want that now. I simply want to serve You.

* * *

4:34 a.m.

Srimati Radharani's bracelet keeps falling off. I wanted to make Her look elegant and neat, but I am a clumsy *pujari* and those bracelets don't fit well.

The last act of *Lalita-madhava* is filled with reunions as the residents of Vrndavana come to Dvaraka. Suddenly, everyone recognizes the *gopis* in their Dvaraka dress. But radha has gone to drown Herself in the Kaliya lake. I couldn't quite follow that part.

Earlier in the play, a pet parrot reveals Krishna's deception to dress Himself as a woman in order to spend time with Radha free of Rukmini. Then the parrot reveals Rukmini's plans to send Satyabhama away. O Krishna.

Krishna, please make it clear what I should do.

What do you mean? Are you prepared to follow Krishna's order without fear no matter *what* He asks?

No. I know I'm not. Then what is the point of that prayer?

Then let me pray for the courage to do something that will please Krishna. May He give me strength. May He rescue me from my unsundered position. As Bhaktivinoda

Thakura prays, "O Gopinatha, You are the most intelligent person, so please find a way that I can rise out of my lower modes and become a pure devotee of Your Lordships."

Today Radha-Govinda are dressed in bright red silk with gold trim. It is Rama-navami, but I'm going to honor the fruit I offered Them for breakfast. If I fast, it's likely I'll get a headache. "All right," I can hear Srila Prabhupada say, "do what is practical."

But how will I observe Lord Rama's appearance? I doubt I'll hold a special reading; I plan to keep to myself today. But I like the story of Rama.

Today is also Palm Sunday, the beginning of Christ's passion.

Srila Prabhupada is wearing a knit cap and scarf from Vrndavana. I like to offer him such clothes, because they help me contact the holy *dhama*. Krishna says the land of Vrndavana is nondifferent from Himself, just as His name is nondifferent from Him. There is no higher worship than the worship of the *vraja-vadhu*, the *gopis* of Vrndavana.

How did Rupa Gosvami know all those pastimes? Did he make them up the way a fiction writer would? No, he saw the *lilas* in his pure mind and heart, and Lord Caitanya empowered him to record them. And he is Rupa-manjari in his eternal identity. But even if we say he imagined something, then still there is no harm. His poetry is pure and strictly in line with *rasika* understanding. His poetry is without fault.

Stay with me, Krishna, please stay with me. Don't let me be confused. Empty, distracted, weak in body and mind, I could not dive into the ocean of nectar. I won't berate myself. Just use the present moment to try again.

What happened when Radha went to the lake? I could tell you, but it's best you wait until tomorrow to find out.

* * *

Dreamt I was picked up by the police while I was separated from the devotees. None of the devotees knew where I was. The police interrogated me and wouldn't let me go. They were not really sure what I had done, and they didn't really hurt me, but I could see that they had decided to detain me because I must have been guilty of *something*. I told them a lie, hoping it would help my case, but it didn't.

* * *

Pre-Dawn Bird Hopping
The bird sings and jumps as if
it wants to be a sergeant-at-arms a
gopi or blade of grass
in Vraja "hopes to rise up
gradually.

* * *

A blackbird flies at dawn's first light
and I rehearse the scene for next Sunday's
class.

* * *

No Enjoyer But Purusatam
& Please, sirs, be with us and
play etudes.
Be a plain Paris cafe and
plan for a ratha-yatra
O Steve-become-Sats.

* * *

But don't enjoy "you're no great elder
and can't even pretend
you didn't cop out
that you did great
although you still read
his books and
pray.

* * *

I heard that even birds are happy
in Goloka. They feel neither
sadness nor fear
and hear only rumors
of demons.
They feast their senses
on Krishna's form

* * *

and accept the boat the sages have left
for them to cross
as singers, dancers, playful
friends and
forest birds
simply for His pleasure.

* * *

There is no enjoyer but Purusatam,
no handsome male but He
no heroine but His Radha.

* * *

O dawn-singing birds
don't forget your arias
those *gayatri-mantras*
based on etudes learned
in this world.

* * *

May Krishna be happy in eternal
lila and may I learn to love only that. "

* * *

8 a.m.

"As the Supreme teacher of human society, He teaches His own way of activities, and thus He inaugurates the real path of religion. I request everyone to follow Him."
(*Bhag.* 8.1.16) He who organized the Krishna consciousness movement is teaching us to follow Lord Rama, follow Lord Krishna, follow Lord Caitanya, because this will perfect our lives and allow us to go back to Godhead at the end.

After he listed off the Manus to Maharaja Pariksit, Sukadeva Gosvami told how Lord Hari once saved Gajendra from a crocodile. Maharaja Pariksit then wanted to hear more. "Any literature or narration in which the Supreme Personality of Godhead, UttamaSloka, is described and glorified is certainly great, pure, glorious, and all good." (*Bhag.* 8.1.32)

Srila Prabhupada says that the preachers of the Krishna consciousness movement, especially the *sannyasis*, should speak from the books he has published "*Srimad-Bhagavatam*, *Caitanya-caritamrta*, *Bhagavad-gita*, and *The Nectar of Devotion*." "This will create an auspicious atmosphere."

Gajendra, the king of elephants, was attacked while in the water by a powerful crocodile, who fastened his jaws on the elephant's leg. The two fought for a thousand years, but the crocodile grew stronger while "the elephant diminished in his mental, physical and sensual strength." (*Bhag.* 8.2.30)

You know what Srila Prabhupada writes here. He says it is necessary for devotees "his disciples included "to be enthusiastic in mind and body so that they can fight the crocodile of *maya*. We need staying power. Therefore, we need to do whatever is necessary to keep alive. Srila Prabhupada goes so far as to say that even if a *sannyasi* must step down from his vows and take a wife, he should not despair. rather, he should make the adjustment and continue the Krishna conscious fight. Never, he says, should we leave this process.

To maintain such vigor, we need to be in a "normal condition," in our natural element. The crocodile was able to defeat Gajendra because it was in its natural element. And "What constitutes a normal condition will not be the same for everyone. . . . That one has been found to be very weak in one place does not mean that he should stop fighting the crocodile of *maya*."

* * *

10:28 a.m.

12.20p Writing In Time

The devotees here went to Inis rath to celebrate Lord Rama's appearance. Later today I will read about Rama. Now I'll read my palm, or prick it with a pin. No, no theatrics.

But blood and pain

are part of this recitation. To Christ they said, "Now you are crucified." Images: twisted, blood dripping "I once read something John Masefield wrote of the accursed hill where it all took place. Such a dreadful meditation on sacrifice.

Our way seems easier, and certainly more joyful. We may suffer, we devotees, even voluntarily, but God does not. And He wants us to return to Him. Still, we cannot impose the material concept of suffering on Him.

Anyway, just respect the various traditions and their ghastly *rasas* and sweet deliverances. I am not here to judge but simply to state a preference.

Roll along. Mr. Cummings is here, and Mr. Rightford is about to appear.

They went to Inis rath in our casual religion.

Hey, *get* that guy! Ask him why he is so estranged.

Because his name is Etranger, Stranger, Etienne, Esteban
and he wears a honkey sombrero
with Levis and bronze.

Sports no goatee

and wouldn't harm

a flea.

Is he Indian?

* * *

No, a Swami's man "converted.

But that story's well worn.

He rode a donkey into Jerusalem

for triumphant, bold preaching,

but by the time the week

was up, Judas betrayed him.

* * *

O Rama, this is *Your* day.

You were banished on Your coronation day

and yet you accepted it without pain.

Because God never suffers.

I once worshiped Hanuman in a little picture
on my nightstand.

He made me brave.

Hanuman, ideal servant "all

was interchangeable for me in those days.

It wasn't until later that I understood
ista-devata. But thank you for leading me
to Radha-Govinda.

* * *

Keep cool and don't get a headache today, hear? I held off eating. I cannot write deep.
I breathe in, sigh, and let go of bad news. My hands are the hands of truth temporary.

Rama's father died of separation. Later, Rama returned triumphant to Ayodhya.

The *Ramayana* appears, by external measure, to be a sad story, full of exile and
separation and pain and death, but it is the greatest triumph. It is transcendental.

The Christians who believe in the Cross, in Christ as Lamb, and in Christ's
resurrection do not believe in Rama and the monkeys and the floating stone bridge. One
is faith and the other myth, they say. I say both are true and good. But you can't choose
both. There's not enough room in the heart for two paths. We are not eclectics, even if
we are respectful.

Taxi! To Vrmdavana! Hare Rama!

12.40p

* * *

2:05 p.m.

Reading an EJW written last year at this time. It contains a lot about pain and not
being able to do more than I was doing. Now look in the mirror of your writing and
admit you are a diarist.

Angular exchanges I feel in the gut. I can't write better than I am.

My *Bhagavatam* quotes sit on the page with only as much conviction as I have for them.
They are absolute, but a perceptive reader can tell whether I am simply pasting them in
my commonplace book or whether I mean them. Same with any of the words you will
find therein.

* * *

After reading Poets

Pegasus. Play with words. He's a Greek but
we want Sanskrit to play with "affixes
and suffixes. Well, I don't know any
but I read poems by Al Young that
I liked. His poems had heart
and encouraged artist-musicians
with gratitude.

* * *

Yeah, that's good. Why don't I write now

grateful for dear brothers during the years when
I lived in the hinterland playing Steppenwolfe?
They remained my friends.
And now? He hasn't answered my letter
in three months. It doesn't matter so much
because in the end, no one can really help.
In the end the only friend is Prabhupada
everything is tested in that relationship.

* * *

I don't live in any hinterland now
I've got friends and followers,
Rain and trees
for community.
I'm no despairing Rilke
or a poet writing incomprehensible stuff.
I reach for something
maybe a universal sadness
or a particular humor.
to become a *sankirtana*
artist.
Krishna! Krishna!

* * *

Ribbons of desire, words of strangeways.
Ramacandra's sunset comes early
in this country.

* * *

3 p.m.

M. arrived. I was able to see the slow progress of the white van from my perch here.
As soon as he entered, the phone rang, and I still haven't had a chance to talk to him. I
can wait.

Remember that Rama-navami in 1968? We Boston devotees went to New York for a
be-in at the park near the 42nd Street library. We joined Brahmananda and others, and
sang our songs. One girl played tambourine. When the sun set, we went downtown to
Second Avenue and honored potato *prasadam*.

* * *

5:06 p.m.

There is a brilliant double rainbow in the sky right now. It arcs over the treetops and
disappears before touching the ground. It appears to form a bridge over the Wicklow

mountains. It gives the sky an intense blue-gray hue, and the sheep in the pasture look that much brighter.

* * *

Night Notes, 5:27 p.m.

Honored *prasadam*, then M. sped back to the building site. I'll take rest soon. I eked out twenty-one pages today. Krishna's words are not just etched on stone, but imprinted on the devotees' hearts.

April 6, 2:45 a.m.

Hey, don't become like Beckett's Krapp "that idiotic man recording his life, then staring vacuously into space while listening to the sound of his own voice. What did he have? Nothing but the darkness surrounding his dimming light, only babble. Worse, no one cared.

No, I can't become another Krapp "I'm Krishna's messenger, fallible as I may be. The kingdom of Godhead is with us now; our captivity is over the moment we recognize that fact. That's my message "Krishna's message "and carrying it is what makes me different from Krapp.

Thinking again about Christ as the days move slowly toward Easter. He declared himself the Son of Man. No wonder materialistic religionists became outraged. Who *was* this person declaring himself in such a way? Who was he that he could heal the sick and raise the dead?

And who is this midget shivering? Does *he* love anyone? O late-blooming creeper, chant Hare Krishna.

* * *

I missed my midnight *Bhagavatam* reading. I'll make up for it later today. Each day is a holy day and seems to carry limitless opportunities in spiritual life.

I have three Esgics to last me the rest of the week. His will, not mine, however, will actually be done. Let's see what happens.

* * *

Thought of how people call me "*goswami*." I don't really deserve that title. A *goswami* is brave and surrendered, fearless and renounced. I'm not like that. Oh, but I can't completely disown the super-title. What am I then, a goswami-ette?

* * *

4:35 a.m.

Be happy so much has been given to you. The *Lalita-madhava* reading is over, and soon I will play *Vidagdha-madhava* again. Hare Krishna. I am not entirely a Vrndavana person. I am, however, accepted by my master and deputized to preach. Also, despite my

alienation, I love my brothers and all those who follow Srila Prabhupada. At death, I hope they will help me remember him. We all need the devotees' blessings.

Yes, I am grateful that so much has been given to me. Now I want to give it to others in a way they can assimilate.

At the end of *Lalita-madhava*, we hear of the wedding of Radha and Krishna. *Vidagdha-madhava* discusses *parakiya* love. Hare Krishna. May those syllables dawn in my mind and heart.

* * *

A true story (almost):

Once there was a man from Money. He foretold the weather and marked red or blue on the top of a city building so people could see what to expect. People often went to work carrying umbrellas. Then a *harinama* party danced out of the fog chanting the *Deus Ex Machina*. "rest in peace," they sang. "Wake up and get with this rhythm!" The *mrdanga* rocked and the cymbals clash-clashed. People thought the Bengalis had discovered jazz, and they smiled.

Although some did not. Some were actually put-off because Monday was a blue-mood day, and anyway, it was raining. They didn't want to hear no Hare Krishnas on their path, and they certainly didn't want to be asked for a donation.

The Hare Krishna chanters continued to sing regardless, under the protection of the First Amendment. Whenever they were chased off the street, they would reappear somewhere else. You just couldn't get rid of them. They found legal venues and sang and sang, the drums drumming away. They had the faith that God's names, even if heard reluctantly, would bring good fortune to one and all, and had the power to transform a person's heart.

Tell us a story about one who was transformed. What actually happens when the devotees chant in public?

That story's too esoteric "at least most of it is "because we can't see what happens. But let me tell you what I know. Some of the people became happy for a while, found themselves surrendering more and more to the holy name, and made friends with devotees. After some time, they became less happy, at least on the surface, although their austerities were making their faces glow.

That's all I'll say for now. Most of us already know the rest. Back to the *harinama* party. They entered La Jolla and inspired a waiter to bang forks and to shake his hips with glee. The people in the restaurant froze for a moment when they saw the parade, but this was no naked lunch. They picked up their forks and went back to their plates. Changed?

* * *

Romp For the Lord
& Oh boy we're happy and sis and friends are
here in the balcony we are whompin' with
the best group "and suddenly we ebb
and don't like it 'cause it's just a show

and we still have to go home, we
bumpkins from Staten Island

* * *

O Krishna, we know better
now, and my brother almost died
on the street while out
with the chanting party.
When those musicians stood up and
blew we knew it was heaven.
They breathed in and out
wavy and with great
Rhythmic sense.

* * *

Peter laughed at Jesus when they first met
snickered behind his hand.
But Jesus continued to look at him
into his heart and soul.
Peter turned frenetic
then surrendered
an acorn grown spring-green
even over the tough notes.

* * *

Like Prabhupada and me "
although I never laughed,
just screeched.
We will all get through. "

* * *

* * *

7:55 a.m.

When he is in trouble, a pious man turns to God. In this material world, there is danger at every step, so a pious man rarely has a chance to forget God. Only those who think this world is meant for their pleasure forget Him. Devotees know the truth, and they also know that no one but guru and Krishna can help them. Therefore, they always take shelter in the Supreme.

"Thereafter . . . Gajendra fixed his mind in his heart with perfect intelligence (*samadhaya mano hr̥di*) and chanted a mantra . . . which he remembered by the grace of Krishna." (*Bhag.* 8.3.1)

Srila Prabhupada advises all devotees to practice chanting the Hare Krishna mantra. He also mentions the *Brahma-samhita* and the *Nrsimha-stotra*. "Even though [such a person] may be imperfect in spiritual consciousness in this life, in his next life he will not forget Krishna consciousness." (*Bhag.* 8.3.1, purport)

Gajendra began his prayers by offering his respectful obeisances to the Supreme Person. "Because of Him, this material body acts due to the presence of spirit." (*Bhag.* 8.3.2)

Srila Prabhupada remarks that we should never consider a devotee fully engaged in devotional service, and thinks always of Krishna, to have a material body. *Gurusu naramati*: "One should stop thinking of the spiritual master as an ordinary human being with a material body."

* * *

Music Before Death
& He's not seriously remembering
Christ's agony on the cross. He simply
wants to compose a piece of music
for peace
he reminisces and
Ruminates
waits for the flow.

* * *

The flow "to God his maker
Lord of all religions
the One and Two and
All.

* * *

Now the beginning middle and
end ought to remind us
of Krishna. Then we won't die in the void
lost from the track
away from our love of devotees.

* * *

When Mickey rooney went over the
fake waterfall in a movie
and in reality he
got yellow-faced, ready
for death,
he told them to fade-out I can't

laugh anymore it hurts
too much
and that's how he left us. "

* * *

Crossing a Busy Corner
& Brilliant corners. He looks both
ways before crossing a busy street
the Swami in swami cap "
you know that photo with the manhole
in it, it looks like Houston Street
with parking meters up and
down "he's coming forward
a tough giant champ of an unknown world
a Christ!

* * *

I was there in those days, even present
in some photos
my big Adam's apple my
danda (later)
wanting nectar
which I defined (in those days)
as status.
I felt so much anxiety.

* * *

No drug to stop that pain. None.
Some guru tried a drug
but we kicked him right out.
Now, what was I saying?
Oh yes, look both ways
at every corner, then cross
the street quick
as he did,
to recall him. "

* * *

1:40 p.m.

Our association with Srila Prabhupada is an extraordinary thing. Sometimes his disciples say glibly that it was similar to being one of Christ's direct disciples. Do we pay the cost of discipleship?

* * *

3:55 p.m.

Gajendra prayed to the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the cause of all causes. "May that Supreme Personality of Godhead give me protection." O Prabhupada, what am I doing to follow you? How can I increase my faith? My service? I usually conclude, when I ask these questions, that I can do no more. I have actual limits. In about a week I'll move into a house that will commit me to staying in one place. Of course, I can still go out to preach from there, but I still wonder about the value of that kind of preaching. My writing is what drives me, and that's where I hope to give the most vital Krishna consciousness. O Prabhupada, please protect me.

When the universe is annihilated, "there is a situation of dense darkness. Above this darkness, however, is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I take shelter of His lotus feet." (*Bhag.* 8.3.5)

We should believe in Vedic mantras, the words of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and other scriptures. reject anything that is unfavorable "any teaching that minimize or blasphemes the Vedic version. Gajendra calls the Supreme Lord the Supreme Artist. As an artist in costume cannot be recognized by the audience, "Neither the demigods and sages nor the unintelligent can understand the features of the Lord, nor can they express in words His actual position. May that Supreme Personality of Godhead give me protection." (*Bhag.* 8.3.6)

The Supreme Lord is present in our hearts, yet we struggle to find Him. What else can we do but accept the statements He has kindly given us and follow His instructions?

When the Supreme Lord comes into this world, He does not accept an ordinary material body. rather, He appears with His immense spiritual potencies (*sambhavamya atma-mayaya*). Chanting His names will liberate us, and bring us to the stage of pure love of God. I offer my obeisances to He whose activities are wonderful and transcendental.

* * *

3.35p Writing In Time

Okay, I commit myself to Krishna conscious time. I'm a devotee, a direct disciple of Srila Prabhupada. Then tell us some nectar.

One time Srila Prabhupada came down from his rooms at 26 Second Avenue because he saw a light on in the bathroom, which was connected to the temple room. He turned it off. Some of us watched him. He didn't have much to say on that occasion, and neither did we, but I remember the event.

Who is he?

We stood by the pond at Ananda Ashrama in Upstate New York. I didn't want to speculate or take their remarks so seriously "I didn't want to be frivolous about him. Consider the heavy personalities of that time "Kirtanananda, who always adopted the role of guru; Hayagriva, literary man and always his own man not to be confined by rules and regs; the others. I tried to serve and not be influenced too much by them, but it was hard for me to maintain personal integrity. It got easier when I moved to Boston and

had my own small services for the swami there "typing, editing, and management of that little center. And of course, I learned to tolerate the unfriendly people who mocked and vandalized and even attacked us. That was service too.

Then I couldn't resist getting married. What an entanglement that proved to be. O Swamiji, we still managed to love and serve you through those days, to hear about Krishna from you, and to accept Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Now I am continuing, breaking new ground sometimes, or just trying to cope with dignity through the days and nights when I can't seem to do much. Every day I write, and every day I read. I don't want to do more than that. Given that ISKCON is now a certain sort of institution, I can't live in it as I used to, as a member of a commune, or even as a vital manager, responsible for the movement's upkeep. I no longer identify with such things, although I'm glad they're going on.

O Krishna. Krishna. Hands on a legal pad. Krishna boy in love with his Deities of Radha-Govinda, but he wishes for more. He doesn't have much money, though, and practically no energy.

(Been writing for 9 minutes 13, and I have to stop and sigh. To sigh, you push air from your mouth like a runner blowing when he's tired. He waits for his second wind, just like I am doing.)

O Lord, I am a boy who still owns his red beads "the link from the past "over thirty years later. The link is in the beads.

Certain of my disciples write me less and less. They see nothing vital in our relationship, so don't find any point in maintaining it. Let me be honest about that. Some of them don't want to practice Krishna consciousness, and some of them do, but don't want to follow me. Should I worry about it, I, who am over here, writing these pages?

Krishna Krishna.

Oh, don't think about it. Better to stay here now. It's April, and the weather is beautiful. In the backyard here there is a short, gravel path. I put on my canvas shoes, finger my beads, and walk back and forth reciting, "O Krishna, O Krishna."

Silence as I write, except for the birds. I am not *driven* to write this. Or maybe I am. I like the sight of black ink on a yellow page. I *want* to put it there. Krishna, Krishna. Play the banjo, no, the nothing "because I said no noise, just birds.

I see the neighbor's horse and donkey grazing in their backyard "a sign that this is not India but rural Ireland. If they don't let me stay here, I'll just write wherever I am about whatever happens.

Gajendra didn't say Krishna's name in His prayers, only "Lord." But he knew Him and described Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore Lord Visnu responded, since He is Supreme.

In this life, we speak what the *sastras* say because they are our lawbooks and our holy writ. My hand makes commentary. Dear sirs, will we scribe in heaven? I pray for inner confirmation that after working hard in this life to please Krishna, I will be able to go to Goloka. There I will discover my new-to-me relationship with Krishna and His pure devotees. There will be no political *prajalpa*, and this information will be no mere *jnana*. All souls will be there to engage in eternal play with Lord Krishna. We will each think of how to please Him best, and will lose the selfish egocentric life. Sounds good "may it happen.

But it may not, at least not immediately. It may rain first. Hare Krishna. This man is tired out. O Krishna, may I always remember You with more fervor than I remember my stock of memorized verses.

O Krishna, I believe in You. I am a disciple of Swami Bhaktivedanta. I don't claim to be a leader, and perhaps later in life I'll get some new commission from You. If not, I'll stay loyal and simple. No committee can stop that. But if they try, I will yield to You. Krishna Krishna.

Twenty minutes fled and I'm finishing this page. Heard that Billy Bones asked for a leave of absence to finish his ten-part novel. He got it, but wrote only a one-act play reminiscent of *Krapp's Last Tape*. It was about an old ISKCONite who wrote many diaries and died in an apple orchard. His tomb can be seen among the others at ISKCON Mayapur. What did he learn, that man who died among the apple trees? That the Krishna conscious science seemed confining only until he learned something new.

I hereby finish this session at the time indicated in the sign-off, with respect to sages and pure devotees, *dhamas* and daydreams.

3.57p

* * *

After reading Poets
Reading poets I blink when they let me go
and I am again on my own with my own
language, like the time she hitchhiked
and enjoyed the ride and talk but was in the end
dropped off on the outskirts of town.
She was lucky she wasn't raped.

* * *

She phoned me at the temple past midnight,
described the place where she was
somewhere out in Connecticut
so I asked Karunamaya dasa to get up and
drive me out there "an hour and a half each way "
and although she didn't say much, I was genuinely glad
to get her back, although I knew it was the beginning
of more to come.

* * *

As for me, I'm a sinner. I
walked up and down in a backyard
with my beads then came back
and opened a letter from England "
this year they have six different Diana stamps "

and guess what? It was from a disciple
who is signing off from being my disciple.
He'll stay in ISKCON but has opted for another,
more lively, more compassionate, and more interesting
guru. What does it matter?
He says, "This will lessen your own burden
because I know you have poor health."

* * *

Think about it. Do I feel envy? Find fault?
Oh, what can it matter? Break all attachments
except one or two "Krishna and Prabhupada "
and grant permission to this soul.
But he was never a burden.

* * *

Backyard gravel, swing left arm, right
hand in beadbag. Poets jive in words and
feelings, stirring their own and mine. But we
have Krishna, and carry the burden to tell His message
and how He kindly delivers each of us.
It's not really a burden but a joy
and yes, He loves us true.

* * *

Night Notes, 6:20 p.m.

Hey, Sarge, I read your poem about the disciple signing off. Don't worry about it.
There are plenty more where he came from. Want some peanuts? If you want to collect
disciples, go to Russia. You can collect a bunch there.

A bunch of keys
on a ring.

Little Dorrit and someone asking
Prabhupada "it reverberates
in my mind, "Are you
Ginsberg's guru?"

Did Srila Prabhupada say yes?
No, he said he was everyone's servant.
I heard it with my own ears.

M. just returned; he won't work more tonight. The electrician can't come over right
now, and it's too dark. April-tight buds on the little tree, I noticed. Radha-Govinda are in
Their night outfits, but I saw that Their sleeves are frayed. *Hari-nama*. Srila Prabhupada
singing "*Dusta mana*," and me loving it.

A warning: don't cheat in spiritual life. Just serve Krishna.

April 7, 12:10 a.m.

One can know the Supreme Lord when, by His mercy, He reveals Himself to the individual soul in the heart. "Therefore, if one is serious about understanding the Supreme, one must receive enlightenment from Him, as instructed in *Bhagavad-gita*. One cannot understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead by one's mental, physical or intellectual powers." (*Bhag.* 8.3.10)

Lord Krishna may say of me, "I didn't know he was so serious to know Me. He seems afraid to know Me, to surrender himself."

Krishna allows me to serve Him from a distance. I notice contemporary spiritual writers (outside the Vaisnava tradition) emphasize that we should feel a psychological empathy with our own limits and a healthy (free from guilt) self-awareness. I agree in some ways. Berating ourselves because we have not attained love of God can be counter-productive. When I do it, I sometimes see the pretension. I don't *want* to hate myself, although I sometimes write as if I do. Neither does God want me to hate myself. The more real experience of self-deprecation occurs naturally as we advance. In the meantime, how to realize and express our bankruptcy? We may not want to be artificially self-deprecating, but neither do we want to pretend we are doing just fine. Why be complacent when we are faced with truth? I think of a quiet mourning.

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead is realized by pure devotees who act in the transcendental existence of *bhakti-yoga*. He is the bestower of uncontaminated happiness, and is the master of the transcendental world. Therefore, I offer my respect unto Him." (*Bhag.* 8.3.11)

We serve the Supreme Lord by renouncing the fruits of our actions (*naiskarmya*). "The spiritual activities of *bhakti-yoga* " *Sravanam kirtanam visnoh smaranam pada-sevanam* "lead one to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag.* 8.3.11, purport)

Reading with *Sraddha* is a precious jewel. It's a first and a first-class service. *Srnavatam sva-kathah Krishnah, punya-Sravana-kirtanah*: hearing about Krishna is pious activity, and when we hear, the Supreme Lord cleanses the heart from within. Of course, hearing will lead to other services, but even if all we do is hear with faith, we could attain perfection.

Gajendra offers his obeisances to Lord Vasudeva, who appears in many incarnations. "Superficial knowledge is useless for understanding the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but when one's knowledge becomes extremely intense and deep, one understands Vasudeva. *Vasudevah sarvam iti, sa mahatma sudurlabhah*." (*Bhag.* 8.3.12, purport)

I once lectured on this "intense and deep" purport in Prabhupada-deSa, Italy. I don't remember what I said, but the devotees asked how to be intense. It makes me think of the temple *Bhagavatam* class. We often characterize it as sleepy and inattentive "a boring lecture or one that has been superficially hyped up to get us to do something particular. But it can be a wonderful, faith-solidifying act to hear it; it can increase our conviction in Krishna consciousness when we hear with the right attitude. The devotees who hear repeatedly come to accept Krishna consciousness as their way. Then how

intense and deep they go depends upon themselves. Some of us can't stand too much intensity; others want a steady diet of it.

* * *

2:41 a.m.

After all, the mind is not the self. The mind appears so dominant because it takes over whenever we pick up our beads, but the holy names are more powerful. They keep going despite the mind. In this way we irrigate the dry self; the effect is steady, if slow. At least this morning I noticed the difference between the intelligence and my mind, how my will is something different from the mind's chariot, and how I am directing my will to Krishna every time I chant. Now if I can just get more in touch with the self who wills to chant, and ignore the *dustam manah*, I will get somewhere.

* * *

4:33 a.m.

Beautiful Radha-Govinda in Their yellow and gold dresses. When I had completed the dressing, I noticed that Govinda's necklace was hanging too low "all the way to His feet. I had no more energy to correct it, but I will do it later. radha . . . Please accept what I tried to offer.

Srila Prabhupada is wearing saffron the shade of sunrise. He smiles gracefully. Lord Jagannatha and Lord Caitanya at the Gambhira "I hope to go back to Puri one day.

If we want to enjoy, then enjoy the taste of Their service. Narottama dasa Thakura: "O Lokanatha Gosvami, when will you place me at the feet of Rupa Gosvami?" Thus he prays to Rupa-manjari's lotus feet to become free from the javelin of unhappiness. We become free by serving the Divine Couple under the directions of rupa-raghunatha, but how can we hope to attain such a treasure? Narottama yearns for it.

O Syama, I worship You in this golden form, rubbing Your body every morning to a warm shine.

What is on my mind? A snippet from the Navy zips by, then a snippet from the old days with Dravida Prabhu and the BTG staff. Vignettes come and go.

The snake-head flower is dead. Let me remove it.

Last year, the cow Kuveri died. I wrote about it in my EJW.

On the increase "my page count.

Gurupada, Gurudeva, Guru *namaskara*, gruesome "jokes galore "and thank God that club is now extinct. The GBC membership is quite different from those days. I said I become confused by ISKCON's changes; everything is passing by, and the time will come when I will no longer be here to see it. Is that what confuses me? Should I simply chant Hare Krishna, or should I play out my role as long as it lasts? I haven't stated it clearly here, but I will let it go for now.

What the confusion is . . . the memory working, suddenly a thought of old times in Guyana, the empty plain at New Panihati stretching all the way to the cracked earth horizon, cows there, a tropical breeze, and me living with the simple yet political and quarrelsome Indian Guyanese devotees. I couldn't change anything there, although I tried. I wrote haikus there once when I was with Baladeva. But this is the present, and

Srila Prabhupada said that the throne upon which he was sitting was an example of *Santa-rasa* "a silent servant. The one who offers a flower and sandalwood paste is doing something more: an example of *dasya-rasa*. Then there is *sakhya* and *vatsalya*, and best of all, *madhurya*, conjugal love. All these *rasas* are above impersonalism, which states, "If I am pleased, then God is too."

I won't be able to see who is crossing Lough Erne in the rowboats from here. I also won't see the pleasure boats or surfers. That's fortunate. Life is full of trade-offs.

We are devotees of Sri Krishna. That separates us from much of humanity. We don't live sunk in illusion with only darkness all around. No, there are thousands of people in Vrndavana and elsewhere who have come into the light. I am the one in the purple windslicker, that bell-ringing fool. O Krishna, I bow at Your altar and sing my prayers.

The door is squeaking like a sad child or a cat that wants to out.

* * *

Save Yourself First
& Now speak to
your audience "ISKCON ad answerers
kaupina buyers, and for
a man sad-moon *sannyasi* with
Ripped pockets
someone who wants *out*
in an honorable way (see
crocodile-in-water purport).

* * *

Have I read too many books?
T. Swami introduced Sharma's beautiful prints
that's okay
and the book too
but don't sell things you know
are not Vedic or at least
Indian or
transcendental.
They say Emerson was transcendental
and Thoreau
and some even say Ginsberg?
How about ginseng
and saving whales (for Krishna)
or the land, the linden trees.
Better yet, let's save
the *brahmacaris* "
after you save yourself
first.

* * *

Verse book 50 cents
but include ten dollars for shipping.
It saves you makes you
Krishna-free "just give yourself
to chanting the holy name.

* * *

Now I'll shut my mouth and
slow this mind.
Especially at death. But don't worry
the hospice will help me "
they are experienced with dying
and death and offer
exit counseling: "Think of
Krishna. Go there. No smirks." "

* * *

8:12 a.m.

This blank pages stares too hard. I had better start filling it. I thought I had already begun "didn't I write a sentence about *prakrti*? No, I only thought I did. Here's something: we are all spirit souls encased in material bodies. We struggle to live in them. The only way out of the cycle of birth and death is full surrender to Lord Krishna.

To act in a body still requires Krishna's assistance. Krishna also reminds us of our real objective. Gajendra prayed to the Supreme Lord as "the shelter of the Vedic knowledge in various *sastras*, which are Your representations, and who are the source of the *parampara* system." (*Bhag.* 8.3.15)

"He's the ocean, and all Vedic knowledge flows towards Him." As *yajnic* fire is ignited from *arani* wood, so although we are all covered by *maya*, "the fire of knowledge can be ignited only by the Supreme Personality of Godhead when one takes Him within one's heart." (*Bhag.* 8.3.16, purport) Krishna enlightens us from within.

If we ask why we are not becoming enlightened, Gajendra said that the Lord, being very merciful, incessantly tries to deliver us. "It is not that He becomes attentive to us only when we offer prayers to Him . . . He is never lazy in regards to our deliverance . . . but although He is constantly trying, we refuse to accept His instruction. Nonetheless, He has not become angry." (*Bhag.* 8.3.17, purport)

* * *

Disciple Talking
& Bluing, I read a little gospel, sat
sat in a chair and maintained attention
it lasted a while. Then I thought,

"Enough." And room seemed to grow darker
clouds moving against the beautiful sky
and the sun obscured
while this small fellow (and so many others)
passes over the twentieth century and probably into the
next and then goes out
only to come back
for more.

* * *

He's no prophet but writes with heart and joke.
Ironic spoof "at himself and because he's
always on stage. He has to relieve the pressure
and release the serious, the scholarly
a lightweight caught out
in sometimes weary hypocrisy,
but away from that.

* * *

Sir, are you one of the Swami's men?
If I were asked that at the price of rest would
I deny it? Are you a Hare Krishna? Sometimes
book distributors deny that identity to petty
cops so they can go on distributing.
But I'm not a book distributor
and like them
I am one of his. I won't ever deny it
to myself.

* * *

Let me gather broken gourds and odd
wire strings from the junkyard out back
to build tamboras or *vinas*, Balaram drums
and contracts for food to make
a clean vegetarian offering.

* * *

O Lord You are never lazy on my
account trying to save me and
take me back to You.
I have refused You, but nonetheless
You do not become angry.

You try incessantly to take me back.

* * *

So this song and dialogue continues "
I talk and plead my case,
and Krishna and Prabhupada for
the time being refrain from crushing
my arguments to pieces.
I assume they love me.
Krishna gives me a measure of time to
see what I will do with this gift of
human life, the double gift (triple "more)
of association with Krishna's dearmost
servant, Prabhupada. "

* * *

12:35 p.m.

Waiting for lunch. I hope nothing's late. No Indian or Irish time for me, if I can help it. A delay here means more delays later in the day. Let me write while I wait "write Krishna consciousness.

A disciple wrote me saying I give him Srila Prabhupada. That's my service. May I continue to use myself as instrument to serve Srila Prabhupada's instruments, and may I never forget Prabhupada's lotus feet.

* * *

2:40 p.m.

That question again: Can I do more? Could I be called upon to act more as we felt we were acting in the early days with Srila Prabhupada? We were so simple and strong then. Or, at least we were convinced we had the best thing. But perhaps that enthusiasm was based too much on feeling that those who didn't join us were hypocrites. We needed to find the strength more in our own positive convictions and drive the hypocrisy from our own hearts.

But maybe I'm judging that younger self too harshly. I can't even remember what we thought. Besides, there were *so* many opinions. For example, there was Srila Prabhupada's opinion. Then there were the opinions of those who felt they represented Srila Prabhupada. Now there is the present. It's too confusing now to determine who was right and who was wrong, who was victimized and who was victimizing. It's a complicated history.

Okay, let's put that aside. I say I want to do something heroic during my last years. Will God reveal to me what I should do? What sacrifice will I be called upon to make? I don't yet know.

* * *

Now read and hear:

"My Lord, those who are completely freed from material contamination always meditate upon You within the cores of their hearts. You are extremely difficult to attain for those like me who are too attached . . . " (*Bhag.* 8.3.18) Gajendra asks the Lord to free him both from the immediate danger he is facing and from the materialistic way of life. "Krishna is situated in everyone's heart, and He gives that which is desired by the living entity." (*Bhag.* 8.3.19, purport)

What do I desire? "Krishna is so kind. *Ye yatha mam prapadyante . . .* " I ought to have the best desire "to attain pure loving service. Don't harbor selfish thoughts or Krishna will reward them.

Gajendra prayed: "Unalloyed devotees who have no desire other than to serve the Lord, worship Him in full surrender and always hear and chant about His activities." (*Bhag.* 8.3.20) Those devotees who still seek impure benedictions cannot feel the full bliss derived from chanting and dancing in the ecstasy of the *sankirtana* movement. Still, Lord Caitanya distributes it freely.

* * *

3:30p Writing In Time

Words emanate from this pen, silent and inky, and turn into print. Uttered by a Hare Krishna mouth, hand, brain. Go outside after this and chant Hare Krishna mantras while walking over gravel. No one will disturb me during these twenty minutes "no cars stop here to deliver books or mamas from the grave, no Lady Macbeth walking by crying, "Out, damn spot!"

No? Isn't that a car swooshing by? It has stopped at this house. I hear the door slam and now a knock at the door.

It doesn't matter. It's not my door. I was saying that a Krishna conscious man is alert to the possibilities of the theater of the absurd.

Oh, talk plain, as Krishna did with Arjuna, and on spiritual topics "death, eternality, transmigration, perfection. He especially described God's nature and devotional service. It's all in the *Gita* in eighteen chapters.

No need to clench your fist. Words provide a pale comparison to that jet-black ink, the letters you write and the portraits you draw, and that exquisite sound of a pen scratching. I could listen to that sound all day.

Prabhupada's pen scratched from night till morning, and it was so loud against his trunk that the servant (Tosana-Krishna dasa, New Mexico) heard it and looked in on him. That was in Sante Fe. Prabhupada was willing to go almost anywhere to spread the chanting of the holy name.

A brother read *Spiritualized Dictionary* and liked it. He said it was the best I could be doing in these days of doubtful gurus (interested in money, women, and practicing poor *sadhana*). Go on writing deeply and honestly, and follow the spiritual master.

Okay, I said, but when they come from the U.S., could they bring me legal pads in chartreuse, myrrh, and jokes?

No, remember *ahany ahani bhutani*, and don't make plans to meet with bitterness.

Although myrrh is a bitter herb. Like a sword, bitterness enters the heart, and I have felt it.

Hare Krishna. We will follow Srila Prabhupada's *vani*. I boast like Peter.

But if you fall down, don't become so desperate and hopeless and kill yourself like Judas. rather, open yourself to Prabhupada's forgiveness by allowing pangs of repentance to wash over you. Be actually sorry that you didn't do better, even if you didn't fall down. Because you harbored wrong thoughts, you dropped out on one level or another, and you saw that ISKCON ain't what it used to be. Well, neither are you.

Twenty crows. Fifteen pickets. Squirrels "I don't see any. I do see the crop of evergreens lining valleys and hills. Later in the summer, the cherries will be ripe in Italy. In a downpour, Nanda went to India. He wrote me a card that said, "I will never forget you." He's living honest, he says, looking for something true. Where will he find it? Doing what he feels like? Pray to God.

God,

Krishna,

You are all things,

and the mystics have addressed You as Yahweh,

Jehovah, Adonai, Allah,

Christ, Buddha, and Krishna.

You are the cowherd boy of Vraja.

And I am the toast of the town. I am a boy watching the Ed Sullivan Show, or I was, and a corrupt chip of pop culture and sex stories and acts learned from boys at school. I could be a different person with my father than with the teachers at school, and quite different again with those boys who taught me things. You see, I was so busy being different that I didn't know which one of those persons was me.

So I asked the Swami. I wanted to be real with him. I tried to explain the predicament, and he answered simply, "This boy Steve gives money and types. You should all do like this."

Will I ever experience that moment again? O Krishna, when will I see my Prabhupada again? Will he say at that time, "Why did you think I was harsh when I spoke?" I'll tell him it was my poor vision, my harsh heart, and my desire to protect him from the thoughts of others. He might tell me he had to be stern, because we were all failing so miserably. Will it be too late then? I couldn't face him as I am now and as he was then. Or maybe I could. I just don't know.

In that, I can't trust my own intelligence. I ask for Krishna's mercy. Please make it clear to me. If I ask, You will give. *Ye yatha mam prapadyante*. But I don't know what to ask for. Maybe You could tell me.

For now, I will write as if retired. This is the aftermath for me, the anti-climax, because I no longer live in the thick of plan-making and management.

Is this the wholehearted effort of a disciple trying his best? I don't want to too easily say it is not.

Krishna, You are my Lord. I will pray through chanting, even when my mind wanders, because I will turn my will toward You.

Now the real question at hand: Do I have a reason to be kind, especially to those around me? That's such a great commandment "to love everyone and avoid the

nondevotees. I can only figure it out a little at a time. I'm no Christ nor (mad) messiah,
not even a best disciple. But I am faithful "that much I claim.

3:51p

* * *

After reading Poets
After moon, it's me. I mean, after
poets I'll introduce you to Krishna,
the best friend of everyone. The atheist
doesn't believe, and Prahlada grieves for that.
Even the Supreme Lord constantly desires
them to end their suffering
but still He refuses to take away
their free will.

* * *

The grass out there is as soft as a golf course
and my sneakers are red like my beads.
I chanted *japa* but
don't ask me what prayers I spoke
because who can recall now?

* * *

Hare Krishna. My reflection in the glass
door "zipped up coat, head in hood "
this coat was given to me in Canada. I see small
Irish daisies on the lawn,
and I refuse to feel despair.

* * *

Because I have no theme. After reading poets
you'd think I'd find a theme
such as "childhood," or "forty poems written
to the moon," or "travel in Yugoslavia"
although I've never been.

* * *

Poets in the moon and still I have no theme. Then
let me relax, glad to pass through
another day. My Lord allowed me. Gajendra's prayers

about to climax "he'll ask for simultaneous
liberation from bodily pain and materialistic
life. He got both because the Lord is
kind "we simply have to ask for what we
most desire.

* * *

So my theme must be God consciousness, torrents of
Krishna, or drops. And asking for
Reprieve. I'd be a devotee
if it was easier.

* * *

Night Notes, 5:47 p.m. "qualifies for being late enough, night notes

M arrived. I heard the van's guttural engine before I saw him. I also heard him jump
down, then open the front door. He's probably tired.

I've been reading Beckett's plays, so that's why I'm thinking in stage directions. I
didn't read many, and none all the way through because they're too empty and
nonsensically absurd for me. Was he trying to be artsy instead of writing from life? But
he was a philosopher and an abstract poet. An artist. Figured it out or couldn't by himself
"his vision of the world, as if it matters at death. Srila Prabhupada punctured all those
self-created visions by explaining sublime reality. He was heavy: "Why don't you stop
your death?" Those who cared could learn that they were not God and that life was not
about sense gratification.

It's now 5:50. I'm a Krishna enthusiast and a priest. When I looked at my reflection in
the glass door, I thought, "All ISKCON *sannyasis* look like this, their skirts all the way
down to their feet. A *brahmachari* wears his cloth tucked in at the back. That seems more
masculine than a skirt, but in ISKCON, the skirt has more status." It's quite a thing to
wear this dress. The coat is normal, but that *sannyasa dhoti*. Often we insulate ourselves
from public opinion. Is that because they might not like our skirts?

April 8, 12 midnight

I thank Lord Krishna for these sunset harvest years of no outer obligations and my
being able to fill my hours with quiet, creative service. I am neither afraid to be alone,
nor am I restless here. My only "fear" is of the unknown, because nothing lasts forever.
This too will turn me to other service. But it doesn't matter; still I thank Him for what He
has given me. If I am placed in a situation later in which I again have to face heavy outer
demands, then I will accept that as His will. May Krishna protect me. I simply want to
remain receptive to His pure devotees and to develop my own devotion for Him. Kali-
yuga is a bad age; even if we want spiritual truth in this age, we can be cheated by the
insincere. Dear Lord, in this life You have given me the association of my Srila
Prabhupada, and through him, Lord Caitanya's *sankirtana* movement. Will I still
recognize those fortunes in a future life? I am helpless to pass through all the changes

and hazards I will inevitably have to face, and revive my Krishna consciousness in a future life. Please come to me at that time. Or, I would prefer to ask You never to leave me. The consciousness I now have, which I take for granted, is actually something rare. Please teach me to honor it more, and to desire Your mercy enough that I can continue seeking it in my next life. Is it too much to ask that I never forget You?

* * *

Gajendra prayed, "I simply desire eternal liberation from the covering of ignorance. That covering is not destroyed by the influence of time." (*Bhag.* 8.3.25)

Om ajnana. Such prayers are the answer to the question I just asked: "How will I continue my connection to Krishna consciousness from one life to another?" It is the spiritual master who opens our eyes with the torchlight of knowledge. Pray to him and serve him. Don't find fault with how he dispenses his mercy. See him as perfect in his deliverance of Krishna consciousness. Also, it's not wrong to hope against hope that you will be delivered from the cycle of birth and death after this lifetime. That would certainly make a happy ending for the readers of this book!

A rich man asked Jesus, "Master, what must I do to gain eternal life?" The Lord's order proved too much for him: Give everything you have to the poor, and follow me. He thought the master too harsh, too demanding. Poor fool.

"Now fully desiring release from material life, I offer my respectful obeisances unto that Supreme Person . . . He is the unborn, supremely situated Lord." (*Bhag.* 8.3.26)

Srila Prabhupada writes that when we preach, common people challenge us, "Where is God? Can you show Him to us?" But at least we can understand, even if we cannot see God, that someone has created both the ingredients and the form of this world. That person lives beyond the universe, because He is its creator. "Simply on the basis of this suggestion, one can offer respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Lord. This is the beginning of devotional life." (*Bhag.* 8.3.27, purport)

I'm supposed to know Krishna's more loving feature. Still, if I fail in intimate realization, I can at least refer to that surmise: He who sustains everything is my Krishna. May He please help me to be His devotee.

O Krishna, please give me the most basic inclination to be with You. I want to serve You, beginning by remembering You in my hearing and chanting. However, when my mind and heart prove to be too dirty to feel pure love for You, please allow even the simplest bent toward theism to remain alive in me. May I worship Govinda, whom the pure devotees see.

"*Maya* covers the living entity because of his willingness to forget the Supreme Personality of Godhead and make his own plan to enjoy this material world." (*Bhag.* 8.3.29, purport) Show Krishna you are earnest, and fight to survive in your spiritual consciousness. Show Him you don't want to forget Him, don't want to surround yourself with material enjoyment at the cost of forgetting Him. Chanting is to remember Him. Let your life of devotional service be simple and pure so that you can go to Him directly. We have each been officially enlightened, but are we actually free of our coverings? Do we see Krishna constantly? Do we give up, like the rich man was asked to do, everything we

have to follow him? Srila Prabhupada says we have nothing to sacrifice but the nonsense idea that we are the universal controller.

Gajendra didn't know much about the science of God or even about His identity, but he did remember a *stotra* from a previous life. He prayed to God as the root: "Although the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very difficult to approach, He is very near to us because He lives within our hearts. As soon as the Lord understands that one is seeking His favor by fully surrendering, naturally He immediately takes action." (*Bhag.* 8.3.30, purport)

* * *

4:33 a.m.

Narottama dasa Thakura sings, "Why am I living?" He laments that he has no devotion for the Vaisnavas. But he takes shelter of Lord Nityananda and knows he will be brought to Vraja. He longs for direct service to the Divine Couple in the association of Their *sakhis*, who will direct him how to serve the Yugala-kiSora.

Today, Radha-Govinda wear purple. I debated in my mind whether to put the black *cadar* on Govinda or to leave Him bare-armed. I wanted Him to be bare-armed but warm. He's carrying His silver buffalo horn and crooked walking stick. I decided He didn't need the *cadar*, although I wrapped radha in Her scarf. But then I couldn't get the folds in Her scarf and skirt exactly as I like them. I had to let it go.

Srila Prabhupada is wrapped in a warm gray *cadar* and a warm saffron wool scarf over that. He also wears a warm knit cap from Vraja. If I dressed Prabhupada so warmly, why did I leave Govinda bare-armed? Some silly thought came that Govinda is God; He doesn't mind the cold. But that's not a devotional enough consideration.

Read at this time, chant at that "people may laugh at my regulation, especially because my activities are so small, not in keeping with the attitude with which I perform them. I don't live in spontaneous *bhakti*, but what I'm doing is better than nothing. And I don't waste time. At least let me offer my time fully, if not my heart.

* * *

The calendar says we can eat breakfast (breaking the EkaadaSi fast) at 6:04 a.m. The sun must be coming up earlier. When it's light enough at 5, I'll try taking a walk, if it doesn't provoke a headache. O people, please listen and take up Lord Caitanya's instructions. We don't ask you to follow blindly; use logic and reason. You will see that Lord Caitanya's mercy is wonderful.

We have heard things like that many times, and if we hear them often enough, they will continue to repeat in our minds, especially if we learn to pray with the repetitions. Let the scriptures enter your heart. It is not only new statements that should capture our hearts. If we want to enter Radha-Krishna's pastimes, we have to hear them again and again, and we have to learn to pray with them. Then we can "dance with Krishna in the *rasa* dance," as Srila Prabhupada invited us to do, when we became qualified. "It is not like your ballroom dancing," he added. He assured us that we could not understand it in the unpurified state, this dance where Krishna enjoys with other men's wives. Krishna

is actually everyone's husband, and He is the enjoyer of all religious sacrifices. Even when worship is offered to the demigods, He receives the misdirected gift.

M. is singing next door. Maybe he's chanting *Slokas*. I think this is his little morning program, so I won't disturb him now by going in there with my dirty laundry. Why do I want to go in there now? Only to prevent him from walking in on me later when I'm trying to write.

Narottama dasa Thakura sings, "Vrndavana is the enclosure in which I keep my mind." I want to say that too. I don't go physically to Vrndavana, but I would like to keep my mind there. Narottama also assures us that the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is the best scripture, and the association of pure devotees is more purifying than any bath in the Ganges. The holy names . . .

Now I've said enough. The Lord in my heart will give me direction if I sincerely ask Him to do so. He advises me to chant, and He gives me enough enlightenment to know that His name is Himself.

* * *

God Sent a Cluster of Stars
& O Krishna, may I sing what I
can on my *bhakti* kazoo.
I am on my own
weighing cents for the Godsent
obeying You and Your permission
to be an American
Hare Krishna
a simple fellow
gruff and bluesy
for the Lord.

* * *

When Christ told them "
they were eating meat . . .
we knew those were different
times. Underrated.

* * *

I don't explain I let my mind
Roam in field so I can freely
offer to Krishna

* * *

a cluster of stars of
piano notes

of going downstairs with a note
for the *acarya's* secretaries
who want to serve
and not mislead.

* * *

The man on the moon
the devotee space carrier
the meeting commenced on time
with a rep from each center
Ready to tell hard core stuff
and iron out politics (ugh).
Leave me to stay at
my work desk.

* * *

Compose spontaneous
I do out of love
and enthusiasm
no fear or mere duty
I am attracted and the
more advanced form of *raga-*
nuga means direct service
to a resident of Vrndavana in
a particular *rasa* I
can know if I'm qualified.

* * *

Make a little mistake or write
a little less than
I would like, diminish the tension and
miss the point the rhythm
the skipped beat
of a traditionalist

* * *

but be forgiving because
people need to find their own pop
their ping and these are light times
in which a rhyme man can be happy,
challenging himself to be the
best he can.

* * *

I'm sorry I am not giving you
the whole *Mahabharata*
or esoteric Vraja secrets
although I wish I was
but chant Krishna's names direct
and keep your ear holes filled
with that right sound and
live in grace. "

* * *

8:15 a.m.

"A devotee does not consider a dangerous position to be dangerous, for in such a dangerous position he can fervently pray to the Lord in great ecstasy." (*Bhag.* 8.3.32) rain predicted all day, although they previously predicted good weather. M. is "fried" because he and his workers cannot plaster a chimney in the rain, and the electrician will not come. Maybe I won't be able to move in on the 13th; I can't go unless they get the heating system working. Bhakta Leo, however, will paint the rooms today.

Those who touch the Lord's body get spiritual bodies and go back to Godhead. Srila Prabhupada says doing daily Deity worship provides another opportunity to touch the Lord's body. Hearing about Him is another way to touch him.

Sleeping while reading "a typical late-morning practice. Wasting time, but what can I do? The elephant king was actually Indradyumna Maharaja in his previous life. Even a curse can sometimes lead us to see the Lord sooner because it culminates our bad reactions. Krishna minimizes our reactions anyway. "One should therefore adhere to devotional service, and the Lord Himself will very soon see to one's promotion to the spiritual world. A devotee should not be disturbed by unfortunate circumstances, but must continue his regular program, depending on the Lord for everything." Gajendra went to Vaikuntha with Lord Visnu.

The next chapter will describe the events leading up to the churning of the milk ocean.

* * *

What Does It Cost?
& You just write "don't worry
'bout nuthin'. Whatever you have to say.
Someone said to me, "I want to be a devotee,
but what does it cost?"

* * *

It costs your whole life.
But how is that measured out?

It's measured case by case.
Will there be unbearable pain?
I heard (in Bali Maharaja) that the Lord will give
the strength to pass the test.

* * *

Are there sweet moments?
Of course.
Does it get boring? Wait, I already know the answer
to that one.
I'll sign my name as when I joined the
Navy, but I can't really know what
I have discovered.
Please make it possible. Give me
enough light to see at least one foot ahead
of my mind. Or, if I must live in darkness,
let me remember my friends.

* * *

We can't promise that you'll get your way. Just
chant Hare Krishna and remember
Lord Caitanya, be absorbed
in preaching. Then whatever happens
you'll get through in good consciousness.
(Easier said than done.) We quote
perfect scripture and have seen it in others
but how do we do it? "

* * *

A Preacher Cannot Be a Dead Man
& Don't waste time in frivolous
or sinful pursuits. Make songs
as others have done but
your own, and in so doing
remember your spiritual master
who was so kind.

* * *

I try to give a factual report
in the way I write but
these times are comic
and I won't deny that. I

sing these ditties although
they may not befit
the Supreme majesty.
But we worship a Vraja prince
who teases *gopis* and
who pleases His neighbors
by stealing their butter.

* * *

And humor because
a preacher can't be
a dead man.
He has to be alive somehow, even if
it means he rocks to what others think
is a worldly beat "but it's not
that song
the one he heard
from Lord Krishna. "

* * *

10:45 a.m.

It's really not important whether we move into the house on April 13, 14, or 19, but there is something symbolical about our moving, so I want to begin it and discover what it means. Krishna and my spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada, call upon me to become the best devotee I can become and to help distribute Krishna consciousness. By securing this house, it would appear that I have backed away from that task. But I haven't. The backing away is only external; I will now living true to my calling by living mostly alone and preaching through my writing. Who will judge it "living in a house surrounded by a high wall so I can be undisturbed by the world and face myself "is it right? Don't make it an either/or question. I will do some of everything if I lecture in Dublin regularly and travel more widely at appropriate times.

* * *

11:45 a.m.

I put this Post-it into the Out basket: "I'm thinking as a writing and living adventure that I want to move into the house on the 13th, even if the electrician hasn't done his job. Why should I be dependent on him? I can set myself up as well as I can, even if it means I can use only one room and that the work will continue around me for awhile."

* * *

12:28 p.m.

"Moving into a house" might refer to a horoscope in which stars and planets move into houses. It could also mean moving into a new phase in my life. I am not moving into a new house "it is an old building that we are renovating it. I am trying to be detached "I may move in and be forced back out. The house could be a symbol for the body "I'll be moving out of *that* house soon too. Whatever it means, this move to the Wicklow house is significant for me, the beginning of a new life. That's why I want to move in as soon as possible "I am eager to meet my destiny. I have so little time left. remember how Srila Prabhupada insisted on moving into his Bombay quarters? I hope it's an auspicious move "and I think it is "so the sooner, the better.

* * *

2:50 p.m.

"My heart, which is disturbed by the three miserable conditions of material life, is not yet satiated with hearing you describe the glorious activities of the Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the master of the devotees." (*Bhag.* 8.5.3)

I had to wipe off my Vaisnava *tilaka* and splash my forehead with warm and then cold water. Approaching *Srimad-Bhagavatam* . . . The Lord helps the demigods. Things are always happening. You can't be apart from action. You can try to build peace within it.

* * *

3:25p Writing in Time

Saw some scenes from *Jesus of Nazareth* in honor of holy week. It was filmed in Tunisia and Morocco. The theme music, the shouting match "I thought of the actors gathering later at their hotel, getting paid. Perhaps they even joked about Jesus. But maybe not. Robert Powell "maybe while shooting the film he was "Christ-like," not eating too much, not getting drunk or whoring. That's method-acting. Claudia Cardinelle's bare back.

Oh, come down to earth and leave us alone. We follow a different master. We followed him out into the streets of the world to distribute his books and chant Hare Krishna. We became temple presidents and maintained a semblance of order in his young movement, worried over bills and even had to call the police once or twice.

No Jesus, me. I avoided it and followed only the Vedic path. The first time I went to India was 1973.

Thoughts: Will I agree to what the GBC may decide in my own case regarding my behaviour ? Those recommendations may take time to reach me. We'll see, then, what they say. But I know I must protect my disciples "protect them by acting honorably. I am not much of a revolutionary.

Green light. Headaches. Lying in bed. Spring and summer not much different in Ireland. Whatever the Supreme Lord decrees "it comes down through ordinary events. His will and time and change define what happens. We assert ourselves to some degree, but what can we hope to accomplish? Thus I say let's move into that house next week and face Krishna head-on. I don't want to be passive about this.

Just to act a bit.

It's mainly a literary idea "this house "so we'll see what happens.

Hare Krishna. Will you be well enough to go out into the backyard for two rounds?
Yes, why not? We'll just see.

This feels like it's oozing out. Nicromous, Nicodemus, Nick Stabulas, stab at a memory and up it froths. O Krishna, please let me hold onto my master. It's been so long since I have seen him; he is my emotional foundation.

And don't ask me why.

Some think it's because I'm an old man and I have invested almost my entire life in his cause. They think I'm afraid to change. That would be too shocking to my sense of security and peace. They think that's the source of my *guru-nistha*. But they're wrong. I have no divine mission as Christ had, or even Prabhupada, but Prabhupada's no teddy bear in my mind.

* * *

Effervescence "I feel it in this quill when it finds the pull of no-sense rhymes. I've been writing straight for the past fourteen minutes. I am not a Christian, but a Krishnaite "if no blood into wine, then drink water and thank Him for the taste (*raso 'ham apsu kaunteya*).

Janmad yasya: Krishna is the source of all.

My sleeve is torn. Ask someone to sew it? No, don't complain.

Or complain, argue,

demand. I am about to hear

of the Lord appearing as a turtle.

It's not difficult "He can do whatever He likes. It blows our

puppy brains, we who have grown up expecting

God to be the Jewish-Christian concept of Abba,

closely united with Christ His

only son and the mystic

path.

No, we have given that up to read *Krishna* book.

We don't have to come to any old-new conclusions but

swim in time,

loyal.

We are selves

part of God.

We hope He isn't dissatisfied with us.

Me "I hope He accepts me.

Maybe my trusted devotee friends will joke of me,

"Crazy poet-writer," shake

their heads.

Krishna, Christ "devotion at *any* price.

To strive only for peace is

to lose honor. Better to stand up for our rights

and do our duties

and doodle too
if necessary, to connect left with right
permissive, creative with
a life free of sin.

Because I want that.

Life may be hard, but it's good too. I pray to remain in Krishna's shelter no matter
where He takes me because I belong to Him.

(21:20)

3:46p

* * *

After reading Poets

Write a vital Krishna conscious poem: Say you
wanted to walk in the backyard but
coal smoke was pouring from the
chimney, weighted down
polluting your breath and
you had to come inside.

A Krishna conscious poem would tell us
how you chanted Hare Krishna
in both places

but never mind. What about this:
Srla Prabhupada says that those who have
taken up a preacher's duty should be kind
enough to give others Krishna. I
thought about that, then prayed
alone to my spiritual master.
He will tell me what to do.

* * *

Read a poem by Zimmer, then
one by Sandburg
but want my own
exact situation.

* * *

No mail and no bail necessary. Sandburg wrote one
where he spoke of his parents:

"You for the little hills and all the
years alike/ you with your patient cows . . .
I'm going away." Am I for little
hills and years alike and

looking at patient cows?
So it would seem. Again, I pray
to my master, prepared
to be honest.

* * *

Night Notes, 6:15 p.m.

Cars pass, but usually it's quiet here. I am still wondering whether I am doing the right thing by living here alone, but I know that if I was a temple president somewhere, or living in a van traveling around one countryside or another, or even living as a resident *sannyasi* in some temple, I would still ask the same question: "Is this what I should be doing?" It's a question that should always be asked, and for me, it seems, it may never be completely answered. Even when Srila Prabhupada called me and asked me to become his servant, I had questions. It's not just the Wicklow situation that is bringing this out in me.

In the meantime, my days feel productive. I'll have to see later what they amount to. But there's a simple bounty here, a greater freedom, and I am thankful for it. Hare Krishna. All glories.

Now filling space. It's evening and everything is all right. Hare Krishna. Thought of Shepherd talking in 1960, but not about God "it wasn't on his agenda. I am mad after God. The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* supplies me good descriptions "I have heard many times of who He is, of His wonderful qualities, and of the qualities of His pure devotees. To know what they know, to taste what they relish (never sated) "we have that opportunity if we hear with love. Thank you, Krishna. My capacity for hearing is pitifully small, so perhaps my words ring untrue when I say I crave nothing but hearing of You. But they're not really untrue. It is what I want, what I pray for. I want a genuine God consciousness guided by Vedic, Krishna conscious *sastra*, and the opportunity to speak what I have realized in my own words, complete with struggle, doubt, and whatever *lack* of taste I experience. We will attain Your lotus feet; we must hope against hope for that inevitability, because You are infinitely kind.

April 9, 12:04 a.m.

The best welfare activity is to preach Krishna consciousness, and "those who have accepted the task of spreading the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* in full Krishna consciousness should take the opportunity to deliver people very easily from the clutches of material existence." (*Bhag.* 8.5.23, purport)

It is easy to say in response that we are not fully surrendered or fully convinced enough to "deliver people very easily from the clutches of material existence." But it's what we want, or at least what we should want. It is also what Srila Prabhupada wants of us. If we enlist ourselves somehow in preaching, he will bless us.

Why, then, do we make it so complicated? Why waste energy worrying about our inability to surrender? Is it self-pity? In our bewilderment, we may find ourselves angry with Prabhupada for making the demand of us. That may be especially true if we were

more active in our younger days than we appear to be now. Or we dwell on what went wrong with ISKCON rather than what changed in ourselves. To stand before these stumbling blocks, to face that so many leading preachers deviated and fell, to look squarely at our loss of faith in authority, and to trust Prabhupada to lead us anyway "yes, we will learn to preach from who we are.

Srila Prabhupada states that in Kali-yuga there is no *sattva-guna*. Therefore even big philosophers and scientists remain in the bodily concept of life. This is their greatest mistake, and we must help them understand that. It is too great an impediment to spiritual progress. We are spirit soul. We can ask Krishna in the heart (and our guru) to reveal it to us. We have access to that much mercy, if we want it. Pray to them and they will help us. "Ask and ye shall receive."

But do I dare ask to become Krishna conscious, to become a preacher, and to be able to change people's lives? In the Jesus film yesterday, it was painful to see how Jesus' mission was so opposed; he was driven from the temple by the mob of Scribes and Pharisees. Why preach there if they are all so opposed? Can we actually change anything in such an atmosphere?

Fortunately, Srila Prabhupada was not opposed so vehemently. Yet his message is ignored. There are so *many* preachers in this world vying for converts. I don't have that fire to stand up and shout into a crowd. Christ did, and many other preachers do too. I do have energy to preach through writing, to shout into the crowd from this quiet desk.

But we must ask ourselves this question: Do we want to be preachers on Prabhupada's behalf? If we admit we *don't* want to be preachers or that we simply are *not* preachers, then we will not be able to help anyone. It seems Srila Prabhupada wanted preachers to convince others to become preachers: Tell everyone you meet about Krishna and pass it on.

What we have been lacking in ISKCON is the space in which we can discover that we are all able to be preachers if we pursue a larger variety of ways. If we are simple, committed devotees, and we can preach in simple, committed ways, according to our capacity. Lord Caitanya spoke His famous *yare dekha, tare kaha 'Krishna'-upadesa* verse to the Kurma Brahmana after ordering him to stay home.

The first step in becoming a preacher is to realize that we will not find happiness in the material world. "If one actually wants happiness, one must go to the spiritual world . . . The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and *Bhagavad-gita* give definite directions on how to stop the struggle for existence and how to survive in eternal life." (*Bhag.* 8.5.23, purport)

"Lord Krishna is very much pleased with His devotees, even if they are not on the topmost stage of devotional service. Even on the lower stages of devotional service one is transcendental, and if one continues with devotional life . . . Krishna will always be pleased with him and will give him instructions so that he may very easily return home, back to Godhead." (*Bhag.* 8.5.24, purport)

* * *

Shall I push through and move out of this house and into the other? Sure, go ahead. I want to maintain the concentration and aloneness I already have, but it's taking forever, it seems, for them to get the other house ready. At this rate, I don't know when it will be

finished. Anyway, this is an adventure, isn't it? So just go ahead and live it out. I'm eager to enter the more permanent place (ha!) and see if it takes me deeper into reading and writing. O Krishna, then there will be nothing left to do but celebrate the life "and wait for the forces to take me out of it sooner or later. Until they do so, however, I will continue to sing and learn how to pray. Keep asking Lord Krishna to allow me to become a preacher, and to allow me to remain attracted to hearing and chanting.

I just read about Prabhupada's insistence on moving into his own new quarters in Bombay in 1977. First he sent a telegram ahead saying he would be arriving: "Have rooms ready in whatever condition." When he arrived, however, devotees had prepared his old apartment for him. "Hari Sauri informed him that his quarters were not yet ready, with no toilet, no running water, no doors or windows, and the workmen polishing the floors. Prabhupada dismissed these objections and said he would move in anyway."

When Prabhupada arrived at Hare Krishna Land, the devotees still tried to take him into his old apartment. Again they told him the new place wasn't ready. Prabhupada replied, "I will never again go into this apartment. Take me to my new quarters." Prabhupada had to shout to convince the devotees that that was what he wanted. "Srila Prabhupada felt his time was limited, and if he was not insistent, his disciples would delay more and more." So they carried him in a palanquin up the five flights to his rooms, where the workmen were still polishing the floors. Prabhupada said, "I'm going to sit down here." Because there was no furniture, he sat on a devotee's woolen *cadar*. The devotees performed *arati* for Prabhupada, and he smiled and said, "Thank you very much." I thought that was the gist of the story, but the next paragraph goes like this:

"When the welcoming function was complete, Srila Prabhupada was left alone with his secretaries. He said his quarters were to his liking. He spent the night there, but the next day agreed to move for a week to the home of Mr. Kartikeya Mahadevia. For a week he would attend the Bombay *pandal* program, which was near Mr. Mahadevia's home, and this would give Surabhi Swami enough time to get the quarters ready." (SPL, Vol. 6, p. 272)

I'm not going to imitate Prabhupada, and anyway, it seems my house is already more prepared than his was "it has a toilet, cold running water, doors, and windows. Still, I'm going to move in no matter what is finished and what is not.

* * *

2:41 a.m.

Japa "that rolling sound, the mind elsewhere, and rain beating on the roof. Hearing Srila Prabhupada chant. It's too warm to sit on the floor near the radiator. Chanting quietly so as not to wake Madhu. Away from the radiator, I feel the chill, so I sit down again, thoughts out of control. Do I even think of Nama Prabhu's qualities, how He is identical with Krishna, our *nama-cintamani Krishna*? What about that devotee who left ISKCON to chant a hundred rounds a day? Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna.

After I have chanted eight rounds, I place Srila Prabhupada's beadbag in his hand, and at ten I turn the tape over and play the other side. By fourteen it will be about 2:45 a.m. I'll be back.

* * *

3:15 a.m.

It's Holy Thursday. Don't mind that I keep pointing it out. Devotees of Krishna are not expected to notice it much, but it's not forbidden to do so. As Srila Prabhupada said, Christ is "no joke." His work, his followers, his worldwide movement "true, it decayed into worldly-mindedness, but it has always nurtured genuine saints. The same is true of ISKCON, our ISKCON that is only thirty-two years old.

I am as old as ISKCON because I was there from the beginning. I have also witnessed the cooling off of the charisma. I too have refused to continue only in the institutional form. I want to return to my original motives for coming to Srila Prabhupada. Of course, as soon as I open that up, I see the difficulties. It may be that unless I stay with the headaches of the institution, I can't receive the mercy to stay in touch with my original motive for joining it.

I don't really believe that. I have staked my life on the belief that without being involved in active management and even participation in temple life, I can go to the original source of *Sravanam kirtanam* and still preach on ISKCON's behalf. But staking that claim does not mean that I denounce the institutional structure. Neither do I avoid it entirely. I follow the GBC's edicts, although I maintain a personally healthy distance. Please save me from any arrogance in my feeling of confidence. I am just reaching out to my Prabhupada.

* * *

4:34 a.m.

I dressed Radha-Govinda in Their burnished, copper-colored outfits today. Krishna has a yellow turban and a peacock feather. I played Narottama dasa Thakura's poems while I performed the *puja*. Tried to clear my mind of distraction.

Prabhupada is now wearing a nice, brown knit cap. Yes, it would be good to direct my attention more fully to Krishna consciousness. We are meant to savor it.

My dear Lord Krishna, there is no need to pay attention to the things of this world. Srila Prabhupada says that although he's an Indian, he does not think in Indian terms, just as his American disciples should not be thinking of themselves as Americans. I seem to consider myself an American, and perhaps that's all right if I'm using it in my preaching. But I also see what he means: in the end, we are not these bodies, not citizens of any nation.

Today I would like to relieve myself of work and assignments and diversions. Let me not be in a hurry to do anything but pray, read, chant, and write. Why should I be so eager to move into the new house? Just practice *bhajana* as most important. Be inward no matter where you live. Think of the cows and how they are moved to different pastures. She doesn't think of any one place as home, but taste the grasses in each place. Then they give milk.

Inward passages. I don't have to use a Carmelite's wooden kneeler, or seat myself in a full lotus without a backrest to stay awake and pray as deeply as I can "as simply as I can. O Prabhupada, I feel your forgiving presence and pray you will grant me your

mercy and direction. Please don't ask why you should direct me, since I am such a poor follower. I need your mercy because of my shortcomings. Only you know what is best for me.

I have started to pack, and the room is filling up with cardboard archives boxes. It will be good to move where the winds blow. The rain is slanting sideways, and I can't see that Geaglum lake here. O Krishna, I cannot see how I will attain direct service to the *sakhis* and Radha-Krishna. I cannot see how I am about to attain it. I am that unfortunate. But hearing of their sublime pastimes and feeling the ache to taste them means to attain pure Krishna consciousness beyond bodily identification and voidism.

Hare Krishna. Some men are here to load the boxes in their car for the five-minute ride over to the new place. O Krishna, Krishna, is the time ripe? The wildflowers think so, although I only see them in the moment. That's You, isn't it? O Krishna, these flowers are a spark of Your splendor.

Link paragraphs like joining hands from the perch on a flying trapeze. I dare you to let go into space, only to fall at Krishna's lotus feet.

* * *

On the right Track
& We were happy to work on the journey
to Krishna consciousness and get corrected
by a cowherder of
erring calves and cows. Get into the
camp with all your brothers and sisters on the
KC way.

* * *

Sing-bing "you know
frown and
grip the pen
when there is a man to help you

* * *

and a clock ticking
while I wait for *bhakti*
to flow in a stream. Am I worried?

* * *

Am I able to climb on top, underdog?
Printed *saris* and *dhotis* "uniformed
members in *tilaka* and we should never
knock it or
mock it but appear in

our own insides
spirit willing
becoming like a rod in fire.

* * *

We're on the right track when we converse with
devotee friends of Krishna
on preaching tactics and falling quiet.
When *prajalpa* enters
plan an attack on *maya*.

* * *

Krishna, the truth, is in my pocket.
I'm a dead tree a
new sprig in spring still alive
and I will never give up trying
begging for the descent
of *Suddha-sattva*
from the Lord-source of all
geniuses and carob puddings
and skies and puddles.
Krishna consciousness is that nice. "
The raven in Springtime
& Krishna, I see this page and bow
to You, my Lord
although secular states
declare no God allowed.
I repeat only what
my master taught.

* * *

Parrot caught and released.
Look again in yourself "there's plenty
to improve but also honey
and time to serve
crickets and blade of grass
and I cross my legs, seeking comfort
in this world whose essence
is Krishna conscious.

* * *

A raven calls the
cry of death they say "
and we can hear that in anything.

* * *

My end and yours the
slices of permitted
words gone to kick the seed
but it comes up in spring
dark forces subdued by dawn
which comes earlier
and feel God conscious
even in cotton. "

* * *

8:28 a.m.

I read recently that nowadays, faithful Catholics accept much of what has been written as biblical criticism (scholarship) and no longer accept the gospels as objective or literal truth. There are discrepancies among the four gospels. The Catholic writers say the differences make for a deepening appreciation of the *meaning* of the gospels, and they provide more and more interpretations.

I am sympathetic, but I prefer our standard of reading scripture. We are taught not to accept the scriptures as projections or meditations or devout imaginings by various writers, but to know that Srila Vyasadeva is God's literary incarnation. It's not always easy to follow up on this literal approach, and Sadaputa Prabhu points out how it is impossible to think of the *Bhagavatam* statements in terms of ordinary scientific-historical viewpoints. Nevertheless, we do not give up our literal conclusion when it comes to *sastra*.

I'm reading Brahma's prayers to Lord Visnu at Svetadvipa. This is not allegory. There is a Svetadvipa planet, an ocean of milk, and a Ksirodaka Sayi Visnu. I wish to understand it the way the *acaryas* teach it.

Srila Prabhupada says two songs are sufficient for pleasing the Supreme Personality of Godhead: the Panca-tattva mantra and the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*.

Slow down when you read. Don't try to finish anything. It's the amount of attentive time that you spend, not the number of pages turned. (I just caught myself turning a page without having actually read it.) If we read without attention, the words don't penetrate. They travel through the mind, but the mind does not see them. Rather, the mind is free to move elsewhere. While reading Brahma's prayers, I realized I was actually remembering that Bhakta Leo has decided not to paint the walls in the new house for another four to six weeks because the house is too damp.

Back to the *Bhagavatam*: "The Lord has no material qualities. Indeed, You are inconceivable." (*Bhag.* 8.5.26)

I want to pray with a verse and purport, and that's not always accomplished by reading it through or by taking notes. We need more than intellect when we meet words like the ones the *Bhagavatam* uses to describe the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

* * *

9:48 a.m.

Line from a reflection on the stations of the cross: "What is your cross? What burden are you carrying? What do you bear in order to be happy and at peace?"

My quick answer is my headaches. But I haven't had one in four days. There is something more. I carry the burden of uncertainty "what I should be doing, what I should not be doing, and what my *dharma* is supposed to be. I want to know solidly what I must do to please guru and Krishna.

I also carry the burden of feeling a loss of inspiration and trust in institutional life. My enthusiasm and faith are gone, and I now know what I don't need or want. Although some would see that as freedom, I see it as a burden because I cannot blame someone else for this; I have to deal with it honestly and personally. Neither am I ashamed of this burden.

The stations of the cross reflections end each "station" with a "communal prayer":

"O God, we know that You are with us and that You behold all that we do and say. Now grant that, by the light of Your Holy Spirit, we might be earnest as we search for truth, and fair in our judgments of others, through Christ, our Lord, Amen."

Let me make that prayer my own, with a Krishna conscious adjustment: "Through guru and Krishna, our Lords." Allow me to be earnest in my search for truth, fair in my judgments of others, and please, please direct me in how I may please you.

And this: when I write in my search for truth, I must drop the pretension that I am teaching by my example, or that I already know the perfect truth and how to apply it in my own case.

* * *

12:35 p.m.

I wish I could have a Krishna conscious book of *sastra* and Srila Prabhupada's purports to pick up whenever I had a spare moment, and enter deeply, prayerfully "something small that I could carry around. O Krishna. And I wish I could chant on my beads (or sing His name) always "not that I feel I need a full eight or ten minutes to chant one round. But to pray at every moment and live with the Lord like that. Please, Lord, let me realize that I *can* be with You, that it is my heart's desire to do so, and that all I have to do is chant Your name with love.

* * *

2:48 p.m.

The central reality is the Supersoul. The *jivas* manipulate matter, and the Supersoul directs the wheel of birth and death on which the *jivas* revolve (*iSvarah sarva-*

bhutanam). So don't get carried away by the material world and forget the Supreme Truth.

The electricity has gone off. Will it come back tonight? Write while you can. We tend to take electricity for granted. Without it, we have no lights. What will we do in the dark?

Yogis (and devotees) who attain *viSuddha-sattva*, pure goodness, can see the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Demons and atheists can never understand Him. Lord Brahma described the Supreme Lord eloquently as the independent source and creator of all living beings, all water, the moon, vegetation, and as the source of generation. Lord Brahma prays that the Supreme Lord be pleased with us.

* * *

3:25p Writing in Time

This is a relatively brief time in which to write. White snow on mountain top. The electricity is back on.

Diarist.

Jesus.

Film.

Wristwatch.

Just keep going.

Black pen. Find poems of blacks and younger poets, or poems written by people who live in Krishna consciousness. We have so few. And I have only my journal,

Discovering Our Voices. I hereby pray to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The *devas* want Him to protect them against demons.

I'm telling you, man, just be on the alert. Pray, pray and

act. You have done enough today, and I'm getting tired of asking whether I'm doing the right thing. Prabhupada knows I want to die in his good graces and to move onto a better next life. If I can't do better than that, at least take the right attitude toward your own weakness. Feel *compunction*. Feel

free

as air.

Pray to be forgiven for all your mistakes, all you have omitted, all the ways in which you fell short. And ask to be placed next life where you can serve Him.

But before you ask about that, steer yourself properly now. You still have time left. Keep your nose clean.

Hey, who's doing the talking here?

O Krishna.

And if the GBC calls on you, don't trifle with it. This act of writing in time is the essence of my art, my freedom, and my joy. Just use it in His service.

Praise Krishna. Cosmic poems "Brahma praising Visnu. He was great enough to grasp the grandeur of the Supreme Power and himself as tiny dependent. Srila Prabhupada said we are fallen, but that's okay because the Lord is Acutya and He loves us. We fall; He doesn't. But He will forgive us.

Hare Krishna.

There is no use restraining yourself. That is . . . trying to be . . .

I said the Eucharist, which Jesus inaugurated at the Last Supper, reminds me of *prasadam*, food offered to Krishna. Like the holy name, such food is nondifferent from the Lord. Anyone who thinks that Govinda's names or His food remnants (or the Deity) are material is an atheist. But today I ate with a natural appetite, enjoying my tongue and the sensation of eating "especially that apple pie and whipped cream, a treat even on the day Christ went through his *agonia* on the Mount of Olives.

Well . . . Nicodemus asked him, "Do you have to be born again?" He didn't understand it spiritually. Be born again by complete faith in Jesus as the son of God. They took his words as blasphemy.

Hare Krishna. We don't have to decide the matter for them. We accept Jesus by accepting the Lord's pure representative, Srila Prabhupada. We stand our best chance of following the beatitudes and of pleasing the son of God by serving our spiritual master. I am committed to this path and feel assured that Jesus would like it too.

But what kind of devotee am I? What is my attitude when I eat holy remnants? Do I risk inconvenience to preach God's word? Do I carry my cross with an uncomplaining spirit, following in the footsteps of the great preacher?

Srila Prabhupada, please help me to serve you.

Hare Krishna. I have stated my doubts in private, but I am basically faithful. I am trying to scour my heart and reach a better state. Can I help others too?

Hare Krishna.

Hare

Krishna. White on mountains, wind cold "unseasonal for an April 9.

O Krishna, I feel my own hand and my chance to rifle random words, as if those could help. Passion without sex "the passion of giving one's life to God wholly despite the fact that the body is taken. He suffered great pain, and he was mocked, tortured, reviled, then crucified. How men torture. They wanted him to save himself if he was God, or the son of God.

Pilate wouldn't take anything back. His words are now infamous.

Hare Krishna.

Krishna's story is more pleasant, although the demons may not see it that way since He kills so many of them. Passing thought this time: Hare Krishna. Maybe I'll wind up chanting only the holy name, slashing the words onto the page with my pen tip. The Lord appears in the holy chant brought to the Lower East Side by an old swami. I was there, a NYC person. Now I carrying that surrender to its natural conclusion. I have kept my vows. Krishna has given me that strength; He has proven that He will not abandon me, although I always want to do more.

Hare Krishna,

Krishna "I cry out for Your mercy.

You are never lazy in the matter of my deliverance. You never forget me, even when I forget You. You help me to remember You always. Whatever desires I harbor as an author or for ease, may they be banished so I can see You fully.

I heard DDS say preaching is selfless. Therefore, it is the quickest way to qualify ourselves to practice *raganuga-bhakti*. *The Nectar of Devotion* teaches us spontaneous love while maintaining our outward duties, but we in ISKCON tend to emphasize that

such things will come automatically if we simply stick to our outward duties. And the heart? Will Vrndavana-going, serving guru and Vaisnavas, chanting our rounds "will these potent practices really save us? Yes, eventually. If we don't cheat.

This writing time is up, so give it a break. Go out to the backyard and chant a few extras, and plead with Brother Mind to hear those names as God. Ending at 22:52 minutes. Finish off the minute? No despair. All can be forgiven if we turn to Him.

[3:47]

* * *

After reading Poets

After the poets, after the books have been
printed in India and some distributed and the
sankirtana stories have not reached me,
after "what I need is right now
writing.

* * *

I need Krishna, my son, said the guru; *every-*
body does. I believe that but not so
deeply, totally. I say "heart" and "prayer"
too often and, when I see them in print,
it looks a little vapid.

* * *

After the poets the best thing that could happen
is to speak his own mind like
a baby bird opening wide its beak, or a lamb
even a calf approaching its mother.
He's an old man and no baby
but he still has what Krishna gave him
original, to speak in his mother tongue.

* * *

Oh, Sanskrit is fine if you mean it and
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna can't really be
translated but you've got to *hear*.

* * *

Dear reader, please walk fifty percent of the
way and life will supply the rest if we

are not too dishonest. Maybe we will
meet somewhere and *Krishna-katha*
won't be absent

* * *

Pause and consider. The best laid plans
of mice and men gang aft aglay. It's up to
Sri Krishna. Mice or not. Ice on the mountaintop,
snowflakes in April. Now I lay me down to
sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep.

* * *

Night Notes, 6:30 p.m.

This was my fifth day in a row clear of headaches. Radha-Govinda are dressed in
Their butter-yellow night clothes. It pleases me to see Them. They are the beauty that
will conquer Cupid (sex attraction).

A devotee wrote me that he is "passing seaman" (sic) in his sleep. I'll advise him that
he can reach a stage where that no longer happens, even in dreams. Maybe that strength
comes from the waning of physical power too, but it is centered in a Krishna conscious
lifestyle.

Today was a day of fierce weather, snow, hail, and strong winds. The wind is still
rattling the windows in other parts of this empty house. Hare Krishna.

April 10, midnight.

My main religious thought on Good Friday? I feel my need to come close to God by
reading my spiritual master's books. And that I have to die, sacrifice my life, for Him.
Then let that happen here. Srila Prabhupada says it is not difficult to surrender to God
because He protects us. In this age, Lord Caitanya has made surrender particularly easy
by giving us the holy name. We're supposed to concentrate on that, although our efforts
seem so feeble. Still, we open ourselves to it every day, giving it our prime time.

It is difficult to understand the universe's workings and nature. At least we can
understand from Bg. 9.10 that "Everything is actually happening under the direction of
the Supreme Personality of Godhead." Lord Krishna and the sages have also advised that
"this material world is *duhkhalayam aSaSvatam*; in other words, it is a place of misery
and temporality. One must give up this world and go back home, back to the Personality
of Godhead." (*Bhag.* 8.5.43, purport)

Reject this material world on the advice of those learned in Vedic wisdom. If we try
to enjoy it, we'll suffer.

It is also difficult to know the Supreme Lord, who is behind the universe. "Even
without seeing Him we should offer Him our respectful obeisances. We should know
that He is complete."

Accept it on faith; accept it upon receiving transcendental knowledge in answer to
your inquiries. The process of chanting and hearing is easy compared to the difficult

austerities a *yogi* must perform, but that doesn't mean that by chanting and hearing we can know God immediately. First, we must become free of our material attachments. It's a great boon, however, that *bhakti* is *susukham* and very potent. Continue practicing, and inquire by study and prayer.

The demigods pray, "O Supreme Personality of Godhead, we are surrendered onto You, yet we wish to see You. Please make Your original form and smiling lotus face visible to our eyes and appreciable to our other senses." (*Bhag.* 8.5.45)

Radha-Govinda give me Their *darsana*. Srila Prabhupada said that householders may keep "*must* keep "a Deity in their homes. Indians, he said, have been trained in this culture for centuries. It is easy, therefore, for them to follow the sixty-four items that comprise Deity worship. "You Westerners are not yet trained," he said in 1972, so don't turn it into a farce. If you can worship strictly, all right.

Now we have heard that there is an easier standard for home worship; it doesn't have to be scheduled as rigidly as worship in the temple. Still, don't let it become a farce.

Karmis work hard but are not satisfied by the results, "yet devotees who have dedicated their lives to the service of the Lord can achieve substantial results without working very hard. These results exceed the devotees' expectations." (*Bhag.* 8.5.47)

Srila Prabhupada encourages the devotees, reminding them how the Krishna consciousness movement will increase. If devotees continue to dedicate their lives to the movement, no one will be able to check it.

Life and soul dedication. For me that means my dedication to preaching through writing "using art as a cultural weapon. I'm not a governing man or a manager or even an outward-bound active counselor. But I preach. In this way, I hope I am giving my best to Prabhupada's movement.

* * *

Little life: Yesterday afternoon, four new books, all printed in India, arrived: Two volumes of *My Letters from Srila Prabhupada*, a reprint of *Srila Prabhupada's Samadhi Diary*, which we pulled out from *Churning the Milk Ocean*, and *A Poor Man reads the Bhagavatam*, Vol. 2. I'll be dipping into them. I hope they will be distributing them.

The weather continues bitter. It's a dark night. Madhu continues to work at the house, but it continues to be damp, and the heating system has not yet been installed. I have decided to carry through on my decision to move in on or about the 13th of April.

* * *

"Activities dedicated to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, even if performed in small measure, never go in vain. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, being the Supreme father, is naturally very dear and always ready to act for the good of the living entities." (*Bhag.* 8.5.48)

Ajamila performed a little service at the end of his life and received the greatest result. "If one somehow or other remembers the holy name of Narayana, Krishna or Rama at the end of life, he immediately achieves the transcendental result of going back home, back to Godhead." (*Bhag.* 8.5.48)

* * *

4:33 a.m.

Jolly pastimes of Radha and Krishna poetically envisioned by Narottama dasa Thakura. So different from the mood of the crucifixion. But Christ was a great preacher in this world, and he taught the people at that time to attain the Father by following him. He reprimanded hypocritical priests. His example is complicated, as were the times in which he lived. Now a theology has grown up around his teachings in the powerful world movement called "Christianity." I can't seem to mix Christian understanding with Vaisnava understanding; they are different moods altogether, although both carry the flow of *bhakti*. It's too much to assimilate.

If I were forced to choose between Krishna or Christ, I would take Krishna and assume that Christ would accept my devotion to his Lord. I won't pretend "shouldn't pretend "that I am a Christian. Still, it's Good Friday, so I remember him and his sacrifice, and pray for the goodness of his teachings to enter my heart. That is why I am exposing myself to his *bhava* and the *bhava* of his disciples. He gave the world so much. Let me offer my private remembrance.

* * *

Maha-mantra dasi made the outfits Radha-Govinda are wearing today. Their dresses are white with a trim of embroidered blue flowers and a gold border. Krishna holds His long, gold flute with the peacock jewel at its end. Srila Prabhupada is wrapped in his large, gray wool *cadar*, a pink scarf over that, and wears a saffron knit cap. O Krishna, please protect me. I thank You for giving me this pleasant process and most relishable pastimes and qualities as my *ista-devata*.

* * *

Read a little in *My Letters from Srila Prabhupada* (recalling letters he wrote me in 1969) and in *Srila Prabhupada Samadhi Diary*. Each has a particular flavor, offering the nectar of the early days with Prabhupada as ISKCON's guide and dearest friend, and then the mood of separation I felt in 1993 while visiting his Samadhi Mandir in Vrndavana. A reader has to surrender to the mood of each book, and be open and patient. Don't read to find fault; read with love and trust. Then the reader will receive the good things that these books contain "Prabhupada's blessings, and even the blessings of the many visitors who came to see him in his Samadhi monument while I was there.

Some think there are too many books to read at once. I feel like that now, although I'm certainly a book man (and we are a book-reading *sampradaya*). We even praise book distribution as the boldest and most praised ISKCON preaching. Book reading should share the limelight more.

The wise do not lament over the living or the dead. Fight for the sake of fighting, because that's what Krishna wants us do to. The many sayings of *Bhagavad-gita* flow through me. The calendar I was sent from the Krishna-Balaram Mandir is for businessmen, but it contains Hindi and English excerpts from Srila Prabhupada's books as well as *Bhagavad-gita* verses.

Come on now, free-write. I will see cows, horses, and donkeys when the sun comes up because this is the republic of Ireland. Still, it reminds me of any rural scene you might see anywhere. I will also see the devotees' homes when there is more light. And a Krishna conscious man remains sane, flies down and up again, wants to be a person.

Don't chew your fingernails or chewing gum or tobacco. They are not Vaisnava activities.

I know that you are not an ideal devotee and that you don't want to pretend that you are, but you do have to rise to the occasion and act like a *sadhu*. Set an example for your disciples. They should not hear that you have become a rascal. I'm trying as hard as I can, but green grow the rushes, Ho!

This room is cold, but it's colder outside. This is a day of suffering "then *matra-sparsas tu kaunteya*. Srila Prabhupada said that Christ did not suffer, but the Christians said, "Please respect our religion as we respect yours." Prabhupada told them that he respected Christ more than they did, because he recognized Christ's spiritual body and freedom from suffering and death.

* * *

While You Feel Ease
& Sweet serenade clouded over
by the unhappiness of this day "Christ's trek to
Golgotha, real history, they say
as was his agony. Christians worship him
in pain, and how can we do otherwise?

* * *

Better I gather with devotee friends
chant Hare Krishna
and celebrate Lord Caitanya's mercy
His pain of separation and
joy in reunion.

* * *

We suffer in these bodies and
seek release in joke or food or rest,
but when we learn to turn instead to Krishna
in our distress, we will do better.
There will be pain for each to endure
car accidents
death of friends
and a wrenching of the world order "we
can't even imagine it all. So now while we
feel ease, use it to build layer upon layer
of Krishna-thought onto the psyche to

pray. "

* * *

5:46 a.m.

I appreciated the point I made earlier: don't pretend to be a Christian.

I remember when I was young that I practiced *mauna* for a few hours on Good Friday afternoon. I didn't go outside to play. That was meant to be a time of meditation for me. Others got into it more. I remember one woman sobbing uncontrollably when she thought of the death of her bridegroom (Jesus Christ). She cried through Friday, then all day sankirtana. Yet Jesus is for non-Christians too. His message can reach across all barriers and touch their hearts. If they will believe it. He is for everyone, and surely his meaning can be brought through another bona fide guru. He is the truth, the way, and the life, so follow your guru and take up your cross. Love God with your whole body, self, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. I have heard of people who have had dreams in which Christ told them to surrender to Krishna. That's our spirit in accepting Christ.

* * *

10:30 a.m.

Perhaps it's the influence of Good Friday that is keeping me silent. The day is cool but sunny. Daruka came by and asked how I was. "Peaceful," I said, "and moving on the 13th, ready or not." He told me about his painting sales and the *nama-hatta* program at the Dublin restaurant he will attend tonight. Maybe I can go. No, not now. Another time.

Srila Prabhupada was caustic when he spoke of how so many so-called Christians have taken Christ's sacrifice so cheaply. He said they claimed Christ had contracted to die for their sins, but they do not stop sinning. They continue to kill animals to satisfy their tongues, despite the fact that Christ taught "Thou shall not kill." Srila Prabhupada also praised Christ for his tolerance. "His only fault was that he was God conscious." He preached and was crucified. But at the point of his death, even while surrounded by his executioners and the jeering mob, he said, "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do." Srila Prabhupada included Jesus in the company of Lord Nityananda and Haridasa Thakura "preachers who were tortured and beaten for teaching God consciousness. We should not fail to be touched.

Srila Prabhupada also gave us the added insight "so different from Christian theology but certainly pro-Christ "that Christ did not suffer. That knowledge gives me relief. I don't claim to understand these mysteries, but neither will I dogmatically accept the Christian viewpoint of it and dismiss Srila Prabhupada's as "heresy."

* * *

12:33 p.m.

Try to make a sincere prayer while offering the meal to Srila Prabhupada for Radha-Govinda. You don't know Them well enough to offer it to Them directly, but you know Srila Prabhupada. Where is he now?

Be thoughtful. Proceed with feeling and in *parampara*.

* * *

2:55 p.m.

"Eternally existing in Your transcendental form, You are the Supreme subtle of the most extremely subtle. We therefore offer our respectful obeisances unto You, the Supreme, whose existence is inconceivable." (*Bhag.* 8.6.8) Here is more evidence (yes, *sastra* is evidence, *Sabda-pramana*, the best kind) that the Supreme Person's form is completely transcendental. Don't think He is mortal flesh. And don't try to imagine *what* the transcendental form is like. It's not a rubber balloon filled with air. Also, I tell myself not to compare Christ to Krishna, or to mix them and create a syncretism.

Then?

Read as daily duty "*Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Pause and ask for knowledge, *bhakti-Sraddha*. "These pastimes are transcendental bliss to the Lord . . . There is no limit to the Lord's appearance in different incarnations. All of these incarnations are eternal, blissful and full of knowledge." (*Bhag.* 8.6.8, purport)

When a devotee sees the Personality of Godhead either in meditation or face to face, "He becomes aware of everything . . . within this universe."

A little toehold of attention, even for fifteen minutes, is good. The Supreme Lord can only be known by devotional service, and His form and activities, even when appearing in this world, are always unattached to the material modes. Conclusions like this I hold close to my heart. I hear, as a student, faithful to *siddhanta*.

* * *

3.30p Writing in Time

It's like going to work "you don't always feel like doing it, but you begin anyway. Now, to think of Krishna will I work, as He has asked us to do. I don't have a headache. That means I also don't have an excuse not to work.

The electrician worked until 3 p.m. today, then went to Mass. Three of us watched the Good Friday events in *Jesus of Nazareth* and there was not a dry eye in the room. That's good; don't avoid being touched by him.

I am alone, but the house is busy. The devotees who live here are going to Dublin for a preaching event at Govinda's restaurant. I thought, "Someone opens a Hare Krishna restaurant, someone else conducts *nama-hatta* meetings, someone gardens, and I move into a house."

For health.

For preaching.

For seclusion.

If we had known beforehand how much time and money this endeavor would cost, I might have decided to stay at Inis rath.

No, I couldn't have. M. knew that too.

It's true. It seems like such a small event though "this move "in the face of world events, but we're going to do it. Madhu is working hard for it, full of passion and drive.

And I am here, inching along with the *Bhagavatam*, looking for a toehold up the mountain face. In the section I'm reading, the demigods pray to the Lord on the shore of the milk ocean. They call Him "transcendental" and "inconceivable." They say He is not affected by matter, and that one can know Him only through devotional service. He has a beautiful form, but even if we can't see Him, we should go on serving Him, always wishing for the day when we can receive His *darSana*. *ASlisya va pada-ratam karotu va*. Even if He makes us brokenhearted by not appearing before us, still, we will go on serving Him in love.

As I read, I thought about my prayer, "Please tell me what to do." How can I ask that? I'm not surrendered enough to receive the answer. I am more likely meaning, "This is my offering, so please accept it. Within the context of my life as it is, please grant me the mercy of tasting the nectar of chanting and hearing." Maybe I stretch it a little further: "If You want me to do something other than what I am now proposing, then please give me the strength and inspiration along with Your order. And please don't make what You are asking impossible."

When Christ was on the cross, one thief reviled him. The other begged forgiveness, and to come to Jesus' kingdom. Jesus promised him that they would both be in paradise at the end of their lives. Then, "Mother, behold your son."

"I thirst."

"Father forgive them."

"O Lord, why hast thou forsaken me?"

"Father, I commend my spirit unto you. It is accomplished."

He accomplished his mission. But he appeared to suffer physical, mental, and even spiritual agony to save others. I can neither measure it nor understand it from the theological framework created about him by others.

His Church has a turbulent history. So does ours. Will I be back for more turbulence in my next life?

What about my mission? Have I already done for our master all that I could? I know I have already asked this question. Am I at least acting on my own account "making a conscious and personal offering to Srila Prabhupada? Prabhupada said his return to India to establish ISKCON and build temples was his personal contribution to the *sampradaya*; his spiritual master did not directly order him to do that, but only to preach in the West. May my current writing be like that "my personal contribution to Srila Prabhupada's movement.

Compassion: some say it can only be increased by preaching; we can't meditate to attain it. Sometimes, however, preaching exhausts us so much that we take shelter in the superficial "it seems so much easier. If we don't address this, we may become indifferent or diverted and fall down.

Krishna, Krishna, please help us. Crying out to Krishna is the only way to get His mercy. We have to first admit that we are helpless, weak, cowards. He will always respond.

(21 minutes, 37 seconds).

* * *

After reading Poets

Sigh and get to work. Coal smoke wafts down from
the chimney to cut my throat and ruin the fun of
outdoor *japa* pacing. I guess I belong inside
with my books and my desk.

* * *

Kitchen dishes undone. Notes to answer too. This
is a quiet house. Do I deserve such care and privilege?
What can I do to reciprocate?

* * *

Some poets tell what happens
during their visits to Mexico, Spain, even
India, but only of other tourists or the people
who live there. We want poems of
God consciousness "by someone who sees
Krishna in a temple Deity or while
speaking with a hitchhiker.

* * *

What if I could brood a silence with
Hare Krishna prayers? What if "half-closed lids
and the sound of Hare Krishna in my ears
I fear nothing "can say anything
as any good student can claim.

* * *

People sometimes smile quizzically when they see me.
I wait and see and breathe
in and breathe out.

* * *

Night Notes, 5:45 p.m.

Srila Prabhupada Samadhi Diary contains interesting glimpses of Vrndavana people
visiting the Mandir. I *paid* something to write that diary; I offered up my physical and
mental austerity to be there, and that austerity helped me create a bubble of peace and
yearning from which I could write.

April 11, 12:10 a.m.

"My Lord," the demigods pray, "we . . . have come to Your lotus feet. Please fulfill the purpose for which we have come. You are the witness of everything, from within and without. Nothing is unknown to You, therefore it is unnecessary to inform You again of anything." (*Bhag.* 8.6.14) Srila Prabhupada says our duty is to "Execute devotional service sincerely under the direction of the spiritual master, and Krishna will supply whatever we need, even without our asking."

I keep saying I'm afraid to ask Krishna to tell me what to do, or to show me where I really am at. He knows that, even if I don't write it down. I suppose I write such things mostly for myself. He knows (and I pray to know) that I have an inner core, a real self, which is fearless, all spiritual, and which loves Him with its whole being. Krishna knows what it will take for me to uncover that self, and to be it truly. My destiny is still unfolding.

The Lord also sees my less-than-pure desires: *ye yatha mam prapadyante* "I pray the real self will win out in the end, that that desire becomes strong enough to cry for Krishna's reciprocation. His heart is soft toward His devotees. He is also *bhava-grahi-janardana* "He will take whatever sincerity a devotee has and will favor that over quantities of impure desires.

The demigods pray that the Supreme Personality of Godhead will give them a mantra to chant by which they can become delivered. Prabhupada says that in Kali-yuga, it is difficult for people to become qualified to chant mantras, including the *gayatri-mantras*. "Therefore, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in His incarnation as Lord Caitanya, gives us the Hare Krishna mantra."

"The *maha-mantra* "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare "is directly chanted by the Lord Himself, who gives us this mantra for deliverance." (*Bhag.* 8.6.15, purport) By chanting, we who have fallen out of the fire can associate with the Supreme Fire again and regain our original illumination.

Lord Visnu outlines to the faithful demigods the need for a truce with the demons. They should work together to churn nectar from the ocean. The Lord desires it to be so because He wished to enjoy a pastime.

As I read, I am to tell you what I think, right? You don't want me to give you a simple gloss of what it says in the book, nor only my attentive student's participation, but to speak about those things that are uppermost in my mind, what I'm really dwelling on. Okay, to be honest, as I read this, my mind continues to flit back to the Jesus film I watched yesterday. I see Barabbas's face, how the jailer pushed Jesus from the cell with half the cross tied to his back, saying, "Here is your man." Jesus had a helpless, dazed, suffering look, and he staggered as he walked. It appears that he *was* feeling pain, that he *was* overcome. But he never faltered in purpose. He surrendered to what had to happen to fulfill the prophecy and his mission. Now I find myself replaying his pained expressions. "If you are the son of God, why don't you deliver *yourself*?" The soldiers and the mob taunted him with such words. Pious women cried for him, and one stepped forward and wiped the perspiration from his face with a cloth.

Then my mind moves on to the copy of *Prabhupada Samadhi Diary* sitting on my desk. I even pick it up and look at the photo on the cover. I realize that the same obstacles to Vrndavana for me "too many people, too many controversies, and too many headaches" existed in 1993 just as they exist now. Yet I went to Vrndavana in 1993 despite all that, and lived there despite the "thorns." Somehow I feel I walked away with a "rose," which has been preserved in the *Samadhi Diary*. Some day I'll go there again and write more, wrest more.

Now the *devas* are going to wrest nectar from the milk ocean through their cooperative churning. Read it as fact and as allegory, and apply it personally.

Something from that reading: the Lord knows what we want and need even if we don't ask for it. We can simply serve. He will give whatever it is according to His own will.

* * *

2:40 a.m.

Japa. Sad to say that the motor was left running while the person went elsewhere. At least the motor is blessed "it's better than the purring of a cat or a generator in a big tent in India, or even how the van motor sounded when we sailed along into France. I was chanting *japa* that time too all along the predawn highway. We should mix the Hare Krishna mantra into whatever we are doing. We can write it down, bemoan it, keep it alive, chant it in our minds as we run the water for our bath, punctuate it, be with it when we are with ourselves, say hello and good-bye, and in the middle, Hare Krishna.

* * *

4:32 a.m.

I am about to begin hearing *Vidagdha-madhava* again. rupa Gosvami wrote it after Satyabhama told him not to take Krishna out of Vrndavana. Lord Caitanya blessed rupa Gosvami, and also asked the devotees to bless him so that he would be able to describe radha-Krishna's transcendental mellows. I enter a light trance as I perform my Deity worship and listen to the sublime pastimes.

Purnamasi speaks at the play's beginning "something about radha being in danger but that they will take care of Her. Purnamasi wants to bring about the union of radha and Krishna. Let me put aside what came in the mail and what has to be done when this *puja* is over, and enter this moment. That's the best way to live. Hearing with pure mind, devoid of material desires "not thinking of the mood of the Christians but concentrating on Vrndavana "feeling we have no other obligations, hearing about Radha and Krishna as They are described by the *rasa-acarya*, Srila Rupa Gosvami.

* * *

Srila Prabhupada walking on Venice Beach, Los Angeles "that's the location of the photo on the cover of the cassette album, "Hearing From Srila Prabhupada." He speaks and I listen to that lecture, although it was given twenty or thirty years ago. The Krishna consciousness movement was growing then, and it still is, but slower. He is the founder-

acarya, and his loyal followers try to keep his institution afloat. "Your love for me will be shown by how you cooperate to maintain this institution," he said. We wanted to cooperate.

I have a place in that "we each do "but I want to find it beyond the official speeches and dogmatic jargon. How to really please Srila Prabhupada? What does it mean to "cooperate"? How to help deliver fallen souls? Where is the person within the flowery talk? What does he really want? Does he even know? Does he know himself? Of course, some would say none of those questions matter; just become an instrument in ISKCON's hands.

Well, this instrument yawns, and tears of fatigue spring to his eyes. This is not a symptom of ecstasy, don't worry. It was not inspired by Krishna and His devotees. I am not the abode of love for Krishna. Krishna is not the *visaya* (steady cause of ecstasy) for me yet. My heart is still steel-framed. But I'm working on that.

Unfold slowly if necessary. People eat peppermint sticks in the winter, but I never liked them. They used to filled my stocking on the mantel. Give me something I can use and enjoy, I would think. I had my particular greed and still do. I always want things I like. Often, however, I received conventional gifts. At Easter we would occasionally paint hard-boiled eggs. There, I was free to be a little random in my patterns. And of course, I would receive at least one chocolate Easter bunny.

What did any of it have to do with the risen Christ? I remember more wearing a new suit to church, and if it was too cold, I had to wear a coat. My mother, sister, and I would walk from our house to Easter Sunday Mass. Great Kills was a small town in those days. Mother would have a new Easter hat; Father would have nothing, because he didn't accompany us. We didn't bother him about it. He sent us each with money to put in the tithing envelopes. All that is gone now "the social, familial relationship with the Church. I never liked it much anyway. I went because I was convinced that to not go was a great sin. My mother always upheld that teaching. Now that I am a Krishnaite, have I gradually fallen into my own superficial observance?

* * *

KC Slide Show

& See the funny pictures Sats did
before he died? He was merry
Releasing the colors
of a spring day.

* * *

When time is ripe, move your hand.
Here is Kamsa being killed
and dragged by Kana and
here Paurnameji plotting,
confident she can unite
Yugala-kiSora.

* * *

Here is a picture crudely drawn "
Radha and Krishna and Madhumangala
viewing paintings on a cave wall
in Nava-Vrndavana. A cornucopia
of color and poses
of a Krishna conscious sort to prove that Krishna
is in all things, even in play. "

* * *

5:30 a.m.

The *Mayapur Journal* tells of the progress on the Vedic planetarium and ISKCON Mayapur's planning office. An architect in England called the Vedic Planetarium "the most significant religious structure of the century." A photo article describes the stone they will use, how it will be taken from a certain quarry. Srila Prabhupada (1971): "I want the inside of our temple to be just like the Westminster Abbey." Then this from the editor: "The Sri Mayapur masterplan office, SMMPO, located in Bangalore, South India, employs about ten full-time architects. They have various areas of expertise, such as planning, environmental concerns, engineering, etc. 'Using the *vastu-Sastra* [the Vedic science of building and architecture] as our guideline, we have been able to develop a basic skeletal road plan, which we are presently refining.'"

Suddenly, I thought of the house they are preparing for me. Yes, this house will be important for my service. It will be a writer's house, although it will be simple. Nothing like the Mayapur construction project that is employing millions of dollars and thousands of workers, and which requires the cooperation of leaders and fund raisers. Both projects have a right to exist.

The SMNPO states that they have created an "activity structure and land use plan" for Mayapur. They will have capacity for twelve hundred permanent residents and twenty thousand overnight pilgrims. The *vastu-Sastra* has been used to determine the influence of the planets on the buildings. Two devotees used that *sastra* for my house too. I thought it was funny, but now perhaps I should take it more seriously. What would the stars say? That instead of twelve hundred residents, with room for twenty thousand overnight pilgrims, my home will house two (neither of them pilgrims).

* * *

9:52 a.m.

Read the *Bhagavatam*, poor reader. When demons heard that Lord Visnu lifted the Mandara mountain, placed it on Garuda's back, then Himself mounted His eagle carrier to fly to the milk ocean, they called, "Mythology." Demigods believed it because they accept God's omnipotence on principle.

Read and know you are tiny, human, always fallible, and easily swayed. You need Krishna's help. Pray to relish what you read.

Lord Visnu and the demigods first grasped Vasuki's head as they prepared to churn the milk ocean. The demons were given Vasuki's tail. As is typical of demons, they assumed they were being cheated and insisted on switching. Lord Visnu smiled, and "without discussion, He immediately accepted their proposal by grasping the tail of the snake, and the demigods followed Him." (*Bhag.* 8.7.4)

* * *

11:45 a.m.

A record-breaking week "six full days with no headache! Today I have felt a slight flickering, so we'll have to see whether we make it to tonight without pain.

Bright sunshine on the page, drying the ink as I write it. Oh, India. Another pilgrim returned and said, "It blew me away." She meant it was amazing. She liked being in a country where it was culturally acceptable to be a Hare Krishna devotee. That's nice. Then why return to the West? Because, as I told her, it's her *prabhu-datta-deSa*.

Do we want to die in our *prabhu-datta-deSa*? Christians used to hope to die as martyrs; devotees aspire to die in Vrndavana.

Hear the music in your own head and look at the clock. You have time to praise Krishna.

I weighed in this morning at 128 pounds. I must be ready for the championship fight.

* * *

2:29 p.m.

The Lord presents hindrances, then removes them Himself. Mandara Mountain sunk below the waves, but Lord Visnu, as Kurma-avatara, lifted it up and supported it. Then the demons and demigods became fatigued. Lord Visnu appeared again and revived them, then took up the rope Himself. Thus He appeared under the mountain and on top of it, and He expanded His energies into both the demons and the demigods to keep them enlivened. As they churned, the ocean became perturbed and produced a virulent poison. Lord Visnu took the demigods to Lord Siva for protection.

* * *

[3:13] Writing in Time

Head fogging. Inspiration low. I am setting out nonetheless. Jesus had blue eyes in the film. He promised his followers that he would be with them until the end of time. And he will keep that promise. Lord Caitanya made a similar promise to His followers, as did Lord Krishna, who keeps it by remaining always in our hearts.

Write quicker, old man, and start packing more boxes. They want to take my stuff over tomorrow after lunch, but not me, not yet. I'll go on Monday morning.

I will do it as if I live in the present tense. Only our memories drag us both backward and forward, as we relive pains and pleasures and plan for future experiences. The present.

At this present moment, I am scratching with a pen while listening to the wind circling a house that is not mine. My body is a house too, as is this world. I am not a

permanent resident anywhere. Everything can be changed except our eternal identity as servant of Krishna. We cannot apply for anything more permanent than that.

Coverlet. May my head fog not get worse. Then step outside and chant. I confine my activities by choice.

Angel in white at the tomb: "Why do you look for the living among the dead?"

On the way to Emmaus. Seek him in Galilee. Gather, and he will come to you in Jerusalem. The apostles hid in fear. After the holy spirit visited them, however, they became fearless and went out to preach to all nations.

That leads into a long story, and includes details on persecution and how it eventually became institutionalized by Emperor Constantine. I prefer stories of Krishna "I realize that now.

It's 11:38. M. went to Dublin to meet a fiddler who may work with him one night a week. See how busy he is?

They will be on guard.

What?

Never mind. M. worked at the house, then went off for his music. I can't accuse him of neglect. rather, I continue to approach the *Bhagavatam* with a semblance of attention three times a day.

Car approaching. Someone knocking at the door? Ah, Caranaravinda answered it. Is it her children? Could it be a parcel for me? Not on a Saturday.

Saturday means the children are home too.

Yes, my path is confined by choice. I live in grooves.

Free pass island, fat pen, crocus spring "outside, I attempted to see tree buds, but it was too early "not light enough. At the end of May, I'll have to visit the Department of Justice to ask for an extension on my permission to stay in Ireland. What if I don't get it?

Listen to that wind! Ink on the edge of my sleeve.

Thought of Shakespeare. Was he born in his next life petted or abused?

The *Mayapur Journal* tells us that Bangladesh orphans can go to the Mayapur *gurukula* if they receive a scholarship. A boy from Switzerland can go too, and does. They also printed a poem by Sats' sense impressions in Mayapur recently. O Krishna,

O Krishna,

I am all right.

I can't tell anyone.

Who would have guessed what would happen to me? The empty tomb is a sign. In my case, I know if I fix heart and mind on Krishna at the end, I will go to Him, leaving this flesh-and-bones body behind. The *sastra* assures us: we are all eternal.

Lord, let me know You in truth. Lord Siva is compassionate, and he proved that by compassionately drinking the poison from the milk ocean. Prabhupada says unless we have compassion, we are not true devotees. Go and preach.

She said that when she read Srila Prabhupada's books, she decided to become a devotee. She lives in Jammu and wants me to become some kind of link. The tanks roll on. Aditi is on the USS Artica. Time is 22:16. Sorry, that's all I came up with.

* * *

Night Notes, 5:46 p.m.

Srila Prabhupada's cap low on his brow. It was sunny out today, but I saw a few snowflakes. The cold has shocked the plants. I have learned not to expect smooth sailing in the material world.

Looked at papers in M.'s room. He can't tend to all my requests. I sat on my haunches on the floor, the way a person squats by the side of the road in India. The Hare Krishna mantra continued to float through my mind.

April 12, 12:05 a.m.

Lord Visnu could have dispensed with the poison from the milk ocean Himself, but He wanted to give Lord Siva the credit. Therefore, He approached Lord Siva, along with the demigods, and requested that he save the situation.

To be honest, these verses in praise of Lord Siva don't satisfy my midnight attempt at *lectio divina*. Perhaps I should choose sections in advance that I know will be conducive to the "*darSana*," prayer like reading that nourishes me so immediately in the small amount of time I have. Reading in the *lectio* mood means giving up whatever attachment I have to reading everything in sequence and getting the flow of a particular chapter.

My head is also foggy right now. Perhaps that's contributing to why I can't enter this section in a more prayerful way. After all, Lord Siva's statements about how he will save the living entities *are* inspirational, especially when he and Prabhupada explain the nature of a Vaisnava's compassion.

Let me turn to *The Nectar of Devotion*. I plan to give a class this morning on selected favorites. I'll read four excerpts, then comment on them. There are different ways to study, I'll explain. For example, one can do an overview of *The Nectar of Devotion*, studying the quotes and examples in an overall context. One can also simply choose a variety of sections and try to taste what Prabhupada is giving. And there are other ways. What I tend to retain when I read this book is an impression of isolated sections, quotes, pastimes, and teachings, each having its own individuality and merit, rather than seeing the overview.

Madhu has a book on art improvisation. That book states that in public speaking, it's not good to read prepared speeches, even if they are good. Rather, we should prepare for a talk, but when we come before the audience, speak from the heart in what the author calls "real time." "Real time" refers to the fact that we have prepared our notes at an earlier time than when we will be delivering the talk. "Real time" means the present "when we are standing before the audience. For a devotee, we are often so afraid to speak something concocted that we do not let our own realizations and life enter much into our classes. And we *should* speak *parampara*. But can we do it in "real time"? When we actually face the audience and not our notes, we can better intuit what the people need to hear and know what we can honestly give them.

The excerpts I have chosen for my audience this morning are potent ones. And they are my favorites. That should help me speak from the heart. The first is about Daruka fanning Krishna. He preferred not to experience ecstasies because they inhibited the service he was trying to offer for Krishna's satisfaction. This reveals the nonselfish

nature of devotional service. We are meant to please Krishna's senses, not our own. We can try to apply this as far as we are able.

The second excerpt is a prayer to attain spontaneous attraction to Krishna, which is compared to the natural attraction a boy feels for a girl. When I was editor for ISKCON Press, I placed this quote on the back of the first edition of *The Nectar of Devotion*. We all know the example. It is not a prayer only to attain the conjugal mood but to experience that *kind* of untrained spontaneity. Srila Prabhupada describes this mood in his first definition of *raganuga-bhakti* in *The Nectar of Devotion*: how a devotee will get up early because he wants to see the Deity, not because he's afraid he will be punished or he is driven by duty.

The third excerpt is NOD's explanation of *tat te 'nukampam*. I have read this to audiences many times, but I'm going to do it again.

The fourth is the list of "steady ecstasies," starting with full utilization of time.

That's my list of excerpts. Now let's see if I can deliver the lecture without a headache. I have decided I would like to give a class every Sunday either in Wicklow or Dublin. That will be good for me. I don't want to rot here in the new house. That house seems to stand for a life of retired contemplation, although writing is certainly an active service. The house is really a base for active preaching through the pen and occasional lectures. Let's see what my health permits.

Old man I am becoming, white beard, blast through that rock! The gorse explodes. Males explode. The hail and forked lightning explodes. The sun and moon stay quiet, and the rabbit on the moon looks cold. Chant *japa* and leave no trace of a record of it, except on your heart.

* * *

Dreamt that Bhurijana was telling me some technique about writing "how to write a lot.

* * *

4:40 a.m.

I heard that last night there was a large golden moon; it appeared to be quite close to the earth. Devotees noticed it while they were working on the house. It seemed auspicious to move in so close to the full moon. One devotee wrote me that the house is far from ready; maybe I should reconsider moving. But how long can I wait? It will *never* be ready. I might as well move in before I'm moved out by time. They were building a house for Srila Prabhupada in Mayapur, and he never did move into it. In the end, they built his Samadhi Mandir, which also took a long time to finish. O moon that I didn't see, shall I take advantage of your appearance so close to the earth? Take it as a happy omen; it probably is. Govinda's moon.

O Govinda, today You are wearing Your Sunday pink with its peacock-feather trim. When You play Your flute, the demigods are attracted and listen from the clouds. When You see Them, You feel hindered in Your free play.

Krishna, Krishna, this literary persona flutes his might in the night chute premises. He tootles and brandishes a silver ring and is no Batman. rather, he says, "I want to hear

more about Madhumangala, Sridama, and Subala, Krishna, Lalita, and radha, Mother Purnamasi, the parrots, and the Vrajavasis, in *Vidagdha-madhava*." And he means it.

Well said, well *said*, foolish boy. Now please bring these candies to Krishna. You're not qualified to enter such pastimes, but this may be your chance.

No, I'm not qualified, and worse, I don't even feel bad about it. I am simply glad that Rupa Gosvami has given so much nectar. This something is much better than nothing, and even I can receive some of it. His writing is so potent that it is not completely lost on me. Isn't that amazing?

But our hearts must be clean before we are able to enjoy His pastimes in full. We have to desire Krishna more than anything else; we have to be free of mental speculation and the desire for fruitive gain. We can be finding fault with the guru, or be rank fools. We have to control our mind, or let it run wild in *Krishna-smaranam*.

Hare Krishna. What hope?

In any case, I will move into that house tomorrow. If it's too austere because it is still a construction site, then perhaps my presence will help speed things up. Moving in now will mean renouncing my privacy for a while "workers will be around to finish things up "but it seems worth it.

After breakfast this morning, I will load up boxes and move them into the hallway. No, not after breakfast "after I return from the lecture where I hope to be singing the glories of Sri Nandanandana.

Fish wreck, Holyhead "I imagine a deathbed scene where the dying man lists all the things he did to preach, then puts them aside. Now he is begging forgiveness of one and all. Despite his wildness in his younger days, on his deathbed he reverts to the classical and conservative ISKCON stance. He feels he had better cool it if he wants to receive the devotees' blessings at this late date. He doesn't want offense or indifference to impede him now. Neither does he want to return to this world.

But although he's a pious soul, he's no pure devotee, so just as his consciousness revives after a few months in the womb, he promises to obey and worship Lord Hari. But *maya* is strong, and as he enters this world, persons and events conspire against him and he again forgets his eternal relationship with Krishna. He begins to race against the clock, to again learn to put aside attachments and awaken his dormant love for Krishna.

Krishna sees all the way into his heart "what he actually desires "and awards him what he actually wants. Often it is less than what he wishes he wants. But the desire for a little fame has been thrown into the mix, or perhaps he wants to love a beautiful woman, to grow old again surrounded by loving children and grandchildren. He might also have offered charity in a past life, but claimed the pious results for himself. Now he has to return and enjoy the use of that hospital he supported or receive some other favor connected with his earlier gift. We won't mention the suffering he also may have incurred, despite the fact that he is a pious soul. It is impossible to be completely sinless while living in this world.

Back on another deathbed, he tries to look good "*really* good "and again begs his brothers for their kindness and forgiveness. He has learned to want to serve his spiritual master's movement that much more intently, and his request for forgiveness hints at a softer heart this time. His brothers humor him, then look at their wristwatches and leave

the room. He dies with a coconut balanced on his head, reciting a song by Lewis Carroll
"I won't tell you which in case you begin to sing it too "

No, don't wish such an end on yourself or anyone. Better to sankirtana of Radha-Govinda, and met at the door by his spiritual master, he goes to Them. That is the story we wish to hear, so that is the story I will tell.

* * *

Govinda Moon
& I'm onto the Govinda
moon. I was jolly well asleep last night
and missed the whole thing "
dreaming of Bhurijana on a bike
and my body so old and heavy
it was hard to keep up.

* * *

But I laughed in my sleep and
lied through my teeth
wore red and white striped pajamas
heard fascinating rhythms.

* * *

O Death, be not proud "
fragments of such music came.

* * *

A horn subdued in mind
is round and pure and profound

* * *

like this Govinda moon! Pockmarks
filled with brilliant light
and we move on the road of life
thinking death auspicious
or that he has made a mistake.

* * *

O Govinda
I won't be afraid
when I have to give up everything

to rest my mind in Your names. "

* * *

12 Noon

The talk at the schoolhouse went all right. I wasn't so inspired when it came to answering questions. They seem to already know what I will preach, and their questions are meant often to balance what I have said, to present the opposite side. We start to split hairs. Or someone gives an opinion that supports mine instead. I don't know. I feel a bit drained now. Maybe it's because whenever I speak, I realize that I am neither wonderful nor powerful.

The children were in attendance. Each one had drawn a picture on the theme of moving into a new house and then presented it to me. Most of the pictures showed the two windows in the thatched roof, Madhu's small house, and a shining sun. In some, I was entering the house. Each also contained a message along the lines of, "I hope you will be peaceful in your new house to read, write, and chant." One folded picture contained a pop-up of a seated Srila Prabhupada, and beneath him a volume of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* on a bookstand.

I have a little indigestion from the two and a half simply wonderfuls I ate at breakfast. They were a treat at the time, but I shouldn't have eaten them. Praghosa wasn't there this morning, but Purusa was. Now I'm back in Daruka's empty house, waiting for lunch. They will move my desk over to the new house, and the rest of the boxes. I managed to pack almost everything. I heard that Bhakta Leo stayed up last night to paint. He appeared at the meeting in his work clothes and painty hands.

* * *

Caitanya-candrodaya dasa just arrived from England with light fixtures for the house. I'm supposed to see him after lunch, but what will I say? In my talk I said, "If you can't do all your activities for Krishna's pleasure, then try to do something for Him and then increase your concentration." I encouraged them to be realistic with themselves. That Christian book by Marilyn Gustin gave the same advice to her readers. If we try to love more than we are capable, we will fail. Find the edge of what's possible for you, then increase from there.

M. told me the bathroom is austere "no hot water and the drain is stopped up. He said he'll try plunging it.

It's Easter today, and colder than it has been all winter. I heard a small airplane in the sky. The motor has a lonely, sad drone. Someone told me that there would be a car rally today. Is that why so many small cars have been zipping by? Each one has an almost identical aerial.

Heard Srila Prabhupada speaking to a group of Indians, San Diego, 1972. He said that we should avoid the four kinds of impious activities. A man commented, "But those who are most powerful in the world, America and Soviet Russia, do these four things." Srila Prabhupada assured him that these countries are not actually powerful. Whatever power they appear to possess is temporary.

"Why follow the rules?" the man asked. "Is it for otherworldly reasons?"

Srila Prabhupada replied that we are otherworldly; we are Brahman, spirit. I liked his answers.

Lunch is late. No problem, I can sit here and write a while longer. Still no real headache. Was it the vitamin B complex I have been taking? Just a fluke, to be followed by harder times? I don't know.

* * *

2:45 p.m.

Vaisnavas are unhappy when they see the unhappiness of others. "Devotees, even at the risk of their own temporary lives, try to save them." (*Bhag.* 8.7.40)

Lord Siva swallowed the poison after first reducing it to an amount that could fit in the palm of his hand. Don't imitate Lord Siva!

"It is said that great personalities almost always accept voluntary suffering because of the suffering of people in general. This is considered the highest method of worshipping the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is present in everyone's heart." (*Bhag.* 8.7.44) The best welfare is to bring people to Krishna consciousness. Krishna Himself comes to mitigate sufferings of humanity (Bg. 4.7 - 8). If we engage in Krishna's mission with His pleasure in mind, He will be very pleased with us.

After Lord Siva swallowed the poison, the *devas* and *asuras* again began to churn the ocean. "As a result of this, there appeared a cow known as Surabhi." And so the story unfolds. But let's go back to Lord Siva's compassion. Can we apply that ourselves? We should each ask ourselves what we are doing to help others. Do we have faith that Krishna consciousness is the best welfare work, or is that just a cliché? These are important issues, and sometimes discussing them yet again feels like an overload. For example, this morning, someone told me that he teaches the children to think for themselves in Krishna consciousness. Yes, but it's also right to follow the spiritual master's instructions, to please him, because that is the source of the blessing called Krishna conscious intelligence. Still, our following and service must be offered freely. We shouldn't be *blind* followers. A barrage of ideas from different viewpoints. Where is simple Krishna consciousness? Is there any one point with which we can stay without moving? Anything real and loveable?

The weather here is crazy. It snowed heavily this afternoon. A crow sitting on a fence post in this white landscape was clearly visible. Then the sun came out and the sky was blue. I decided to take a nap while it was snowing, thinking I could later walk in the whiteness, but by the time I woke up, the snow had begun to melt, and by the time I got outside, it was gone.

Caitanya-candrodaya said he wasted his time coming here all the way from England. He had been told that the house was finished and that he could give suggestions for the finishing touches. The house is not ready at all, and we have no money to buy furniture. I'm sorry that he received the wrong information.

The *devas* claimed Surabhi and Bali Maharaja took the horse that appeared from the churning. Lord Visnu claimed the *kaustubha* jewel, and when Rama appeared, the beautiful goddess of fortune, He took her too.

[3:27] Writing in Time

There. I misplaced (not lost) the Micronta quartz stopwatch. Twenty minutes will go by without it.

"Give us Barabbas," the crowd shouted.

O Krishna, please allow me to concentrate on Your *lila*, in a prayerful spirit. I will look at just one verse and purport and stay with it, waiting for You to reveal Yourself through it. I want to let feeling for You arise, then turn to pray. May we read it and weep.

My *Poor Man's Bhagavatam* petered out, but no one will care. *I* should care! I want to write and write in any easy form, and rise to whatever Krishna conscious occasion comes my way.

My books have been packed and carted away to that other place. Now I'll really have to write what comes.

Believe in something "the nine kinds of steady *bhava*, Krishna's sixty-four qualities, the books I have written on these topics "stones and runes and rubrics and warlocks and witches "and may pure spirits defeat evil. Empires rise and fall. A man can seek peace even within turbulent times, as cars zip by on an Easter Sunday to celebrate the risen Christ, simply by chanting the holy name.

Did I hear there was a car rally *today*?

To friends I wish to say that if it had been better organized, we could have succeeded in preparing the house on time; we could have spent the necessary money and employed the necessary men to bring it to completion. But it doesn't matter: I will move in anyway.

How am I helping others? Let me ask myself that question.

But I have answered it hundreds, if not thousands, of times. Don't you know that my poems are meant to fight demons? And those squiggly colors contain the music of the spheres? Others' misery makes me unhappy, and that's why I write. Can I claim that truly?

Dear reader, this is my real life.

And today I tried to do a "Writing in Time" session, but my writing was taken out before the clock had finished. Henry Miller used to say that his chair was constantly being pulled out from under him when he was trying to write. Ray Carver said something similar. Then his chair *was* pulled out and he died. It's likely to happen to me. Will they show up while I'm making this attempt and ask for the desk and chair?

Well, it won't matter, because there's always the floor. I don't have to follow any rule that says writing should only be done in a chair.

Natalie Goldberg says that good writing is like baking bread for hungry people. Take the original, potent Krishna conscious message and don't change it. Simply serve it in your own voice to others. That's what will help. This is, after all, a group effort, and they are thinking they will fit 12,000 people into the Mayapur temple. Out of those people, *some* will want to read how to practice Krishna consciousness in my voice. Others may not. That's why it's a group effort "we want to catch everyone. Every voice is needed. There's no one way that's absolutely right.

Other than that, as I said earlier, we can hear of Lord Siva's compassion, but we cannot imitate his method of expressing it. We can't drink an ocean of poison, and many of us are not even book distributors. What we can do is to serve others as duty and with love. We can also practice detachment.

This hirsute beast stops here, scratching with his pen on yet another day. Four of the fingers on his left hand held the page steady, while his right hand gripped that pen and made the squiggly loops and lines we call handwriting. We all know how to do it. Learned it as children. It only becomes a complicated execution when our feelings block our words or our feelings. They say you can read a personality by studying someone's handwriting.

Anyway, I've reached my minimum quota for this session. Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There are snakes and other poisonous entities in this world. Now end. This is a living book.

3:47p

* * *

After reading Poets

Hail seems to be leaping from the sky and I have
black-gloved hands. Walking and chanting. "Garbage
belly," my father called himself and,
"My mind is in the gutter."
Yet he was so conservative "1950s Dad.
Mom would restrain his coarseness.

* * *

That dinner table talk. Gone that life. Look
at ISKCON pictures? Here I am at a GBC meeting.
Here we are after reporting to Srila Prabhupada.
Sweet moments "when he had us under his control.

* * *

Here's a photo of me looking at a hailstorm
and a horse in a distant field. "Snow," we called
it "the stuff filling the TV screen.

* * *

I always have some plan or other to start *lectio*
and then I stop. It's my way of saying
I hope to get rid of all things extraneous
and just love God.
I'm certain that all my "extras" are keeping

him from becoming possessed by Krishna so
I agree to stay in a desert or under a dark cloud
of unknowing to stay and pray dry
and wait. Then, "remember *yukta-vairagya*?"
And so the cycle goes.

* * *

I hack at the problem some more.
Another day has passed and we have all
survived "or most of us "so I'm
turning in another poem.
I wasn't stopped but
neither did I attain *bhava*,
a noticeable stirring of soul, or even clarity.
It's that cloud.
Is this the way to love of Krishna?

* * *

O Krishna, You love me and
will not reject me
no matter what I say
here.

April 13, 12:10 a.m.

Sacred duties. Taking up *Bhagavad-gita* again at midnight. I can read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* at other times. I'll pick up where Krishna tells Arjuna that there is never any loss when one practices devotional service. Even if one fails to achieve the goal of his practice, Krishna will not forget him. Nor will his practice go in vain. Arjuna expresses his worry on this point: "This is my doubt, O Krishna, and I ask You to dispel it completely. But for You, no one is to be found who can destroy this doubt." (Bg. 6.39) But Lord Krishna knows everything past, present, and future. His answer will remove all doubts.

I have doubts too sometimes, but they do not usually develop to an intellectual agony. They are more like mosquitoes biting. They are probably the result of *aparadhas*, offensive responses toward Krishna, *sastra*, guru, and Vaisnavas. I constantly seek relief from such pains, and Krishna's words in *Bhagavad-gita* help. Let's look at the verses ending the fourth chapter. They climax when Krishna tells Arjuna to slay his doubts with the sword of knowledge.

When I read *Bhagavad-gita*, I like to imagine that I am reading it for the first time, that a sudden transformation takes place in my heart, and that I completely believe whatever Krishna says. Wouldn't that be nice? Then I could actually become a disciple.

But the process seems more gradual. "Inquiries and submission constitute the proper combination for spiritual understanding." (Bg. 4.34, purport) This is proven by the fact

that I am *not* reading *Bhagavad-gita* for the first time. That doesn't shame me. I will never be too old or too so-called experienced to receive instructions from my spiritual master, even if I have heard them before. And I am not *so* fallen that I can't awaken to the words in *Bhagavad-gita*. "O king, as I repeatedly recall this wondrous and holy dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, I take pleasure, being thrilled at every moment." (Bg. 18.76)

"This knowledge is the mature fruit of devotional service, and when one is situated in transcendental knowledge, he need not search for peace elsewhere, for he enjoys peace within himself." (Bg. 4.31 purport)

I want to chant now. The room is chilly, even though the portable electric heater is on. Let me chant anyway, and with attention. They didn't end up taking my desk away yesterday, and I was alone all afternoon. Were they working on the house until late at night? Will we move there today? I had better put such thoughts aside for now, or they will absorb me while I try to chant and recall the mood of *Bhagavad-gita*.

* * *

4:20 a.m.

It doesn't look like we will leave as early as I had hoped. I have to wait for M. to wake up, and then we can discuss it. It's been a cold April, and plenty of wind still rattles around this house and sweeps the streets clean. It comes down from the hills and moves like music through the trees.

I keep saying this is my last day here, but I'm not thinking of death but of an expanded life. I suppose if there were more obvious signs of approaching death, we would prepare. Our body would grow taut, or perhaps we would learn to relax into it. Devotees should be practiced to remember Krishna at the end. We don't think about salvation but loving service to Krishna. Ultimately, we will accept whatever Krishna wants for us next life. We ask only to be with the devotees and to serve them.

Most of my altar pictures have been packed. Govinda doesn't even have His flute; I thought we were leaving right after breakfast, so I packed His paraphernalia. Not good. I should have waited and packed it at the very last minute. We should never neglect our present-moment worship: *man-mana bhava mad-bhakta*. After all, I made sure I would not be inconvenienced by this move, so why shouldn't I ensure that Prabhupada and Radha-Govinda won't be either? I didn't fill their water cups this morning, thinking I would need to empty them and pack them quickly. That wasn't a good reason. Don't be so efficient that the Deities are not cared for. So spoke the old man to his stomach and toes. May breakfast be simple so I can avoid indigestion. If others don't agree with that, then at least don't put much in your stomach, or you'll pay for it later.

Now give us some profound thoughts on the science of Krishna. What are some *vibhavas* in the parental *rasa*? What is the *uddipana* for devotees in the conjugal *rasa*? Who is the *alambana*? He explained, and the students laughed, because it was too much for them to assimilate quickly. They couldn't see how he expected them to take it all in. "*Bhakti*," he said . . . If we know more about it, then when we read *Krishna* book, we will have more appreciation for it. I'm not sure about that. Love is required, either simple or scholarly.

A therapist told me she could solve her problems if she wrote enough. Write through life, but not so much that you forget to live, so that the solution to life's problems is to make writing more dominant than life itself. A scholar accused Emily Dickinson of that. He said she created an alternative reality in her poems. He referred to it as "the radicals of writing." Such writing is not for communication but to create the truth for oneself, to construct a universe.

I was typing just now, but the ribbon ran out and the other ribbons have been packed and moved over to the new house. Things are scattered like that right now. An Indian *sadhu* would have much fewer possessions; he wouldn't be worry that he had misplaced them. He might even live in a cave and chant Hare Krishna most of the time. Like Raghava Pandita did, or Raghunatha Bhatta and others.

I discovered that an alternative to neat, handwritten lines is loop-the-loop broad strokes in narrow colors. Thought departs, and form becomes improvised when you change your handwriting. Therefore, my own hand is the teacher.

Srimati Radharani, in the ecstasy of *purva-raga*, says She doesn't know if She was awake or asleep. She heard Krishna's flute, then heard the name "Kana." Purnamasi shows Her a portrait of Krishna that ViSakha had drawn. Radharani falls in love with all three persons, thinking them different from one another. She is embarrassed by Her own shamelessness, but ViSakha assures her that the three persons are actually one, Krishna.

* * *

5:55 a.m.

I imagined, shyly, that my disciples here were on a marathon yesterday to finish the construction and to clean up "getting the place ready for their guru. In my morning class I even told how Srila Prabhupada said, "Wherever I go, I smell fresh paint," and the story of how we constructed a garden for Srila Prabhupada within twenty-four hours of his arrival in Dallas. Well, it was my imagination. Madhu said he worked alone at the house all day yesterday; no one else showed up. A few devotees worked over there late Saturday night, but they didn't come back yesterday. After telling me this, Madhu proposed to call the devotees this morning to see if he could get some help. In other words, they're not ready for me. I opted for moving in anyway, even though there's no desk and the place is a mess. Madhu agreed, so that's what we'll do.

* * *

9:30 a.m.

Sitting on bricks in the corner of a room, writing in a tiny notepad. My feet are cold. Goloka and Caranaravinda are cleaning the two upstairs floors. The Deities are already on the altar. The place is at least fifty percent unfinished "there is no running hot water, no kitchen, no light fixtures, no heat, the sockets are still uncovered, and the front yard is a mess "but I should be able to live here all right. People have lived in worse. The main thing is that I now have the freedom to move about as I please, although I really would like to warm my toes by a fire somewhere.

Can I pray here? Can I read? Can I concentrate on something Krishna conscious? Develop art?

* * *

10:40 a.m.

Still here on these bricks. The floors are taking a lot of scrubbing. They didn't want to do it until I had actually moved here. I'm not sure why, but I want to be careful and not make demands on them.

Let me go to the shed that will become Madhu's place. If I sit by the window, perhaps I can warm up. Chant Hare Krishna, mate, and please be hearty. Heat some water for Prabhupada's bath. I will have a desk, and the Deities already have an altar. I also have a mattress on the floor, a chair, a tape recorder, and meals. They have even hooked up the electricity. All this provides shelter against the rain. Anything more really is luxury.

* * *

12:40 p.m.

Back aching from moving the heavy boxes. I'm becoming an old-bodied servant.

* * *

4:04 p.m.

After moving in, Madhu asked if I feel this house can be a home. I couldn't say. Not yet. I am happy to be here, but I restrain myself from feeling too deeply about it because a *sannyasi* shouldn't feel at home in any particular house. Still, it is good to gather all of Srila Prabhupada's lecture tapes on one shelf and his books on another, and to set up a writing desk, prepared for the quiet.

* * *

The devotees in Wicklow are quarreling "my disciples all. Now there is a split, and they are not about to repair it. I say I won't take sides, but I said to one devotee, "The devotees on the other side are also wonderful." He objected. How could I think that and still say I wasn't taking sides? It's easy. I see the good in what all of them are doing "it's not hard to see "and it's true: they are all wonderful because out of millions of persons, they are trying to take shelter of Krishna.

* * *

[4:36] Writing in Time

Okay, Mr. Backache, no headache, so move along. You are in possession of nothing but Krishna conscious paraphernalia "your spiritual master's books and a new house. I don't know if the government will let me stay for as long as I desire. If they don't, I will take it as Krishna telling me He wants me to move on.

Provisions and plans "a long chronicle of a short boy's brief life.

Did you know there are other people in this valley? Even those of us who belong to the same cult don't always get along, what to speak of others. Sometimes people have real cause for disagreement. Manipulation, misunderstanding, envy "and if we are not in

the middle, we should stay out. I hope to build a cement wall around my place. Then I will be able to chant as loudly as I like in the morning and not disturb anyone. Or perhaps I will. Will Madhu hear it in his little house? Will I hear his music? "When a body meets a body comin' through the rye . . . "

Yes sir, three bags full, sir.

All music hath its charms.

The sheep are shaggy at this time of year. Not for long. Hailstones still flying. I moved the boxes and the boxes moved me.

Krishna science startles London. Yank in Eire. Listen to the rushes, ho! Nevermore, and all that. All these voices make me want to go silent.

Today is Lincoln's birthday. There's a limit to writing whatever leaps into the front of your head.

Okay, then let me say this: I'm sorry they don't get along here, even in a loose family spirit. Probably that's too much to ask. But until they do, they won't be able to accomplish much preaching in this country. They'll each have to find their way first.

This is the time (4:45) when I start to wind down. I skipped some of my usual activities today "the two extra rounds, the afternoon reading "because I had to concentrate on moving and cleaning and arranging to live in this house. The floor in the bathroom is a cement slab, and the house is dusty and dirty. M. is out there burning the trash in the front yard. No one to help him except one. We shouldn't complain.

Deeper.

I pray to God. Krishna, I wanted this house to facilitate my service. The cloud of unknowing may be able to lift here, and perhaps I will come to know You better. Hare Krishna.

Don't whimper, child. Everything will be all right. A mother wrote me that when she was about to leave her son, he "went into hysterics." I have only to contend with a simple problem: a wild mind that refuses to, seems unable to, fix on the repetitive sounds of our thirty-two-syllable mantra. Make it simple; make it clear.

O Krishna, Krishna, You are the truth of the matter.

Krishna science startles Tottenville.

Now a new generation.

The boor, the poor

man who likes to read

his own book

and wants to count it as time with Prabhupada

because it's through his *Bhagavatam* that this book was composed.

The temple in Mayapur is being built to last a thousand years. I am vacuuming up the dirt in the hallway, scraping paint, and putting boxes onto the shelves. I don't need a thousand years. Or perhaps I do, if you count how many times I will probably have to come back. But when I return, let me learn to be humble while I'm still a child, and earn the right as I did in this life somehow, to take a sabbatical from a nine-to-five job in order to focus only on Krishna consciousness. May I learn gratitude toward Krishna.

It's 20:13.

* * *

After reading Poets
Move in not in wrath or
trying to be
better. Move in and back off "holes
could give entrance to vermin and
other field hearties "but I am not afraid.

* * *

Move in and place your beads in beadbag
on a shelf, with gloves and stopwatch ready
for 1 a.m. That seems early, perhaps, but
this is the late quarter of my life. Imagine a 60-year-
old monk in a cement-walled curvy house
living mostly upstairs with the high-ceilinged
window he has to stand on a desk to open.
Does it sound silly?

* * *

Out the window a winding
Rocky path and up to Wicklow
Mountain. People don't get along even
in their own families, but
they revere a guru as long as
he minds his own business,
which I intend to do.

* * *

Poets don't help much, but Prabhupada's books.
That's a hint. Praise the
writer, the day, and seek the
Supreme Lord in scripture.

* * *

My Srila Prabhupada told the cynical smirking
Hindu in San Diego, "You listen.
Don't be a laughingstock."
Keep at bay the wild atheists, dear
Srila Prabhupada, and those drunk or
seductive or scholarly, hungry for money.

* * *

Moved in. Now nowhere to go but wherever
He sends me. Radha-Damodara?
Monkeys. But this is Ireland
for now.

April 14, 12:13 a.m.

I began to read *Bhagavad-gita*, but ended up making a shopping list. My mind is too clerical right now. I think like a quartermaster: rooms are cold "arrange for heat. I can't seem to settle in quite yet, so it must be too early to try for prayer. I have only been here one night. I'm sure I will relax.

Bhagavad-gita says, "Such knowledge in Krishna consciousness can be achieved by a faithful person who believes firmly in Krishna. One is called a faithful man who thinks that simply by acting in Krishna consciousness he can attain the highest perfection." (Bg. 4:39, purport)

We are not at all perfect, yet we have faith that if we attain Krishna consciousness, we will be fully satisfied. We know we won't need anything else. Therefore, let us proceed on this path with minimum distractions.

To me, almost anything is a potential distraction from pure hearing and chanting. When I can write in pure Krishna consciousness, what will that be like? Srila Prabhupada speaks of meditating twenty-four hours a day "not fifteen minutes in twenty-four hours. Yes, I want to live in that constant flow of Krishna consciousness, to see Krishna in all things and all things in Krishna. That is an active meditation, not an inactive sitting-posture session. reading *sastra* is meant to fuel us for a life of grounded concentration. Don't live on the surface of events.

"One who follows the instruction of the *Bhagavad-gita* as it is imparted by the Lord, the Personality of Godhead Himself, becomes free from all doubts by the grace of transcendental knowledge." (Bg. 4.41, purport) He is situated in self-knowledge.

"Therefore, the doubts which have arisen in your heart out of ignorance should be slashed by the weapon of knowledge. Armed with yoga, O Bharata, stand and fight." (Bg. 4.42)

Stand and fight: that's a particular order to Arjuna, because he stands on a battlefield. But it is meant for all of us. We must learn to fight our doubts on the battlefield of the skeptical mind. We can't sit back and expect Krishna to do that for us. We are meant to actively use the mercy and intelligence the spiritual master gives us.

I added to my list, "Get a good desk lamp," then remembered how I was asking for Krishna conscious knowledge. I want life "as a lifetime student of *Bhagavad-gita*. I want to possess the secret and have the secret possess me.

I found myself humming aloud. This house is an "aloud" zone "I don't have to keep quiet.

The important essence of all sacrifice is self-realization, knowing we are the eternal servants of Krishna. We don't die "not the real us. If we want to become free of false

ego, restrain the senses and the mind. The spirit soul engaging in Krishna conscious action accrues no karma.

* * *

4:48 a.m.

Heat water for the cold bathroom. I'm shivering. Then back up here with Radha-Govinda. Now let me tell you something more interesting.

I heard *Vidagdha-madhava* and knew it was beyond me, so I felt good instead about the little perks in this house, like when I can find a pair of warm socks or when I anticipate a hot breakfast. Some other things are nice, but they evaporate before they even happen, and are thus more temporary pleasures.

Let me go deeper. Krishna, You are the source of all pleasure "the *reservoir* of pleasure. You are also the pride of Gokula. You and Madhumangala discuss the various *gopis* and conclude that Radha is best. Your pastimes with Her in the groves of Vrndavana are excellent. I say that because it's true, and even I recognize that truth in Rupa Gosvami's flowing and dramatic lines. Those lines bring light to my heart. Thus Srila Prabhupada assures us we will improve our lives by hearing as constantly as possible.

It was difficult for me to pull everything together this morning, so I'm running behind schedule. There is no light downstairs, and I had to find the water heater, fill it with water, and plug it in "all in the dark. I didn't know, however, that the heater also had to be switched on. I didn't find that out until I realized the water wasn't heating up. And there were other delays. I couldn't find the clothes M. had laid out for me either. Anyway, here we are. The small space heater roars and pushes out hot air into the chill of this house. When we think of hot air, we usually think of meaningless boasts or empty rhetoric. Only speech backed up by action has any value. Aghasura was full of hot air. This hot air roaring from the heater, however, I appreciate.

Do I like it here? Yes, but my inner life is most important. Can I flow through to a deeper Krishna conscious writing while I live here? That will make the whole move worthwhile.

But the reader also has to respond deeply. It doesn't only come from me, because I am only a poor, half-empty person who knows how to sleep and dream and to leave behind words and worlds he no longer wishes to claim.

* * *

Krishna Buzzing Like a Bee
& I want to buy a van or
U-Haul, and a kitchenette
and please don't send me to Africa.
I'm only kidding on both counts
almost.
Those were just words.

* * *

I only want to be a devotee
not interested in a life's partnership
in business or with a wife
no aprons but to rise to a different
occasion
I'll live forty years or one hundred then die
in Mayapur where they will place
a six-foot tombstone weighted down
with my books.

* * *

That would cause serious cosmetic karma
GNP haphazard
but get serious now and wipe that
smile
off your
face.

* * *

Krishna buzzed like a bee.
That's interesting! He's new He's
blue He's all
Right.
May we be in touch
when others are upset
and give them Krishna
but we have no telephone/ no unlimited
checks
although we're
clever enough and
are not afraid of the dark.

* * *

9:14 a.m.

Listening with only the intellect, we hear contradictions when the guru or the Supreme Lord speaks. We have to learn to listen with the heart. That's what it means when we say "submissive, aural reception." Stop fighting and just surrender. In *Bhagavad-gita*, Lord Krishna explains how He originally taught the science of *bhakti-yoga* to the sun-god, but in course of time the disciplic succession was broken due to misinterpretation. "That very ancient science of the relationship with the Supreme is today told by Me to you because you are My devotee as well as My friend and can therefore understand the transcendental mystery of this science." (Bg. 4.3)

Krishna thus reveals His trust in Arjuna. Yet Arjuna immediately raises a doubt "finds a contradiction. Srila Prabhupada informs us that Arjuna is speaking like this to benefit ordinary people. He wants Krishna Himself to speak about Himself. "To the demons, such explanations by Krishna Himself may appear to be strange because the demons always study Krishna from their own standpoint, but those who are devotees heartily welcome the statements of Krishna when they are spoken by Krishna Himself."

We cannot expect to know everything about Krishna within a minute. It *could* happen within a minute, or it could fail to happen within millions of births. If we want understanding, we have to be prepared to pay with our *lauilyam*. So be patient, even if it means that for now we have to remain without the blessings and power of spontaneous love of God. Work and wait. Such an attitude takes humility and enough gratitude to recognize that we are at least in the Krishna conscious camp where *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam* are available.

"The Personality of Godhead said: "Many many births both you and I have passed. I can remember all of them, but you cannot, O subduer of the enemy!" (Bg. 4.5)

* * *

10:13 a.m.

Madhu has hired someone to help him clean and to dig around his shed so that the ground is not higher than his house. When I go downstairs, I may bump into the man. He has worked here for weeks on and off, but I doubt he has seen a man in a *dhoti*.

* * *

12:24 p.m.

That guy is digging. M. is off somewhere else. They lit a bonfire in the yard to burn the construction debris. I don't like the sound of the pounding, but that's probably because my head is fogged up. This is the first headache I've had in over a week. I would like to keep going, but it's probably wiser to rest. When this place is finished, however, I can already see how the quiet, alone life will give me the room I need to be fully engaged and enlivened, despite the inevitable low periods that will come.

My mind just jumped. What was I saying? It's like air pockets in a water pipe "the flow becomes interrupted.

* * *

3:09 p.m.

I'm reading the second volume of *A Poor Man reads the Bhagavatam*, recently printed in India. I honor it as scripture. Unless I slow down to appreciate the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* glosses, however, I'll tend to think they're in the way. Slow down; read the Sanskrit and the verse. Appreciate it. Savor it.

It occurred to me that if I didn't have headaches, I would probably have continued writing PMrB. I like its form. But it was too hard to keep up the pace. Perhaps I'm getting old. Thus I have turned to the easier form that EJW permits. Even here I give *sastra*, but I don't demand that each time I write I must first study verse and

purport, write a gloss, then answer questions on the section. Anyway, this book has been printed and I am glad to see it. I know I spoke strongly at the beginning of the first volume, saying that Krishna had answered my prayers for a lifelong structure, but that wasn't my lifelong structure; this is.

* * *

3.37 Writing in Time

I have no designation "just a band of almost-pain in the front of my head, but not enough to drive me to a pill. I'm rationing them out.

Krishna is the king of all, yet He plays as a child, subordinate to parents, friends, and lovers, all of whom love Him dearly. Yes, that's Krishna, the inconceivable. And this day I belong to the world, to my self, to my master, to my disciples, to governments of the world . . . I am under the control of various powers. They move me about without much concern for me one way or another. I don't even know who "they" are, as long as I don't get in the way of progress. Although I'll be meeting the Government of Ireland and request them to allow me to reside at the end of a lonely, unpaved, rocky lane in Co. Wicklow. I trust their benevolence. The U.S.A. won't mind losing me, as long as I am in touch at least in some remote way, such as by possessing a passport. Otherwise, I have dropped out of sight.

And why? So I can turn my attention to the dark Krishna and fair-complexioned Radha. So I can read and chant and prepare myself for the next world. If we can think of Krishna at the end of life, we can enter His abode.

Oh, you have to know your *sthayi-bhava* for *that*, Prabhu.

I know mine. I'm a devotee in the line of Lord Caitanya's followers. I hope the details will be revealed to me just in the nick of time. But first I'll become stainless (*niranjana*); then I'll be told my relationship with Krishna and what I should be wearing. I've got it all figured out.

But let me stub my toe, and my high thoughts return to bodily identification. That's the only part I haven't solved yet.

They say the giving up of mundane sex desire is necessary before one can understand radha-Krishna's pastimes. My interest has certainly diminished; I've grown older, and my body is breaking down, and passions with it. But I know that doesn't qualify me to follow a chosen resident of Vrndavana in itself.

Don't mind, just sing. Because spring is here. I feel warm enough that I can take off a layer of clothing.

Perhaps my theme is relocation. All right, blokes, then this is like running the decathlon "sometimes we're swimming, sometimes climbing hills, sometimes running (out of breath) to the toboggans. O Lord, You are the pacemaker, and I know now that Srila Prabhupada meant what he said. What else can I do but understand?

Drink water, me hearties. I ask M. a dozen times a day, "Please bring me drinking water." He intends to, but then goes off and does something else. He moves from item to item on his list, and many of my requests are on hold "they are just one more in an infinite, expanding agenda of things to be done, none of which can be done immediately.

I continue to raise my voice, and his response hardens: "Give me tissues, tissues, tissues, tish . . . water to drink."

Yeah yeah, we hear you crying. Get it yourself, why don't you? Yeah, drink straight from the tap. Why this crying in the wilderness?

Please bring me a bottle of
Schnapps a field pack a
mitten, a series on classics
of spiritual life, a notebook
with yellow spirals and
broad avenues.
Banish my doubts, and
while you're at it, make this room
less cold.

(Just as I wrote this, M. came in and I turned the stopwatch off. 3:51 p.m. I had lost track of time, and now I'm suddenly aware of it again. He has brought in Aniruddha to look at a wall. To hell with them "I don't have to be pleasant. "I'm on a timed writing exercise.")

"You do your business. I'll do mine. I'm as serious as you are, and as intent on my purpose."

In other words "

I won't say it. Let them take their measurements for the shelves. Don't I want them built?

I do, but not in the middle of a timed writing exercise.

Aniruddha stands there, wondering, perhaps, how I could write with him standing there. He's *watching* me. Now he has taken out his tape measure, and I lose my train of thought just as he finds his.

Now this session is bust. It doesn't matter; I'll be dead before this epic is over. No "Gee, Doc, can you give me four more years to finish my plans?" I'm living all my plans right now.

Even Srila Prabhupada could not finish the plan he had to complete the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. That was quite a lesson. When Krishna wants us to stop, He stops us. No questions asked.

All I know right now is that it's easy to get angry at a pen that keeps skipping, and it's too expensive a pen to throw away. I keep hoping it will get itself together and begin to write well.

Krishna, You are kind to us all.

A comment written on a "Suggestions" card at Govinda's restaurant: "Excellent food and service. Glad you are back in town." roll over Beethoven, Krishna restaurant has returned.

3:58

* * *

After reading Poets
Krishna, that man is pounding something
in the yard. It reminds me of the Krishna-
Balaram Mandir, the Guesthouse,
where someone is always pounding coal
or brick "whatever they can find? "and
we residents have to listen to it
from our rooms. O Vrndavana,
do I hanker for that sound?
Vrndavana-Ireland and Hare Krishna "
no, I haven't lost track
completely.

* * *

They want me to write clear, as if
I am housebroken. They don't want me
to bewilder anyone and wonder why
a plain song can be God-given.
Make sense, they say, but making
sense is not the last word.

* * *

They mean make *common* sense "
progress from A to B to C
straight in a line. Don't
lose readers along the way. Write with the
Reader always over your shoulder. Write as a
serviceman. Praise Krishna with logic and
argument, transition, and without adjectives.
And go to bed on time. I
do, I do.

* * *

And so I agreed to write educational notes
and an author's intro: Dear reader of "Active
Imagination," you'll find some free expression
here, and you can do with them
as you like. They are permissive and not
meant to be read for sense but for
feeling. And please chant
sixteen rounds if you have been initiated, after

which you can read these for
fun and profit.
Love, your moffit.

* * *

Night Notes, 5:34 p.m.

The day laborer is pounding away in the yard. My chair is comfortable under this desk. Is that man having an out-of-body experience? No, that's not for ordinary people, and it's not for devotees of Krishna either. For devotees, the body is meant to be here and the mind wherever we are able to take it.

Now be ready to rise at midnight and read *Bhagavad-gita*.

I cherish the desire that whatever I write can be worthy. It doesn't matter to me whether every word is worthy, or even every page, but at least out of hundreds of pages, something can be found that's offerable.

There are two ways to achieve that end. Either I can write with skill and craft, draft after draft until the words are each jewels on the page, so the reader won't be able to put it down; or I can speak truth as often and with as many words and images as possible, hoping the reader will take it.

The risk of authorship is that those who love you know could betray you or simply outgrow you later. They could move on in their lives and no longer find your writing stylish. Where would that leave me? They could also begin to think you went too far, that the bridges between here and there were beginning to look shaky, and they could become afraid to follow. That happened to me when I was quite young. Murray and I wrote things that we wanted Harry Lewis to print. His father suggested to Harry that he shouldn't spend his money to print his friends' things, and we were dropped.

* * *

Do it for Krishna: that could cover a multitude of sins. How much abuse we have seen under that heading. Make your offering sincere.

And accept it when Krishna makes changes in your life. At some point, He may decide that I have lived the author's life to the fullest, but because I really do want to achieve love of God, it is better that I become simpler, more humble. From humility will come attentive chanting and hearing. Then He will show me that which may be hard to take at first. It will require courage and detachment to follow Him. It also requires courage and detachment to live boldly for Krishna, as an author or whatever other service designation, and to make the work and the results a sincere offering at His feet.

Anyway, I intend to keep going as long as I have permission. I made two small crayon drawings today "the first time in what seems like a long time. Where is that freedom? Someone thinks I paint every day, but I haven't touched paint in two months.

When I finish this I will dress Radha-Govinda in Their night outfits. Then I will bow down before Them and receive Their *darSana*. After that, I will go to bed. The room has no curtains, and it's still sunny at 7 p.m., so I wear an eye mask. We are still moving in.

April 15, 12:15 a.m.

Lord Krishna says He has many births, and so does Arjuna. So do we all. Krishna remembers all of them, but we do not. He has unlimited forms, and whenever He appears, His eternal devotees appear with Him to serve Him in various capacities. Of course, the Supreme Lord remains in His original form in the spiritual world, but for His mission in the material world, He incarnates in spiritual forms. In Bg. 4.5, Lord Krishna makes the point that He remembers while the *jivas* forget.

The Supreme doesn't have to protect Himself from the elements with an electrical heater. Neither does He spend sleepless nights because of physical weakness, nor does He have strange dreams that make no sense to anyone. Upon waking in a new house, He doesn't worry about the situation's impermanence, and He doesn't . . .

But at least I can rise and come to this page, thinking of Him. I am part of Him, but I have forgotten that relationship. Little by little I feel the memory being revived. Saying His names again and again helps.

"Although Arjuna is a devotee of the Lord, he sometimes forgets the nature of the Lord, but by the divine grace a devotee can at once understand the infallible condition of the Lord, whereas a nondevotee or a demon cannot understand this transcendental nature. Consequently these descriptions in the *Gita* cannot be understood by demonic brains." (Bg. 4.5, purport)

Learn about the Supreme Lord, not just about yourself. In all the world's literature, and it is vast, there is much about the self. There is also a healthy amount written about God. But there is almost nothing on His actual nature, His personality, or recording of the words that He Himself spoke to describe Himself. Then appreciate the rarity of what we have been given in Prabhupada's books. Protect your faith in that by hearing from them regularly.

Commenting on Bg. 4.6 (*ajo 'pi sann avyayatma*), Srila Prabhupada writes, "In other words, Krishna appears in this material world in His original eternal form, with two hands, holding a flute. He appears exactly in His eternal body, uncontaminated by the material world." This is the type of statement that is mocked by *mudhas*. Krishna knows about them and names them in Bg. 9.11. It is "too much" for them to hear that God is Gopinatha. Therefore, we refrain from telling them.

Lord Krishna's unique appearance and disappearance are evidence that He is not an ordinary living entity, and that "He is eternal, blissful knowledge by His internal potency" and He is never contaminated by material nature." Krishna appears in this world in His original form to bestow upon us His causeless mercy so that we can concentrate on Him as He is.

* * *

4:31 a.m.

Singing the *mangala-arati* song. I am not at Prabhupada's Samadhi Mandir at 4:15 a.m. amid heavy *sannyasis* and my own agitated thoughts. Neither am I at RadhadeSa, Belgium, leading the singing and praying not to suddenly forget the words. I am standing on the unvarnished floor of my new house (new toy?) singing the praises of guru and Krishna because I want to.

It is Wednesday, and Radha-Govinda are wearing purple and white. Krishna carries His silver buffalo horn, and of course, His flute. His earrings are made of white crystals. And Radha "beautiful. They appear to be smiling. I bathe Them in warm water that I get downstairs in the dark to fetch, chanting Hare Krishna as I go. Then I return to Them and wash Their limbs with a paper towel dipped in the water. As I do this, I listen to *Vidagdha-madhava*. I am up to the part where Radha presents Krishna a garland of *gunja* berries. In His bewilderment of love, Krishna appears to reject the garland "and the stirrings of *rasa* ensue.

Prabhupada wears a prototype gray Indian *cadar* and a saffron scarf wrapped around that, crossed over his chest. Prabhupada, whom I heard on tape when I was in the bathroom. He was telling the story of the thief who was eager to go to Vrndavana because he had heard that Krishna wore costly jewels. Then Srila Prabhupada spoke on Rupa Gosvami's verse about how Krishna is standing in the moonlight; if we want to continue our pursuit of worldly life, it is best we don't go see Him because He will steal our minds. He shouted out the word "*lauilyam!*" as the price required to purchase love of God. Hare Krishna. My spiritual master.

This room is painted saffron with a hint of red. They painted another room yellow, and another a lighter shade of saffron. Caitanya-candrodaya chose those colors; he is sensitive to color and environment. Aniruddha built the decorative railing on the second floor to prevent people from falling over the landing. He also poured the cement wall that surrounds the property. M. wished that Aniruddha had worked on the things I needed first "the floor, the shelves, and the electrical fittings in this room. But he is a volunteer, and it seems that none of the workers (except the paid ones) wanted to work under a foreman. Caitanya-candrodaya said that ISKCON is like that nowadays "everyone does just what they want to do.

Do not go to see Govinda playing His flute, with His body curved in three places, unless you want to lose your heart. Govinda is the Aghastya Muni who drank up the ocean of the *gopis'* chaste vows to their husbands. He wants to embrace difficult-to-achieve Radharani. Radha is also the name of a star, and means "worship."

The *gopas* and *gopis* use these meanings to make humorous puns as they joke and play in Vrndavana. Games of costly, heartfelt love; games from which the greatest mystics and *tapasvis* are excluded because they lack that pure, intense love for Krishna.

This early morning *puja* is special to me. I don't always want to begin, but once I do, it transports me to a different realm of consciousness. I want that realm in which I am serving radha and Krishna and hearing from devotees who worship Them as the perfection of their meditation.

The perfection of singing is to sing of Them. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. *This* is my Krishna, that charming boy. "O talkative *gopi*, do not criticize my friend Krishna in this way. O Jatila, whitened with age, do not criticize my noble friend."

"Yes," Krishna says, "I have done nothing wrong. I am a *brahmacari*. It is your *gopis* who have polluted the forests of Vrndavana with their joking and by stealing the flowers."

Finally, I have nothing left to say.

O Lord of the Universe, please be kind to us. We have run out of currency. We don't even have any more dreams. Please, Lord, protect us.

I wear my boots indoors. I
score the fifth "I mean to say
I make sense and
don't accuse me of being *avant-garde* or worse,
a deviant. I am as straight in Krishna consciousness as anyone else.

Someone told me that about myself. "The real thing," he said, "is your private nature. Who *are* you? Are you a lover of Radha and Krishna? Are you a *sannyasi* preacher? Are you really so pure, with no other more mundane self? Do you pray in your garden of Gethsemane? I sure hope so."

Well, even if I don't win any competitions, this has been fun.

* * *

Suave Ways
& She said be on guard and don't expect us
to follow your cause. Scattered
pencils on this worker's desk.

* * *

Is that obscure? Then make it clear.
The sound of the kazoo "play it
if that's all you've got.
But make it clear.

* * *

Beware, he said, I'm on guard.
Then letting go he got beyond sleep
and listened for his brother to give him the
next boost in his Krishna conscious life.

* * *

Here in *Bhagavad-gita* Krishna tells us
of Himself, and you know what?
He didn't let the thief steal His jewels.
He knew His mother would be angry.
Rather, He captivated the thief
who then moved to Vrndavana
a devotee "a heartless thug
who would kill a child for
his money.

* * *

I'm in with all the
latest, M. is going to town
after breakfast to buy a kitchen sink,
stove, bed, nails,
hails. I asked for a bulletin board
so I could pin up my paintings
of green men and hairy-chested
Hare Krishnas with toes and
slogans. In town he'll see an immigration
lawyer on my behalf, and accost the
take-away pizza counter
at Govinda's restaurant, buy, if
he has time, an electric heater,
a plumb operator "and get back
to work with the electric cement
mixer, upon which we pay
each day.

* * *

If he has any time left in town
he'll inquire into how and when
boys wore knickers and come to understand
the passion of life and paint.

* * *

Krishna says many lives both you
and I have passed and I remember
them, but you do not.

* * *

I'll stay here in suave ways
serving the Supreme Lord Krishna. "

* * *

10:20 a.m.

I started reading *The Cloud of Unknowing*. It is reputed to be an impersonalist book, teaching meditation on God stripped of images, etc. But I don't think that's a fair assessment. It's about *bhakti* and a simplified method of being with Krishna. Even if it were impersonal, a personalist could learn something from the meditation method being taught and personalize his own prayer. The anonymous fourteenth-century author of *The*

Cloud believes in Jesus Christ and his Father, the Almighty God. He believes it's good to think of God's mercy, of the Passion of Christ, and of one's sins and unworthiness. But when it's time to contemplate, one should put spiritual reasoning aside and turn to God in love. "Love may reach God, but not knowing."

"A naked intent directed to God, without any other desire than Him alone, is all that is required. And if you want to sum up just what this intent is, and to remember it more clearly, then choose any small word . . . For example, 'God' or 'Love' . . . Then cling onto it so that it is fixed forever within you, come what may."

Intriguing to read *about*, but can I practice it? Seems like a great attitude to assume during *japa*.

* * *

Madhu has gone to Dublin for a shopping spree. It's amazing how unequipped we are to live in this house. The kitchen has four unpainted walls and a cement floor. There aren't even any fixtures. The bathroom has only cold water and leaky faucets, and another cement floor. We could better use it as a walk-in refrigerator. There is no heat in the house except what can be generated by the portable electric space heaters we have borrowed.

But it feels like home. The major defect here is not the lack of amenities but my own uncertainty whether I will be able to stay here after all this endeavor, whether my taste for this life will remain.

* * *

12:10 p.m.

Head vise tightening. With pen poised in air, I hear someone arrive, walk up the stairs (they were built too small, for a child's stride), and knock softly on my door. It's Aniruddha. He says an electrician is coming at noon. (It's already past noon. No electrician.) This man will check the work done by the other electrician and give us the permit "is it okay that he come? I tell Aniruddha I don't want the man in my room while I am honoring *prasadam*. He shouldn't see me sitting on the floor in front of the *choki*, the Deities with Their small plates before Them. Aniruddha says he had already told him I was a monk and didn't talk much. We both agree to the conditions, and another adventure ends.

I'm reading EJW 5, edited for publication. I like it! Give us more. I don't want to get to the end. Our hero is reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and feeling close to Srila Prabhupada in Co. Wicklow, just as I am doing a year later. He was on a good roll then, surrendering to whatever section was next in the *Bhagavatam* and savoring what he could.

I also like how the writing flows into fragments, the alpha poems spelling "Swami," and the reminiscences of my days with him. I like the jokes too. Boy, I was sure on friendly terms with myself, wasn't I? I like the morning walks and the descriptions of the forest trails, seeing deer and dead and live rabbits. I like the life.

Where is that electrician? Where is my *lunch*?

* * *

3:10 p.m.

Things have quieted down now that the electrician has come and gone. I took an Esgic, and the pain too has quieted. The house is again empty. Lord Krishna, the Supreme Person, is eternally existing and never forgetful or in any ignorance; there is no limit for Him. He controls everything, and He is inclined to award liberation and a place in His eternal pastimes for those who approach Him with a loving service mood. Arjuna forgets; Krishna does not. Krishna appears in the world in His spiritual form. His purpose here is to correct the decline of religion. Think of Him as He has described Himself.

"It is not a fact that the Lord appears only on Indian soil." He can appear anywhere. And His mission is the sankirtana culture would spread around the world. "The devotees of Lord Krishna are very much attracted by the *sankirtana* movement of Lord Caitanya. This *avatara* of the Lord does not kill the miscreants but delivers them by His causeless mercy." (Bg. 4.8, purport)

* * *

3:28] Writing in Time

Purport by Swamaji; reading by yours truly. Lord Krishna is Bhagavan. We think of *bhakti* and *bhakta*. There are three kinds of *bhagavatas*. Learn the theology.

Calm yourself and categorize, cauterize the wound. remember Krishna through a simple word, and an even simpler intent to love only Him. These heart and will inclinations toward God may seem like small sparks off a greater fire of apparent selfishness, but we shouldn't ignore even one of them. rather, we should fan them into flame.

Krishna, Krishna.

O Krishna, You appeared in Mathura. They ask, "Have you seen God? Can you show me God?"

Yes, He is in Mathura. He is everywhere.

"But you have to receive training if you wish to see Him."

For example, anyone can look at a car engine, but only a mechanic understands its inner workings and knows how to fix it. If it takes a trained person to really see a car engine, how much more true is that of seeing God? Such a person is trained to see through the eyes of *prema*, and his ears are trained to hear the *sastras* with faith.

A God conscious person represents God well. I'm inclined to become one, but have a long way to go. Therefore I write in this quiet hour.

I hear an engine droning somewhere outside. Maybe it's the dehumidifier in the kitchen. Clock ticking. I can almost hear my own pulse, but the scratching of the pen overpowers it.

I intend to go into the yard in wellies and sunshine after this. Perhaps someone will see the silent monk behind the cement wall. Like that electrician "when he looked at my *dhoti* with his slow look, I felt his assessment. He did not give me the quick once-

over of the jaded but the slow look of the rural. He reminded me of the people in India who stare at something strange with open curiosity and no trace of embarrassment. The electrician didn't speak to me directly; Aniruddha took care of him. Because I'm supposed to be absorbed in prayer and religious thoughts, besides the fact that I'm a Yank and therefore naturally apart.

Anyway, I think he will give us the permit. Now get the work done. Hare Krishna.

Working around the clock. We learn that only Krishna can deliver us. All glories to the Lord of the Universe. You know what I mean?

Now in excelsis, let's free-write. Gray pepper sweater "made in Ireland." M. said it's straightforward: every year the Justice Department renews my visa, and after five years (or something), I can apply for permanent residency. Will I become as permanent as a rock or hill? No, silly. But as long as you live, and other conditions and laws remain the same "that permanent. If trouble comes, ask the Irish congregation to rise and demand that I be allowed to stay.

Then he said . . . Okay, I'll chant, and if I have to leave here, I'll still chant. I can get writing materials anywhere.

I'd like to show my EJW color slides on Sunday. The children would like it more than a lectures. I plan to ask them to illustrate covers for my homemade collection of daily manuscript pages.

Krishna, Krishna, Krishna. Seventeen minutes have passed "three more to go. Caranaravinda should be by to pick up the lunch dishes. Maybe my mail will have arrived from America. Otherwise I expect nothing more from this day.

I couldn't sleep last night; the eye mask was creating an uncomfortable pressure on my eyelids. Too much sunlight in the room, though, and it will only increase in the coming weeks. Maybe we can get curtains at some point. I still got up at midnight for my precious tryst with Krishna. He gives continuity to my life, which would otherwise be like a rudderless ship. Lord Krishna steers me. I can't meditate on Him on my own. I accept His help. All glories to the Lord of the Universe.

Time is up.

3:48 p.m.

* * *

After reading Poets
I've read enough and it's 5 o'clock.
Speak up before the cock
crows thrice. Peter denied
lied that he ever knew his Christ.

* * *

I'd never deny I love you so
others may flee but I'll never go.
Protect my *bhakti*, and here's a poem
don't think this service is just on loan.

* * *

He protests and walks in a little yard
clockwise, stepping over wires
cables and a burnt-out fire
plaster and the cement mixer "
the mess. He can't really write
can only confess.

* * *

May Krishna be kind, may we win the war
against *maya* and not be attracted by whores;
may the doors stay shut may the
moon bless my sleep
so I can wake after 12 and go straight
to *Bhagavatam's* weight.

* * *

In disgust at this farce, I let myself
off. I don't complain although I know
I'm low. God is here, drink
no beer, disturb no quarry
and manpower pool "no slaves
to serve me. But I follow the rules
even when alone.

* * *

Night Notes, 6:22 p.m.

No one came to pick up the lunch dishes, and I never heard the electrician's final decision. But there's a nice *parikrama* path outside the house. It reminds me of the one at Krishna-Balaram Mandir.

Although M. roadblocked it with a heap of rocks, I asked Aniruddha if he could clear them. He built a nice wall around the property, but devotees have already cracked it by backing the van into it. I also asked Aniruddha to heal the wall.

April 16, 12:20 a.m.

"One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna." (Bg. 4.9) If we really knew and could feel what was at stake here, we'd embrace this *Sloka* and take appropriate action. *Nivrtta-tarsair upagiyamanad*. We'd take that medicine which is actually the nectar of immortality. Liberation means to know God, the Supreme Person. But we don't seem so eager to hear

about Him; we think we are already too familiar with these topics. Those who are not familiar usually aren't interested either. As Krishna states, "One who knows Me is very rare."

Any other study, meditation, or work is like licking the outside of the honey bottle.
Who am I preaching to?

Myself. Mildly reasoning with myself for my own good. No point haranguing myself, or even berating myself. Find this understanding and surrender within the beating of my heart "that's what I want. "One should therefore cultivate Krishna consciousness with faith and knowledge, and in this way attain perfection."

* * *

Someone asked me whether writing a diary is useful. I write one in order to keep asking myself to take Krishna seriously. Unfortunately, I always seem to have to report, "I didn't do it again." I'm sorry, but I can do nothing more than make the constant attempt to surrender, to ask myself, cajole myself, sometimes even remind myself only gently "and remember that I have not as yet achieved pure devotion. That means I have not fully realized the potential of my human life.

Besides that, I want to be a literary man, although it is second to my desire for pure devotion. I write to help myself. Preliminary devotional service means coping, focusing my attention, fixing my goal, uncovering my false ego, gaining mental equanimity despite disturbance, etc. Writing the diary allows me to achieve all of those purposes at once.

The problem of personal failure doesn't go away. I have learned to live with it. That's why I can only publish the struggle and not much of the victory over it.

"Being freed from attachment, fear and anger, being fully absorbed in Me . . . " I look at the Sanskrit synonyms to be sure that that "to Me" was actually stated and was not added by Srila Prabhupada. I feel comforted that Krishna *is* explicitly saying, "*mat-maya mam*," "In Me, in Me," and, "*mad-bhavam*," "transcendental love for Me." "Many, many persons in the past became purified by knowledge of Me "and thus they attained transcendental love for Me." (Bg. 4.10) These are symptoms of one who is advancing. Many have achieved such love; we can too. We are no exceptions. But if we resist His mercy, we will fall prey to the three diseases listed "attachment, fear, and anger.

I know this purport well. Even before I read it, I can recite the points: those who are attached to the material concept of life and who cannot expand their minds to accommodate the spirit beyond matter are afraid of retaining personhood (as Krishna's servants) in the next life "that old fear of being reborn even as a devotee in the spiritual world where you "have to" do as you are told and suffer the same old ego trips inflicted on us by others, and the shocks that flesh is heir to, the anger those things generate, etc. "these are the diseases.

* * *

4:35 a.m.

I knew you were happy to have done your *puja*. You entered into it. Your mind and consciousness go deeper as you hear *Vidagdha-madhava*. Radharani cannot accept Her

great fortune. She thinks Krishna has rejected Her (because He apparently rejected the garland She had offered). She is so distraught that She speaks of giving up Her life. Purnamasi, Lalita, and ViSakha console Her. They tell Her that Krishna is actually so much in love with Her that He is bewildered. He is so bewildered that He doesn't even know where His peacock-feathered crown and flute are. Madhumangala confirms, by touching Krishna's chest, that He has become feverish in His desire to attain Srimati Radharani. Krishna also behaves as if He were bewildered. ViSakha teases Him, saying that Abhimanyu has taken Radha to Mathura. Thus Krishna and Radha manifest Their great love for one another in *purva-raga*.

Warm water soaks into the paper towel, and I gently wash Their bodies. Then I dry Them with a "man-sized" tissue, careful to dry any moisture. Their bodies glow with a soft, golden shine.

I look forward to seeing Madhu this morning. I heard him return last night when the door banged at 10:30 p.m. He probably purchased the sink, stove, and fridge. Maybe other things too. A rug would be good for the open space in this room. I'm getting more into the mood, allowing myself to think of ways to make this house nicer. No, I'm not living under a tree like a *gosvami*; I'm thinking of a rug. I'm also aware that we are playing at housekeeping that could last no more than a month. Of course, we're hoping it will be more long-term. But who knows? Therefore, I write while things happen so nothing will be lost no matter where we end up. Hare Krishna. May the holy names of Radha and Krishna bestow on me all good fortune, and may I attain Their lotus feet.

* * *

I say I like to write in the very recent past, about what I thought a few minutes ago, or about what just transpired. I am constantly looking for other books that follow that model, such as Miller's *Tropic of Cancer*. The diary genre is the natural province of the very recent past. It maintains the glow of the moment. Thoreau said that one should write down what happens as soon as possible. He compared it to the red hot iron in the blacksmith's shop. Every moment lost to hesitation means the iron will be that much cooler, that much less effective as expression. Other writers have said they prefer to write in calm after emotions have passed.

The two electric space heaters keep this room warm. The hallway immediately outside this room, however, is quite cold. Today is the day they are supposed to work "Madhu and two paid laborers" with the electric cement mixer. They are going to make a drain and do some touch-up work. I'll be here, plying my trade.

Hare Krishna.

Hand lotion.

Captain Midnight. remember Terry and the Pirates? *Les Editions François*. The books in bookstore windows. I used to feel such excitement to open a piece of great literature and see how the author managed to capture life. Those writers! Why do I think they possess a great secret or key to artistic and religious existence that I don't have? Why did I think I could follow them and be happy? I thought I would live forever on such intoxicating ambrosia. But I was wrong. And my secondary hopes "beautiful women and excellent jazz" proved just as futile. Because everything was so temporary, even then.

People will come and serve me and give me what I need, and I will serve them and give them what they need. Slide show on Sunday. Give them Krishna. Be a poet, but love Krishna.

* * *

If You Believe in Me
& I know you like me and I like you
and we're gonna have a deathbed scene at
the end. Fergus and his brother rode in the hearse
to their dad's funeral. They said, "We've always
seen it from the outside, but now . . . "
Yeah, but wait until *you*
Ride as the star of that show. But you won't
notice because
you'll be gone.
"First you catch me, and
then you can put me
in the grave."

* * *

Let's dance a new one.
Who's playing horn?
Who's that darling girl "is her name
Anne? Percy-fer, her name is legion.

* * *

Or taffeta skirt, and you
the handsomest jokester.
Our hero's name is Krishna
the hard-bop deliverer
of strong-gentle night eyes
Rolling in love.

* * *

We don't forget. I told you a friend named
Nick Stabulas died in a car accident "
not a friend, an acquaintance,
a drummer I knew.
He was "I'll tell you another time
when we're together in person.

* * *

But it's good to sing of the times
and have the elegies proper then
step down your mouth
full of clay
not cruel but
forgotten
although you are lost
in your original self, eternal servant
of God
and happy in that.

* * *

Smokin' *kirtanas*
nonstop *prasadam*
happy *bhaktas*
(we call 'em cute)
from central Europe
and you-name-it places pouring
forth their trickle of
newcomers
who want
nectar and to say "It's awesome."
But I'll be gone
with a wink
print my books "

* * *

He Gave Me the right
& Faster.
Hey, some guy wants to see your draft card.
Well, let him see my crow's feet
and hear how I've learned to sing
since I was 22, although my moves have slowed.

* * *

Srila Prabhupada on Juhu with wranglers:
"Mr. Shah, what do you say?"
They put in a good word
for Mayavadis, but he smashes
them good.

* * *

"After reading *Bhagavad-gita*, if still
you say you don't believe there was ever
a person, Krishna, then you
are a *rascal*. Wouldn't you agree, Mr.
Shah?" He didn't seem to.

* * *

Blow hard and tell me
your province in free-writing
down the pike. I
got a new bed "
I'll sleep for Krishna
24 hours a day and meditate.

* * *

Radha calls Krishna "Beloved"
and writes Him the secret
of Her love in a letter written
in red rose ink.
Then She wanders off to a certain hill. "

* * *

Aniruddha worked in my room for two hours, displacing me. When I returned, I was off schedule and moody. The forwarded mail also arrived. It contained a letter from Bhurijana Prabhu. He says he'll be in England in June and could visit me, but maybe that would be too taxing for me. I want him to come, but he's right about the strain. He's one of the few persons with whom I like to spend time, and with whom I can discuss sensitive issues. It's just so soon after moving into this house.

Bhurijana writes that he is keeping a private diary.

I also heard that China is a political and economic heavyweight, Clinton is still fighting against scandal, and the Boy Scouts of America won a legal case in defending their right to bar homosexuals from holding the Eagle Scout status. They are also allowed to discriminate against atheists and agnostics in their membership, since they are a private, basically Christian organization. ISKCON is like that too.

Lawyers, lawyers. Threats of disruption. Even if I don't get disrupted, I may become morose, thinking I have nothing to offer. Keep writing, friend. It's imperative you keep it up.

Before this morning's disruption, I was thinking of starting a new free-writing series called "Hand Writ" "something I've done before. It's basically a timed writing exercise, like "Writing in Time," but it has the angle of allowing the hand itself to be the expressive entity. I ask my body, especially my hand, to draw out or ease words from my pen. It's an attempt to do the more automatic (unconscious) form of expression. This is supposed to provide a more surreal result. Now with the disruption I seem to have

forgotten the idea of "Hand Writ" or I don't want it. But wait . . . it *did* come and you were enthusiastic. If I wait for the conscious mind to reflect from the intellect, I don't write as much as I'd like to. I often can't think of anything to say. But there always *is* something to say.

* * *

Hand Writ, 9:50 a.m.

Imagine a fat pen held in the hand. You ask it to write, to talk. Something a little different.

The hand is like a Ouija board. It doesn't want only to play with rhythms or soundalikes "the body likes to express itself. The hand "the thumb and fingers are coldish, the body realizes it's a sex organ. The body doesn't have to make sense, doesn't even have to be Krishna conscious, because it's made of matter.

You control the body with the intelligence. The body wants only peace, ease, freedom until death. The body doesn't want to speak only English but to force issues out of its pores, find itself naked, and to find healing or just health.

O Krishna.

A list from my hand:

1. Pinochle (how do you spell that card game?).
2. rehearsals.
3. Girls I loved; scandals a la Clinton.
4. Deprize, defrock, expurgate "stop here.

A voice in my hand asks, "Why don't you allow yourself to speak more about sex? Didn't you say the body was a sex organ?"

Because I'm a monk. The topic is not open for discussion.

"Doesn't that go against the principle of body-honesty? How can you write from the body without addressing the body's issues? I mean, you say you want to be open, but here you are, saying 'No discussion.'"

Did I say that? I mean no negotiation. I don't want to discuss anything that will stimulate a material desire I have already given up. That would be against my serious purpose in this life. Similarly, I don't discuss intoxication with an eye to remembered enjoyment because I'm following the symptoms of *Saranagati* "avoiding all those things that are unfavorable to my Krishna consciousness.

"Then what?"

Hare Krishna. Hand, just move. Make loops and be satisfied with that. Perhaps you can't talk. You will stop one day regardless of what you have left to say. But hand, don't be my organ of doubt; be an organ of assertion. Don't relax, but grip this pen. Feel the strain of Krishna wanting to come through the pen.

I read some Kafka in Harman's new translation, published by Shoken Books. Scholars have rediscovered him, or at least begun to see him in a new light. His voice rings in my head too, but doesn't seem to want to drip down into the pen.

O hand, serve Krishna. Keep hold of that live wire in the moment of Krishna thought. When you feel His presence, hand, fold your palms and pray.

Ouija hand, avoid the palsy of doubt. Keep control of your muscles and use them for selfless service. You have the power to kill another, to commit self-abuse, to sign a bad check, to accept bad money. You have no conscience when I separate you from my body, so you can have your own agenda. I am only trying to get to know you, hand, so give me five more minutes of your time.

Or help yourself "go *finger* the beads. Like a carpenter using a plane, the hand cuts into the wood of this paper. Like a musician stopping the frets, the hand avoids the pain of material life. Those beads . . .

* * *

12:05 p.m.

A few months ago, I wrote to a Godbrother whom I thought wanted to live a life of quiet *bhajana* in one place. His ISKCON authorities, however, were criticizing him and pushing him to travel more. He wrote about his health problems and how they are worsened by travel, meetings, and too much management. I replied, "If you feel it is more conducive to your health and mental peace to live in that place, then I don't see any reason why it's wrong to do so."

I have just received another letter from him. He writes, "The problem with myself is that if I stay in one particular place, attachments can develop, and this can be a little dangerous. I found that when I was traveling, it was favorable for fostering detachment. I think I have to learn to become more detached from my material facilities, disciples, and so on."

Of course, I know about that danger, and I have experienced it myself in the past. I don't want to claim I'm beyond such dangers now. One must be particularly careful about associating too familiarly with women disciples, because they are the ones who seem to come forward to do most of the personal services. But the other side, as this devotee also mentions, is that we have to be careful not to become attached to physical and mental amenities; they dull the edge of renunciation.

Nevertheless, I have set myself on a certain course with this house, and I can only pray for protection. Now we are struggling to provide ourselves with basic amenities. I pray that I'm at a stage where I can use all this in Krishna's service and not become entangled by it.

* * *

3 p.m.

I decided to give the second volume of *A Poor Man reads the Bhagavatam* a time in my schedule. I have to give it one of the slots in which I would read one of Prabhupada's books. Otherwise, I don't see how I will find the time to read it. I don't think that's so bad "it's a serious book, and it contains a retelling of what Srila Prabhupada wrote in his purports. I'm up to the third chapter of the First Canto, the section where Vyasadeva states how we confuse spirit with matter. In the book, I admit that my understanding of the ABCs of spiritual life is theoretical. Still, without acting on our understanding, we will not gain realization.

I write in PMrB that "it is horrible" to look within and see how many material desires we still have. Horrible? The word seems too strong. I wrote that a few years ago, and since then, I feel I have grown more mellow and self-accepting. It's almost as if I want to give myself a break.

But I don't want to stop being honest. The fact is, I don't really think it's so horrible that I'm not a pure devotee. I have come to expect that of myself. And of others. I'd *rather* be pure, but I'm not.

Yes, I guess it's horrible, but somehow I'm not that horrified. I am more horrified when I see the ugly, naked face of material nature in its cruelty "when I see one wild animal eat another, or one human being harm another. That's especially true if I'm the victim. That's horrific.

What about my lack of love for God, and the likelihood that I will not return after this life to Krishnaloka? Isn't this *most* horrible?

"Oh," we say with a shrug, "it could be worse."

* * *

I can hear someone using a pickax outside. The two hired men put in a full day's work. Soon, we will have to return the cement mixer. M. says I'll have a clean path on the *parikrama* path soon.

A Godbrother may visit Ireland this weekend "so far it's just a rumor. If he does come, I won't meet him here at the house. It's too much of a construction site, and it's too early in our living here for the full description to be sent around the movement.

Another dear Godbrother writes to ask me whether it would be too much of a strain for me if he visits. I will probably have to admit that it would be, as much as I would like to see him.

The next *Srimad-Bhagavatam* verse (1.3.32) states that the subtle body is beyond the gross, but the spirit soul is beyond even the subtle. Learn of it through the *sastras*. We don't have to measure everything through our sense perception. In PMrB I write, "Spiritual processes are not dogmatic." But in sense, they are. They are axiomatic.

Christians use the word *dogma* with respect; it signifies the creed or theology. The dogma contains the codes of the religion. The dogma is meant to be followed.

But *dogma* has a less respected usage: "A positive, arrogant assertion of opinion." That's the meaning I intended when I wrote, "Spiritual processes are not dogmatic." In other words, don't be arrogant but humble when you apply spiritual processes. But dogma or doctrine "whatever we choose to call it" is fact. Srila Prabhupada asserted this in everything he wrote: the *sastra* speaks the truth. Therefore, we must learn to walk the fine line between an arrogant defiance of other's opinions and the assertion that Vedic axioms are true for all. We want to argue the point because this is Krishna's opinion, not our own. But not out of arrogance.

The dictionary also defines *dogma* as "Asserted a priori, or without proof." We devotees sometimes argue that the atheist is the dogmatic one. He blindly believes his conclusions without reference to "a doctrine or body of doctrines formally and authoritatively affirmed." An atheist doesn't trust higher knowledge.

Of course, because he doesn't trust higher knowledge, it's difficult to argue with him. Immediately we will fight. We say he must accept some sort of authority when formulating his ideas; he doesn't agree.

But let me leave this debate for now, because to be honest with you, I don't want to sound dogmatic in my attack upon the atheists. *I accept brahma-Sabda as the best proof, and I feel bad for those who don't.*

One last point: the word *dogma* comes from *dokein*, "to seem good." Yes, it seems good; it *is* good.

From PMrB, "When he [the *Bhagavatam* speaker] exerts his energies to make a lecture interesting, we can't say that he is acting only in an official capacity; he's being creative. We can't say he's only dogmatic." (PMrB, Vol. 2, p. 34)

* * *

Writing in Time

Writing in time. There is no way a man is unaffected by the sounds he hears. We want to be Krishna conscious, not bluesy, groovy fellows, but I want to tell you one thing: this is a noisy house. That saw keeps cutting, and the pickax keeps chopping. I already told you that a few brothers might come and visit, and that the mail arrived. "Another person, another human being," says M., upon receiving a letter from Kalindi in six different colors. She said, "Violin . . ." I want only to tell you that I'm the fellow who wants to be a devotee, and when a man meets me, I will talk. When alone, however, I answer the mail.

The desk light isn't working. Oh, and I got one letter from Maine and four from Guyana. Some people think I'm important, some forget me entirely, and vice versa. We're all moving along in the river of life and death. We can make sounds, *avant* and otherwise, but Krishna is our target.

I'd like to feel that *I'm* not the target
at least of an investigation.

I'd like to say I could be a hero, but now Madhava says I can send him goodies on tape, but only some can be distributed. Fine with me.

They'll put my bed together soon. I pray to sleep in peace and dream if I must, and may the day come when I can be more empowered. If I had stronger health, I'd have to consider going for the preaching prize rather than telling the folks from here.

* * *

Pause. This is a free zone. The news of the U.S. president as philanderer isn't assuring but "don't worry, I'll stay apart from it. Back to my master, who never did such things. That's why we can get *bhakti* from him; he said that.

But no more pauses on the path; this is a no-parking zone and the *sastras* do declare, after all, that Krishna is God. Chant and hear. Chant and hear.

* * *

If I were a bell, I'd ring loud and clear, telling people about Prabhupada. That would make me happy. I'd ring on the hour and the half-hour, and souls would recall Srila Prabhupada's last days.

Our own last days.

We want to go to Vrndavana at that time, but we don't know when "that time" is. Others just want to keep score up until the end.

Krishna, Krishna "a gun shoots a bear in an amusement center. The Krishna section wants to be heard, the congregation swelling the ranks of their institution and beyond like the Lord in His majesty filling the world.

I'm writing from

Funny Face, thinking of

the sufferings of a person like X,

who lives in a forensic hospital

doing what she can.

She writes and I write back with care.

Of an afternoon, I can tell you that much.

Hare Krishna, they say. Did you hear

we sold our furniture? Sold

our uncle? He said,

"When I'm not at work, I'm happy to read

in my *kutira*."

Is he? Does he hear the bell?

If I were a bell, I'd ring as limited as a Japanese haiku

butterfly on bell

sunny day

in September "

give the echo of

the bell within

the bell.

But preachers are more explicit, aren't they? Preachers are supposed to ring to call the people to gather for the sermon. Preachers want to tell others how to improve their lives.

It seems, however, that we will not be able to spread the Hare Krishna mantra so widely in this world of madly contesting powers "guns and money and good looks and electoral votes and more money . . .

But if Truth wins, we'll have a better chance. Because Krishna is absolutely true. Temple bell ringing "yeah, I want to be that.

* * *

Someone is drilling with a power tool while late sunlight is coming through the skylight. We don't have to drive ourselves or knock our buttons off. Just chant Hare Krishna. A simple devotee just chants and puts all else aside.

4:53 p.m.

* * *

After reading Poets
He waited until the end of day
to chant most of his rounds
but there may still be a few good ones
Repeating the names rapid-fire
looking for quality to count "that naked
quality of intent.

* * *

They are sawing out there with electric power
so I have to become worthy if I want
to use this shelf. He made a bed
and is now assembling it
so let me sleep with that same naked intent
to serve and love God
even though it's hard sometimes
to overcome the present.

* * *

I think by living almost alone behind
a cement wall I'll find myself
in peace. We are all different so
my path too may not be the same
as the paths of others. All are meant
though, to please Him
and it's crazy to think we'll be pure
effuse grace or quiet strength
when we don't know the nature
of this course.

* * *

I love to see ink on my fingers
and hope to hear him chant his rounds
at day's end while I ask myself
whether I said mine
with nothing but love.

April 17, 12:07 a.m.

I am fortunate to be moving into this house. Someone may ridicule this move, saying that if I want to hold a house, I should also get a wife. But it's not like that. I simply want to have the best facility possible for my service before I die.

Reading Bg. 4.4 out loud. On one hand it seems too much to accept: "That Krishna is the Supreme authority is accepted by the whole world, not only at present, but from time immemorial, and the demons alone reject Him." If we substitute the word "God" for Krishna, it would be easier for me to think that the whole world accepts Him. Anyway, it doesn't matter. My job is to accept Srila Prabhupada blindly because I love him. There's no point trying to waffle on what he says. Keep reading, hearing what he says, and learn the *siddhanta*. Then I'll be able to present it well.

If some statements seem too much, maybe I need more time with them. In the meantime, let me give attention to the statements I can accept easily. Here's one: "Therefore, when Krishna Himself speaks about Himself, it is auspicious for all the world." When I hear that, I find it easy to abandon my critical intelligence and just hear what He says. Krishna is a great, venerable authority, accepted by great Vedic sages, and especially by Lord Caitanya and the Six Gosvamis. Let the magic work on me, breaking up the over-familiarity, the doubt, or the mind's plain dirt.

Remember this? "Lord Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So according to the statements of *Bhagavad-gita* or the statements of Arjuna, the person who was trying to understand the *Bhagavad-gita*, we should at least theoretically accept Sri Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and with that submissive spirit, we can understand the *Bhagavad-gita*." (Bg., Introduction, pp. 6 - 7)

Here's another one I like: Devotees "heartily welcome the statements of Krishna when they are spoken by Krishna Himself."

I have been thinking of speaking on *Bhagavad-gita* and the need to remember Krishna to the devotees here. I'll prepare by reading in advance, then improvise my lecture when it's time. But if I don't remember Krishna all the time, if I don't love Him as the main person in my life, I can only tell them how the *sastras* tell us to do that.

Still unpacking a box I had labeled for sweaters, sweatshirts, and sweatpants. My mind is still splayed out over such things. It's hard to be absorbed in *govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami* when you're going through a change.

Did I already tell you that some scholars are retranslating Kafka? Yes, I think I did. They just published their rendition of *The Castle*. It's supposed to prove that Kafka was more humorous and colloquial, "even playful," than we have known him. They also say he was a modernist, and that the mood of his work was obscured by a well-meaning but mistaken editor-friend. Of *course* I want to read him again!

Govindam adi-purusam.

I behave as if I have unlimited time or a special research license and can read whatever I like. Am I a *jnani* or a devotee? Am I trying to relive my days as an English Lit. major?

"One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna." (Bg. 4.9)

Then the mind races off, hopping, flickering. I decide to try my hand at *japa*. But *govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami*. O Govinda, please accept me.

* * *

I dreamt that I was at a temple where Prabhupada was. Many devotees surrounded him, as usual, hoping to get an opportunity to serve him. Prabhupada was about to go on a morning walk, but only a few devotees were able to accompany him. Prabhupada gestured to me, mentioning that there was a small stain on a table near him in the hall. I went to tend to it, glad he had asked me to do something. I discovered that Prabhupada was indeed perceptive, because the table was stained with honey or grease and was not immediately noticeable.

The next thing I knew, Prabhupada was going out. I wanted to go with him, but didn't have sufficient clothing. The next part of the dream was a nightmare of me searching for clothes to wear. I even considered stealing some, then decided against it. Anyway, I am left behind. I tried to catch up, and felt a deep frustration at having to be separated from Prabhupada. As I met the other devotees who were also separated from him, I began to look for my own conviction that I love him.

* * *

4:35 a.m.

Listening to *Vidagdha-madhava*. At the end of one act, radha and Krishna exit together to go to a pavilion in the Vrndavana forest. It's evening. Theirs is a pure exchange, but we are inept enough that we don't appreciate it. But we can hear it if we can control our minds. Our qualification to hear, even at the basic level, depends on our attitude. Hearing of Krishna and the *gopis* in Their *rasa* dance burns away the seeds of material lust. So states the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Still, it's risky to misunderstand.

A Godbrother wrote me that he's not reading anything but the *Bhagavatam*. He is chaste, he said. He used to read psychology or books on other religious ideas, but has given all that up. I still range out and take with me those who read these lines. A more sober devotee might not speak anything at all. Unless he is speaking a Sastric verse, he might consider he is speaking *prajalpa*.

Oh, tra-la-la. I am fighting off sleep at this time; there is no need to give into it right now. O Kana, dear Srimati Radharani . . . Lalita, ViSakha are expert in the way they try to convince Radha to enjoy with Krishna, but radha persists in Her *mana*. Everyone in Goloka is expert in their service, and thus in enhancing the Supreme Lord's pleasure pastimes. Fools cannot understand it.

O ViSakha, stop! O Lalita, stop! Then Mukhara arrives and thinks she sees Krishna trying to touch her granddaughter. ViSakha tells Mukhara that it isn't Krishna but the branches of a windblown tree. Mukhara cannot see well, so she accepts ViSakha's words. She says, "I feel agitated. I will go home now and go to sleep."

Sounds like me "unable to understand what is happening, and eager to take rest like an old person. I cannot take part in Krishna's boldness. Of course, Mukhara is a great person whose service is to enliven the *lilas* by creating obstacles which intensify the love of the Divine Couple. I am just an intruder in the soft and tender affair.

Slowly, things are getting done in the house. The rooms still have to be painted. Then we (I say "we," but I know it won't include me) have to convince the workmen to lay the linoleum. Once that gets done, "we" can install the kitchen equipment. But "we" have

run out of money. "We" have already run up a big bill at the hardware store. There's no money coming in. Somehow, the house is becoming more livable.

Aniruddha built more shelves in both rooms. Next he wants to repair the wall which was damaged by the van. He should put up the front gate too. Then we can take more of a stand against the world.

Yes, I heard how two schoolboys, one eleven and the other thirteen, killed some of their teachers and schoolmates in Arkansas. A Godbrother wrote me, mentioning that crime: "Kali-yuga is on the march." Krishna consciousness should increase its propaganda to save people. Do I believe it can? People killing themselves or being killed by the guns of madmen and mad children. I look at the calendar and count the minutes in terms of expression. I don't have to write from the more sensible side of myself; just let the words come. Let me fill this page as an artist fills a page with color. Because Kali-yuga is on the march.

And letters to world movers who should become devotees: "Dear So-and-so, I read your letter and admire your leadership in Borneo. There are few as beautiful and learned as you are. Although you are just a *jiva*, you manifest the symptoms of one near to God. Indeed, you show some of the qualities of God Himself, although in small part. Yes, I know you beat your wife and the eggs, and yes, you will be punished for those crimes, but in the meantime, use your considerable talents, money, and power to do some welfare work for a change."

So we advise those who seem to possess power. Do we mean, however, that they should invest their money in ISKCON? What if one of them takes us up on it, but we're fighting among ourselves in Ireland? Who will speak for us and present the united front?

But don't worry, they probably won't take us up on it.

I have to wait two days for the cement to dry. Then I will circumambulate this building and chant Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna.

Madhu could not sleep in his little house last night because of the paint fumes, so he snuggled next to an electric heater in this house.

Someone complimented me for loving to read Srila Prabhupada's books, although he thinks I should be more broad-minded in my appreciation of books written by other Gaudiya-sampradaya gurus. He calls them "equals to Srila Prabhupada." That's all right, but we're different, my brother and I.

* * *

8:40 a.m.

Hear, O Israel . . . that's the rhetoric. How long, O Lord, how long?

Bring breakfast on time, or I'll complain. Over something so petty?

O Krishna, can You empathize with we conditioned souls? We are only looking for our authentic selves.

"We gain self-realization not only when we engage in activities but when we take shelter of the Lord." (PMrB, Vol. 2, on *Bhag.* 1.3.33, purport)

I'll write to the man who fell down and is determined to right his wrongs. He says he wants to accept his penance. What would the *sastra* prescribe? He has already faced the external aspects of his crimes, asked forgiveness of those he has offended, and endured

the ordeal of a punishment decreed by the movement's leaders, but I wonder whether he has done the inner work.

I speak as if I knew. I cannot tell him, however, what that inner work is. *sastra* says *ceto-darpana-marjanam*, and *Srnavatam sva-kathah Krishnah*. What would I advise? If he is so taxed by the difficulties of his new situation, separated from the society of devotees, how will he find the time to dip deep in the ocean of self-purification? Anyway, who am I to tell him what to do, since I am not doing it so successfully myself.

Actions, even good ones, are not enough for us to become purified. We have to actually take shelter of Krishna. That begins with learning how we succumbed to *maya*, then understanding how we could have overcome our urges. "If we wrongly desire to enjoy material life, then Krishna will arrange for us to forget our eternal position. If we pray to revive our remembrance, however, then Krishna will remove the curtain that now covers our eyes." (PMrB, Vol. 2, p. 35)

In my PMrB, I wrote a long prayer to Srila Prabhupada (while in my room at ISKCON Mumbai), "asking him to allow me to write PMrB purely." Now I am writing this breakdown version of the same book, under a different name. Because that poor man became even poorer. He lost what little attention span he had to preach straight, verse after verse. Now he . . . I prayed, "Still it will be spoiled unless you enable me to write purely." Even *that* aspiration I have abandoned. Now I am satisfied to write daily. I no longer feel the need to utter that same prayer so often because "get this "everything is prayer. I'm stumbling in the desert, but I know where I'm going.

I ended my Mumbai room prayer before the Srila Prabhupada *murti*: "All I want is your causeless devotional service life after life." That's right. I mean, it's right *siddhanta*, a good Vaisnava prayer. But . . . do I truly want that? Don't want nothin'. Just this moment . . . Agh.

Madhu didn't give me clean *kaupins* today, so I'm wearing long underwear. But it's hot and itchy. Where am I this late morning? Is that Miami Beach out the window? Is someone coming to get me? Did he start out from a distant place and is now making a beeline for my door? Is it still 1 o'clock in Brahma's day? And if it's later than I think, if the winged shaft of death carrying my name is already in flight "will I change? And if I will, will it be only a superficial, emergency change, impelled by fear? O Lord, all I want is Your causeless devotional service life after life.

After the prayer, I put this into my book in bold print "Srila Prabhupada's exact translation of *Bhag.* 1.3.34: "If the illusory energy subsides and the living entity becomes fully enriched with knowledge by the grace of the Lord, then he becomes at once enlightened with self-realization and thus becomes situated in his own glory." I got it the first time I read it: This is something noble, eloquent, worth pondering.

I want to walk on the *parikrama* trail around the house, literary or not, except it's not ready. The cement needs another day to dry. They are going to a Galway Hare Krishna festival tonight. Shut your mouth here (on this page). Don't talk about others. Answer letters instead.

Repentance. repent! Tell that to the man writing you regarding his inner rectification. But why use *that* word? Of course, that man is repenting. Suggest it's something more

inner than he is yet aware of. I know that from experience, because I haven't found the depth of repentance myself.

* * *

Hand Writ, 10:15 a.m.

Concentrate on the hand. There it is, down there at the end. Extreme digits "extremity. Cold. Circulation doesn't reach easily. In death and relaxation, the hand curls. The left is more idle than the right. In typing and art I use both hands. The hand likes to speak, as do other parts of the body. Today my legs want me to know they are too hot, my head that it feels pain, that my right eye aches.

But the hand "I am most interested in the hand because it grips the pen. Am I overdoing it? No, let's give this a chance. It's no accident that God made the hand the writer instead of the toe or some other part. Think of it like *varnaSrama* labor divisions, and you'll see that the hand is the worker from whence words are meant to spring.

They asked me if I would like to garden. Maybe (another job for the hand), but then I thought of Seamus Heaney's poem in which he described his father working with a shovel while he worked with a pen.

To get the hand to move in Krishna consciousness takes concentration. The ears, for example, don't need much urging to hear. They are always at work, always ready to hear any sound that comes by. right now, they hear the nearby sheep complaining. Hand writ requires concentration. Although the brain condescends to the hand, it is the hand that carries the brain's messages to the page.

Touches. Now my hand, still gripping the pen "this pen full of ink "extend it toward the page. What does it want to say? "I like Swami Bhaktivedanta."

Oh.

Hare Krishna.

Don't be *too* literal. Move it as it would over a Ouija board "words coming as if from "nowhere," before there is time to contemplate what they should be, cooperating with the inner heart, moving toward praise of guru and Krishna.

O Krishna, please give me the permission to move my hand.

A poem: Hare Krishna falter "

halter

overalls Al

Galter of

Katan Ave.

Manual labor Emmanuel.

Proud. Fallen. Hand body

decay

burn

embalm

but not spirit.

Now endure

and live on.

My father built a breezeway and a garage from rejected bricks, *by his own hand*.
He built it with passion and devotion to his craft. He was a handyman.

Others handcrafted sweaters, baskets,
and some lose digits "fingers or parts of them "in machines. My Aunt Jo lost two.
Life is hard on hands. It's good to use hand lotion for drying skin or to set broken
hands in splints.

Will this hand lead us forward into a more Krishna conscious discussion now that we
have so closely defined it? We'll have to wait and see. I'm hopeful. Because the Hare
Krishna movement needs hands "deck hands, stage hands, and hand-to-hand fighters.
After all, Krishna shook the hand of Lord Brahma.

* * *

3:00 p.m.

"Thus learned men described the births and activities of the unborn and inactive,
which is undiscoverable even in the Vedic literatures. He is the Lord of the heart."
(*Bhag.* 1.3.35) The books alone cannot reveal Krishna's inner secrets "not to an
uninformed, bewildered reader. Such a reader needs a guru to show him the way. As he
serves, as he hears with faith, the truth of the *Vedas* are revealed.

Can you get lost (in a good sense) while reading PMrB? Yes, it's Srila Prabhupada's
book, Vyasadeva's *Bhagavatam* coming through. And the adventure of the sincere
author in *parampara*"yours truly "penning his way through. He takes us to inner
sanctums and let's us enter our own *darSana* with the Lord when he quotes Srila
Prabhupada: "We should always take advantage of the narrations of the activities of the
Lord, which are meditations on Brahman in the most convenient and palatable form." He
tells us he, the scribe, has arrived in America from India. He plans to live in a cabin in
Northwest Canada and continue losing himself in this courageous format of giving
a *Srimad-Bhagavatam Sloka*, purport gloss, and a glimpse into his free-write world.
We're with him. I'm embarrassed by his openness, writing from Strousburg (this is 1996)
" "O jazz men of my soul . . . " Yes, now I am busy at this desk in 1998 spinning around
on a plate

The *maha-bhagavata* thinks of *amogha-lila*: "There is nothing lamentable in His
creation." This will lift you above and away from atheists to realms of transcendental
knowledge. Live in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* atmosphere, enlarging it with your own
contribution of submission and love.

This April 17 is fleeting, and I'm alone in the house as rain tinkles on the skylight to
keep me company. As Madhu left for the festival, I realized I have learned to live on my
own. Don't be afraid of aloneness.

* * *

[3:35 Writing in Time

This is me and this is Pittsburgh.

(Is it?)

We listen to music sometimes and drive in cars, because the world beckons us. My
brothers fly in airplanes over the Irish Sea.

But it's better for me to be with *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and Krishna's world here. When we present Him to nondevotees, we feel challenged and refreshed.

But I stay home all the time.

Why? What is this, a vow to stay always within your gate? Playing the monk, the *mullah*? But if you receive newspapers inside your wall, what's the use of calling it solitude? I don't see the purity of it.

Then we climbed down from our lofty heights and said simply, "Krishna, Krishna." And again, "Krishna, Krishna."

There, hear that silence? It's just me here, and the wood of my desk. For breakfast I'll eat an apple, a banana, some raisins, and a little yogurt, and I will be happy.

This music of silence, of
your own breath.

When I finish this, I intend to go outside and take a walk,
chant two rounds, and

Remember that everyone lives, then dies.

People want me to help them, so I correspond with them. I try to speak of Krishna when I have a chance, but also to enter the saga they unfold. A man tells me he has won a court case. He was jubilant, but also pointed out that although it was ISKCON's battle, he had to fight it alone. But not to worry, because Krishna saved him. That's the victory of that saga. I advised him to remember the good part "that when he was alone, Krishna protected him and the temple "and to forget the other devotees' apathy.

Confessor Sats.

My first Confession. As I am a priest, who will hear *my* confession? Srila Prabhupada said, "If I solve everybody else's problem, who will solve my problems?" We laughed. Srila Prabhupada didn't have any problems, did he?

A devotee visited a temple, she told me, straight from the Mayapur GBC meetings. In his *Srimad-Bhagavatam* class, he lectured on improving devotee relationships and said that the GBC have been advocating the same.

Very well.

I'll skip the more worldly news.

Krishna told Arjuna, "If you understand the nature of My activities and appearance, you won't have to take another material body but can return to My eternal abode."

Have you ever noticed how Krishna consciousness travels in circles? We can easily spend Friday evenings alone just thinking about that. Krishna says He is God. That's not so hard to understand, is it? Especially when you get up at midnight and read it then. And devotional service is the only means to gain freedom from repeated birth and death. Hare Krishna. In this age we are not able to do other austerities, so we chant Hare Krishna.

Oh, that. Is that *all*? Yes.

Can anyone help with a little music? I mean, strum a few harps or guitars, help us forget ourselves for awhile so we can contemplate real harmony?. Play fortissimo and all that? If we want that mood. Get me a ticket to the rodeo.

* * *

My life goes in circles too: no pills, a headache, no romp. All that's left is me and God, and it can't get any purer than that. Hear the holy name pronounced with my own simple, unremarkable voice, singsong utterances again and again. Yes, sir. If anyone asks for me at the gate, say, "He can't come, he's chanting."

Oh God, I blew it. I didn't love Him. Did anybody in our movement? Yes, they did, and now they have left me behind. Some of them actually tried to serve beyond their selfishness. I have a few of those moments too sometimes. O Krishna, didn't I hear that You would make up for what we lack? Because every pen runs out.

I asked for mixtures of pleasure and a light good time. I wanted the epic to flow.

By a lake in winter frozen
now it's spring while this . . .

I keep forgetting where I am. This isn't an Aer Lingus flight, as it appeared to be in last night's dream where devotees rescued me and I gave a fallen soldier a few dollars and a place to stay until he could get on his feet.

The judges frown over *that* one.

But there's a need to be true.

The new year half done, and what have I got to show? Only that I have retreated further into the hills. I went so far in that no one could find me. The FBI did not try to extradite me, because I haven't done anything bad.

But did Lord Caitanya empower me as He empowered . . . someone purer than me?

*Mirror, mirror on the wall,
who's the fairest of them all?*

I want to be who I am and dance humble, yet write the Krishna conscious science.

I'll be back. Keep my *prasadam* warm. I'll accept any service according to my position and age. Answer care of P.O. I want to be with you.

3:56

* * *

After reading Poets

I lock the front door "hired cement mixer
unused although we pay for it daily.

I found the *parikrama* trail around the
house, but now he's cemented it at a
tilt for drainage "it's not longer useful
for my purposes. I had aimed to use it
to remember Vrndavana.

Thought I'd walk clockwise, alone, chanting "carve
a bas relief of Garuda, Vyasa,
paint *Krishna-lila*

along the narrow path, but
I can't use it "can't walk at that angle.

* * *

But this cement adobe with its almost
human curves behind the Humpty
Dumpty wall six-feet high.
If anyone peeks in on me, I'll tell
them I'm writing a book
on *varnaSrama*
as it relates to
all us individuals.

* * *

Or I'll say nothing at all, just ask what
they're doing. O Krishna, I will miss
that *parikrama* path.

* * *

Night Notes, 6:40 p.m.

I've been thinking that M. is growing out of his role as full-time secretary-cook, etc., and that I need one. Or maybe not. I'm getting used to things not being done "Deity plates unwashed all day, tapes and manuscripts sent weeks late in the mail . . . Should I try to get our party into shape? The only way to do it would be to add at least a part-time man, but he'd have to work under Madhu. Who would willing or able to do that?

Put these thoughts aside. Now pray about something more important and less temporary. I don't know how to pray, but I keep using that word, along with words like God, love, protection, thanks, *darSana*, *maha-mantra*, and chant. The meaning of such words evolves in my mind, and I come to revolve around them.

April 18, 12:08 a.m.

I'm up. rain tinkling on the skylight again. I hear a car struggling up the rocky lane. Then something in this house crashes. Am I alone here?

Arjuna does not inquire for himself but "for the demons who do not like the idea that Krishna should be accepted as the Supreme Personality of Godhead." All over the world we are in fellowship with those who accept Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Arjuna asks Krishna to speak about Himself so that ordinary people (even if they are not demons per se but ignorant and doubtful persons) can know "that Krishna is superhuman, that He is *sat-cid-ananda-vigraha* "the eternal form of bliss and knowledge "that He is transcendental, and that He is above the domination of the modes of material nature and above the influence of time and space."

Srila Prabhupada fought the material scientists and their heavy, atheistic tendencies. It's no wonder, because their conjectures discredit God as He is understood in any monotheistic religion; they say He's a myth, a projection of the human mind onto the chaos of meaningless chance. Srila Prabhupada argued against voidism, and his scientifically trained disciples continue to fight in more elaborate ways as the Bhaktivedanta Institute. Meanwhile, Lord Krishna speaks for Himself.

Sitting here relishing peace. Why is it I keep worrying that my peace will be taken away now that I have finally achieved it? Srila Prabhupada lived peacefully in Vrndavana for some time, as he himself attested. Then he left that situation to enter the hell of New York City because his Guru Maharaja ordered him to preach. Srila Prabhupada wanted to respond fully to his guru's order. Now back to myself. Srila Prabhupada also ordered me to preach, and I too want to respond fully to his order. But right now, I feel it is more important for me to know Krishna and to abide in Him. I don't feel up to the strain of active, outward preaching. Most *sannyasis* travel, and in ISKCON, manage. I am just not physically or mentally up to either of those things right now. That doesn't mean I don't want to preach, however. Preaching aside, I feel a strong need right now to live somewhere peaceful and to develop a life of prayer, meditation on Krishna, and to express that in my writing. But I notice that I cannot even do that as strenuously as I thought I would. I can't wrest Krishna from the pages of the *Bhagavad-gita*, and I can't simply fall into a trance to find Him. He does reveal Himself, however, constantly and gradually, in life itself.

It seems a drag if as lecturer I continue to raise doubts about Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We have to proceed with full faith. It's also tedious to constantly defend against doubts we don't ourselves feel. We all can list series of theistic arguments to prove God's existence and why Krishna is that God. We can also show how Krishna is worshiped in all monotheistic religions but under different conceptions. Let us grow in devotional service.

Are we afraid of Krishna? Sometimes. We are afraid of contact with another world. We don't know how to live in that other world. When we think of having that contact, we imagine ourselves asking, "Do I have to surrender everything right *now*?" It's like a death. Or so we think. No more breakfasts or walks in the rain. We say we'd like to know Krishna, to serve Him and to love Him in this world and the next, but we are like children reciting our catechism. It doesn't cost us much to say it, so therefore it doesn't mean much.

The *Brahma-samhita* verses are good "grand, eloquent, and fixed on Krishna. *Advaitam acyutam anadim ananta-rupam . . . govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami. ramadi-murtisu . . .* recite these verses without prejudice or speculation.

"His appearance in His original eternal form is His causeless mercy, bestowed upon the living entities so that they can concentrate on the Supreme Lord as He is, and not on mental concoctions or imaginations, which the impersonalists wrongly thinks the Lord's forms to be." (Bg. 4.7, purport)

I'd like to give more time to *The Cloud of Unknowing*. I like the concept of meditation or prayer where you don't use your reasoning faculties, or even dwell on God's many qualities (or on your doubts!). You simply chant His name and keep the simplest intent of loving Him foremost in your mind, banging against the cloud of unknowing, but staying with Him anyway, waiting for Him, remaining inclined in the most "primitive" way.

* * *

Japa jaw

always on the alert
for Krishna's name to come through.

* * *

4:36 a.m.

Radha and Govinda wearing maroon (almost red) outfits with white trim. Maha-mantra dasi of Inis rath made it for Them. Krishna stands, leaning against His crooked silver cowherd's stick and His crooked dealings with the *gopis*. There are some pastimes in which both Radha and Candravali arrive for a rendezvous with their lover in the same place. Both feel jealous. Krishna slips and says "Radha" to Candravali, then tries to recover from His mistake by giving the word an alternate meaning. He also says "Candravali" in front of Radha. O Kana, You are clever. Madhumangala is always prepared to assist Your moods, although sometimes he too appears to make mistakes, misunderstanding Your intention to rendezvous with Radha as a sign that he should bring Candravali. Fools and serious scholars alike cannot understand the sweetness of these pastimes if their hearts are filled with material desire. We must have a pure heart.

Krishnadasa Kaviraja has placed a few verses from *Vidagdha-madhava* in his *Caitanya-caritamrta*, and Srila Prabhupada has given even more in his purports. Thus we can take his permission to hear them.

O Prabhupada, you were so kind to me in the way you gave me instructions and continue to do so. I remember you chanting *japa* while sitting in a rocking chair, me at your feet "I have that photo from Boston 1971. My beloved Guru Maharaja was back from his travels to India, Moscow, Paris, Los Angeles, Boston, New York. But why do I say he was back? Boston was not his home. He stopped only briefly to encourage his servants there and to install Radha-Gopivallabha. When a young man came to interview him, Prabhupada gave generously of his time and attention.

I am sentimental, one could say, always turning to those days and years. All right, I accept my fault. But that's how I want to go to Prabhupada. I must taste love for my spiritual master or die. So I find it where I have it now, where I had it then. If that's sentimental, then I stand accused. Should I be afraid of him because I am living in this house and not pretending I'm a warrior on the battle lines? That would be extremely foolish.

Lalita-manjari sent my Prabhupada a new brown *cadar*. He is wearing it today for the first time. He is comfortably warm. I am outside Vrndavana, but I can think of him even from here. If we spend time with our spiritual master, that is as good as spending time in Vrndavana, because the guru will give us Krishna. Just now I heard him explain the verse Srinivasa Acarya spoke about the Six Gosvamis. He said they lived as mendicants but they didn't suffer inconvenience, because they were merged in the ocean of the *gopis'* love.

* * *

A friend says he's begun to keep a diary. I told him that if I knew what kind of notebook he likes to use, I would send him one as a gesture of encouragement. O friendly friend, push on always. Think always of Krishna's company of friends, and hear

how the *gopis* tease our noble and handsome friend. Madhumangala thinks the *gopis* are sassy, and he defends Krishna's honor. My dear friend, we both know neither of us is completely pure, but we both like to hear these pastimes. May we push on always.

I watched the lambs romping around their field last evening. They are too young to nibble grass, and are still nursing from their mothers. Poor creatures with their ears extended, they don't know what awaits them. All of them have already been counted and marked with blue dye. Hare Krishna. When I opened the window, two lambkins looked my way, both curious and cautious. When I walked away, they went back to their play.

"They compelled me to travel and then criticized me," one Godbrother says, "and this made me humble." He had wandered outside strict ISKCON behavior. Now he is back and they are letting him know he has to reform.

* * *

I'm Not Crazy

& We want to be devotees and we are happy
about what we can do in this house
play and meditate "free-write in what appears
loose ideas "words pouring forth
flowing within minutes then feel like
choosing my words
more carefully.

"I am confined by my health" I say
in one letter, but advise a friend
to go on to Vrndavana, Govardhana,
even if they criticize you
within ISKCON.

* * *

When we follow our words
people think we are either a madman or
very sane "which is it?
It's not always easy to tell because
as Prabhupada said,
"Everyone is more or less
crazy."
But that's *material* life!
And we are spiritualists. Sanity
is one of our qualities
except when we are mad
only for Krishna.

* * *

Quaking Quaker Oats "heat water
for your bath and brush your teeth.
That's mild service
if you remember Lord Hari.
Then free to choose, cut an apple in this cold
unfinished room and
chant the Lord's names. "

* * *

That's My Attitude
& Srila Prabhupada said there
are millions of temples in India but
that doesn't mean we shouldn't have our
own ISKCON place "he said that in L.A.
in '70 just before he left to do it
himself and made such grand
buildings where we could all
learn to become real pilgrims.

* * *

Similarly, we can make our own songs
even though so many have already composed
such songs in one tradition or another.

* * *

The main thing is to sit at the feet of
your master feeling sad and sweet memories
divining love the actual event
of Krishna conscious surrender
and deciding to share that with friends.
Then you can make strong and gentle
music
before you die.

* * *

That's my attitude. But do I expect Krishna
to pick up the tab? No, I'll pay "I'll
pay to have Him upholding these all worlds
and for me to remember Him
I want nothing more. "

* * *

8:58 a.m.

Krishna will be revealed to us when we hear with submission; we cannot speculate on Him if we wish to know Him. So give up your proud understandings.

I know that's hard to do.

The nondevotees accuse us of being imbeciles or blind followers. They want us to keep swimming with them in the ocean, our strokes growing weaker as we never seem to reach the other side. Still, they want to know why we so much trust these old books that were, after all, written by men.

And so on.

Meanwhile, pure devotees in disciplic succession go on hearing and surrendering to Krishna, and sharing their revelations with us. There have always been atheists and there have always been devotees in *parampara*.

Spent forty-five minutes dozing in the chair.

Oh, don't tell us.

I'm still alone in the house. What if I had to be alone eternally? Srila Prabhupada gave that example. He made the offer sound attractive at first "Eternity! Imagine!" But the condition for attaining it was that we would spend it alone. No, we won't do it! Without society, friendship, and love, he says, there is no happiness.

Yet for a while, my spaceship house is flying through space, and I am the only one onboard.

With my books,
and my incoming and outgoing mail.

When Srila Prabhupada gave the example of eternity without *ananda*, I thought, "Well, I would write through it." Then I thought more seriously about what it would be like to have no one to read what I wrote "ever" except myself. Wouldn't Krishna be there? Yes, but I wouldn't see Him. Then no thanks.

Maybe someone will come along to take the cement mixer away, or perhaps M. will soon be returning from the festival in Galway, or at least someone may bring me some lunch.

"Only those who render unreserved, uninterrupted, favorable service onto the lotus feet of the Lord, who carries the wheel of the chariot in His hand, can know the creator of the universe in His full glory, power and transcendence." (*Bhag.* 1.3.38)

* * *

Hand Writ, 10:27 a.m.

I found this in the second volume of PMrB: "This half-hour writing time, my pen rummaging around my soul . . . The *Bhagavatam* is the remedy for all ills. Before I die (my pen hand turns white and bony), let me write on it as much as possible." (p. 55)

Hand. What the hand writes. The handwriting on the wall. Nothing will be able to erase a single line "remember that poetry in the rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam?"

My hand says I worked with hand and arms, backs and legs "as usual, total cooperation " to sort out more of my belongings this morning. Now its humbled; it had no special place. It is not *everything*.

But it can write. Does what I'm saying as a free-writer fuel Krishna consciousness, or does Krishna consciousness fuel the free-writing? Both. In either case, we let it loose, like a puppy, knowing we can catch it if it gets too wild or begins to cause others harm.

Now something Krishna conscious: Contemplate God with love. We're active people, not contemplative monks. If we're too active, our minds fill with superficial chatter. We have to continuously turn to *sastra* to find the connection. And what do we find there? The Absolute Truth.

Still, turning to *sastra* can also become a smoke screen that covers our need to make a deeper, more personal resolution, such as the decision to increase our surrender, to find ourselves, to agree to the simple, direct ways of love, to render practical service. Thus reading books has its limits.

But never give it up. Because without it, we could just as easily be spinning our wheels, moving not toward God but toward illusion and self-indulgence.

By the way, the hand is facilitating this little essay. I just wanted to make it happy by letting you know that. This hand is as reliable as Robinson Crusoe. It writes *every* day, plants wheat, cotton, taters, tomatoes, and steers clear of grizzlies because they are an endangered species in Canada. It found out that if it simply serves Govinda, all its obligations will be met. Therefore, it is sworn not to secrecy but to giving for the cause of Krishna consciousness. That generous gesture is not an open palm but a forefinger and thumb gripped around a pen. The more silent left hand holds down the notepad and watches warm and observant "and incapable, because we're not ambidextrous.

* * *

2:38 p.m.

Hey, this person preaching in PMrB's "Comment" section says when we notice our indifference toward Krishna's desires, we should "feel the raw pain of the corruption."

Raw pain? That sounds heavy. But we want to feel it.

Now he tells us that even if we feel regret, we cannot expect to become perfect overnight. "Practice patience and forgiveness." He flings around such virtues as if he possess them.

Oh, that's just preaching.

Because if a preacher doesn't speak of surrender, repentance, and forgiveness, what will he say? There's nothing wrong with what he said, even if he can't follow it completely himself.

Maybe, he thinks now, there is a better way to go about attaining those virtues. Maybe it isn't enough to repeat what we have been told to say. PMrB's author says that a fool escapes his darkness and enters the light of Krishna consciousness when he performs *ajnata-sukrti*, unknown devotional service. Probably in a past life.

Oh yeah, that past-life clause. It sounds so remote sometimes.

But maybe that's because we've heard it so many times before.

When I reach the free-write section of the PMrB comment, I feel relieved. I used to wipe off the picnic table in the courtyard at 26 Second Avenue "Prabhupada didn't ask me to do it, but a Godbrother did. I was happy to do it for the Swami. I thought it was nice.

My brothers "that's another problem. Maybe I just don't trust them preaching up there on the *vyasasana* as much as I'm willing to trust Prabhupada.

Anyway, poems and pictures, and, whatever giants we have seen in this life have all fallen down. Even Jack's, who missed his step on a beanstalk.

And this "I was just thinking about this point today:

You say *about Bhagavatam*

that we *should* all read.

We have *heard* that before!

But Krishna *grabbed* the wheel.

Krishna *loved* His devotee. What about that?

What can I do but type this and speak from the heart at the bottom of the barrel? I am a barrel caster, a newscaster, a shy, ornery hornet of a man grown old.

"PMrB, Vol. 2, p. 74

* * *

Writing in Time

Starting with a twinge of pain. If it develops, I'll take my second Esgic of the week. This is Saturday afternoon. Lalita-manjari (in her twenties) writes me that it's scary to see how fast this year is going by. What does it mean to her? Is she afraid of old age? Death? Just wait until you're sixty.

Now that I'm older, I feel a little more ability to live in the moment. For example, to move into this house is a pleasure "just the prospects of a semi-reclusive, creative life! Still, I'm aware that the facility could be taken away at any time. But I don't let that scare me. Sure, March turned quickly into April, and now April is already half over, but let me live for today and get as much done as I can. See? There are so many poems and poets floating down the stream, but it's my turn. Living in the moment can provide an opportunity to heighten sense gratification, but I won't use it for that. Not when I'm sixty.

And that twinge isn't too conducive to pleasure either. I can't even think past it sometimes.

Oh, and *I am more self-accepting*. That's new for me. I don't berate myself so thoroughly anymore. When I do berate myself, it's to give us all "author and reader alike "some comic relief. I don't really hate myself.

Because I'm all I have with which to surrender to Krishna. No one can get me to surrender; no one can lead me too far forward. I have to do it myself. They can't scare me. I've seen enough wagging *jnana-mudras* to know what to expect. Just give me the spirit of kindness and a kind of bread I like to eat, and I'll do it.

Hare Krishna.

O Lord, please allow me to approach You. I want You.

Only six minutes gone. Take that pill? I don't think I have ever taken one in the middle of a timed writing exercise before. Well, there's always a first time.

Pause.

Mark it in red on the calendar: I took a pill.

Should I relax before it blows? Lie down your head in your little den.

I'm just happy I wrote and we printed PMrB.

I can't write anything extended right now, so let me stop short of my allotted twenty minutes and rest my eye. It's got me in a half-nelson pinned to the floor.

3:43

* * *

Night Notes, 6:25 p.m.

No poem tonight. I shut down early "wrote less than my usual twenty pages. The twinge wouldn't go away. I'll rest now and hope for the best.

I told Madhu that I like it here very much. He said it will be nicer when:

1. the linoleum is laid
2. the walls are painted
3. the electric lighting is completed
4. there is heat

and I stopped him there.

It doesn't matter so much; already I can taste the solitude "almost too good to be true. Will someone try to pry me out of here? Perhaps I'll simply become too attached, and Krishna will have to evict me. We'll see.

I spent time with my clerical nature today, arranging the boxes, labeling things, moving, organizing, and straightening up. Perhaps that's what brought on the headache "the intensity I feel when I need to organize. I'm funny that way: I love improvisation and a free-flowing expression, but I also love order, preferring that my affairs fit into neat compartments rather than them spilling out over my desk. We have to reconcile all the drives within ourselves for Krishna's pleasure somehow.

Planning weekly classes. I hope to speak each Sunday morning to the devotees who live in this area and anyone else who wishes to come down. Tomorrow I'll show a slide show containing photos of my EJW cover drawings, and give a reading. But first, a midnight *Bhagavad-gita* session, pain permitting.

O Lord, O enjoyer of the Lord "I listen to Srila Prabhupada. Enter the essence of him with love. He said that to us on a morning walk once in Mayapur when JS questioned him about the spiritual master appearing to make mistakes. He said his perfection was to be fully absorbed in Krishna consciousness. Did he say absorbed in *preaching* Krishna consciousness? No, but he was that too. He wanted to deliver the fallen souls on behalf of his own spiritual master, to please Lord Krishna. Feel grateful.

Swamiji, you made me.

You told me to preach

I want to do it

as a servant but

can't help my quiet, timid way.
Still, it's for you
as am I.

April 19, 12:10 a.m.

"Although I am unborn and My transcendental body never deteriorates, and although I am the Lord of all living entities, I still appear in every millennium in My original transcendental form." (Bg. 4.6)

The Cloud author recommends that we put aside thoughts of God's qualities and feel only our naked intent to love Him. As I've said, I like the suggestion, although it's easier said than done. But Srila Prabhupada recommends chanting (and reading) if we wish to meditate on our Krishna. Chanting is the most palatable and convenient form of meditation. The trouble with reading is that it's mostly *about* Krishna (at least I perceive it in that way), and it's in the intellectual, discursive gear. I try to get around that gear sometimes by reading choice *Slokas* aloud, by practicing *lectio divina*, by learning to stop and pray between activities.

God appears in this world in an uncontaminated, spiritual body, although it resembles the body of a beautiful young man. His body never ages beyond "twenty or twenty-five years old." This is the full reality. We can hear about it, but how can we actually experience it unless we express our love for Him?

I'm just thinking now of Madhu's report of the Galway Hare Krishna festival. Three hundred people attended. He said they liked his singing ("It went down well"), the skit, the feast, and the informal talk with devotees while they ate, but the main lecturer spoke too long and succeeded in riling the audience against them. It seemed to me that we have so much going against us in our attempt to bring people to Lord Krishna, including our need to cross the barrier of the stereotype people have about Hare Krishnas. If we can charm them with our culture, we have gained something. To come out cold with a heavy lecture "does it work? Maybe some rare person in the group is actually seeking the Absolute Truth. Although I've been practicing Krishna consciousness for over thirty years, my mind is still somewhat like the crowd hearing that lecture "it balks, prefers entertainment; and some of the lecturer's claims are just too much for it. I could understand how the audience might have felt.

Lord Krishna came so long ago. He appeared like the sun on the eastern horizon, then left after a relatively few years. The words He spoke at that time are preserved in *Bhagavad-gita*, and His activities are described in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, especially in the Tenth Canto. He appeared before Devaki as four-armed Narayana. "His appearance in His original form is His causeless mercy bestowed upon the living entities so that they can concentrate on the Supreme Lord as He is, and not on mental concoctions or imaginations, which the impersonalists . . . " (Bg. 4.6, purport)

Krishna, I want my intellect "that
tiny twisted thing "to
behold You, honor You, and
receive the discourse of the
Gosvamis of Vrndavana

my spiritual master's books.
At least I want to say that, although
I'm not capable of much.

* * *

Bhakta Linc wrote me that he burned his hand while cooking, so he's reading more.
He writes:

I am absorbing myself more in reading in an open way without fear of doubts. The result so far has been that I find myself really looking forward to spending time alone reading the *Bhagavatam*. I was wondering if it is okay to approach reading the *Bhagavatam* in this way? What I mean is that I don't intend to read so much to study the philosophy in an analytical way, but more as a way to associate with Krishna and Prabhupada and the pastimes, devotees, and philosophy. I also often pray while reading, and have had times when it seemed there was some reciprocation. The reason I ask if it is okay to read like this is because it is my first reading of the *Bhagavatam*, and I worry that I should become more conversant with the philosophy.

Linc, reading in the way you suggest is not the most efficient way to get through the *Bhagavatam* or to prepare yourself as a scholar or lecturer, but if it helps you love to read the *Bhagavatam*, if it facilitates your prayer life, then why stop?

"Lord Krishna descends for the specific purpose of mitigating the anxieties of the pure devotees, who are very anxious to see Him in His original Vrndavana pastimes. Therefore, the prime purpose of the Krishna *avatara* is to satisfy His unalloyed devotees." (Bg. 4.8, purport)

That's what the books have to tell us.

* * *

3:20 a.m.

Chanted *japa* while thinking about moving the stationery and other office supplies from the bookshelves to the cabinets. Then thought of the various messages I wanted Madhu to deliver this morning. Each round was just under seven minutes. I was awake. I can claim that much.

I will speak to the devotees this morning. Wondered who would go with me along this lengthening trail of EJWs. Certainly not a casual reader. A core readership may follow. I ask for nothing more. If you can give, you live what you teach.

Japa while crossing and uncrossing my legs. I do appreciate, beg for, dedicate my life to this *yajna*, although not yet perfectly.

* * *

4:40 a.m.

This morning I bathed Govinda but somehow forgot to bathe radha. Only when They were both dressed and decorated did I realize my omission. I decided not to undress Her and start the *puja* over. I made an excuse: I'm shy to bathe Her; I usually dress Her as quickly as possible. But that wasn't a real excuse, because I know how to serve Her

chastely. Ultimately, I was left with the fact that it was a stupid oversight. Nothing transcendental or devotional about it. I let it go. She did not give me the opportunity to serve Her today. Now I'm trying to think of ways to make up for my folly.

In the meantime, I am thinking of the devotees in Vrndavana who will be sending me more crowns and outfits for Her. On a morning walk, Srila Prabhupada said that "spiritual" refers to the consciousness in which we do things. For example, we eat the same food a *karmi* may eat, but we offer it to Krishna and it becomes *prasadam* "fully spiritual. The change comes about by Krishna's grace, which is invoked by our devotional consciousness. Similarly, we don't approach Radha-Govinda as if They are brass idols. We can't claim we approach Them as the Lord in *Hissat-cid-ananda* feature either, unfortunately, but we aspire for it, and have that faith.

In *Vidagdha-madhava*, Krishna becomes so bewildered by Radha's sidelong glances that He doesn't notice He has placed His flute on Her *sari* along with a flower garland. radharani snatches the flute. She says the rascal flute misleads the *gopis*, and She is glad it is now under Her control. When Mukhara arrives, Krishna notices the absence of His flute. He accuses Radha and the *gopis* of being thieves. They defend themselves, turning to Mukhara for protection. She scolds Krishna and tells Him to go tend the cows. This section contains some amazing verses in which Krishna tells radha how each of His incarnations have become subordinate to Her. Lalita counters this by describing how each of the Visnu incarnations reveals an aspect of Krishna's rakish character. These are confidential verses "in them we can understand how Krishna remains the lover of the *gopis* through all His *avatars* and missions.

I am not qualified to hear all this nectar, but I can't stop listening. I do think Srila Prabhupada will be pleased if I develop love of Krishna. Radha and Krishna are the worshipable Deities in all ISKCON temples, and Rupa Gosvami is our worshipable *rasacarya*. We can hear if we keep our lives simple and pure, focused on the spiritual master's order.

* * *

If Madhu doesn't come in by 5 o'clock, I may have to go down and wake him. He has to let himself into our nextdoor neighbor's house by 5:15 in order to prepare breakfast, which should be ready by 6. I don't want to be late, especially today, because we have leave here by 7:45.

Pictures going up on the walls "a sure sign that we are beginning to feel at home. On the door is a picture of Srila Prabhupada chanting *japa*. There is a potted *tulasi* in the foreground. Over my desk I have a cheap, colorful print of the Jagannatha Deities. I got that in Jagannatha Puri the last time I was there. I also have a photo of me sitting on the floor in front of Srila Prabhupada, who is sitting in a rocker in his room in the Boston temple (1971), and a somewhat abstract painting I made of three flowers with red tops on green stems and the words, "Radha-Krishna *nitya-lila*" over them.

A man asked why he should consider a make-believe story.

To get relief from speaking always of yourself. To become free of the obligation to write only when you have personally dredged it out of your own experience. In my case, my personal experience will be limited "I don't go anywhere and don't see anything other

than what I can see from my window. Yesterday I saw a lamb race to its shaggy and homely mother when she came over the hill. No other lamb recognized her as theirs. When it reached her, it dove under her body, pushed its mouth against her udder, fiercely wagging its little tail the whole time. She tolerated it "even seemed to enjoy it "for a few minutes, then walked away. I have witnessed other such few brief affectionate exchanges over there at the concentration camp.

Therefore, I free-write. It's too lonely to look too often into that field. Free-writing is good because it keeps me awake. It allows me to move on from where I was a few monutes earlier. I am tired of my lack of devotion and even scholarship. right now the rain is beating down on the roof, and I'll tell you honestly "I *like* that sound. It's especially audible when it hits the skylight.

So then, move on. I have a good day before me, so don't hesitate to grab it. Pray to Krishna. He says we should surrender to Him, so I will try to do that today by obeying my spiritual master. We don't tell our guru to go away, that we don't need him anymore; we always surrender. I surrendered by uttering the Hare Krishna mantra while filling the Deities' water cups. I did it voluntarily, because I wanted to please him. I chanted with an Indianapolis whine, a rough, bruising voice "Hare Krishna "and tried not to let my voice snarl out that which is sweetest.

* * *

Waking Up a Devotee

& Once a man wandered outside into the rain and knocked on a door, "Wake up!" The morning was still dark, cold, and there were the treacherous ditches to consider. "Wake up! Get into the kitchen!" Hank was not angry.

* * *

The man returned to his concert "took his seat in the rear of the hall. The Catholics were polite and said, "The holy spirit blessed you to attend our meeting," but the main speaker didn't seem interested.

* * *

Now watch out "serve Krishna in
Rainy cold outdoor weather, in boots.
Prabhupada said, "Do not say, 'I am ill and therefore I cannot live
with devotees.' Because no matter where you go for health,
you cannot leave the universe. So why
leave the devotees?" Srila Prabhupada said
he himself left his family.
He said he could have been comfortable at home.

* * *

Hare Krishna. Make some effort

to please the Almighty Lord
Krishna of the peacock-feathered crown
who is the object of *Vedanta*
its compiler and knower
who gives intelligence and forgetfulness

* * *

the Sastric route we will take and be
with You.
I thought you said you wouldn't and couldn't
fall asleep but here I see you have fallen
asleep at the switch. "

* * *

Work and Love and Chant
& We don't want to be devotees of the world beat
but we want emotion to accompany us
in spirit.
We want that.

* * *

Some worldly guys have learned from masters
how to bring that out and we
are learning from our master, sometimes
imitating but failing
then crying Krishna, Krishna, Krishna,
I want.

* * *

Vintage feelings are good when
what we want is excellence
and taste but raw feeling
not bothering to make it nicer.
Just be.
I'll hold my
slide show this morning, tell them
I wrote this stuff in Wicklow
to help them, because
we each have to die
even pretty children
although usually in a different order
oldest to youngest

but not always.
We can see it only a little
at a time.

* * *

We want to think of Krishna
we want to live peacefully in *this* world
but we don't receive both
because we aren't sincere or greedy
enough
for either.

* * *

We don't know how to give up
ease, goodness, passion, and
live the promise for transcendental
loving service.
We don't seem to have learned that yet.
We beg for inklings and hope
to try *today*.
But we forget.
Krishna is so kind
that He sends us a pure devotee
to remind us.

* * *

Because love has to motivate
or it won't last.
Love expressed through work
steady work, and love,
steady love, and chanting
Hare Krishna "*that* work "

* * *

9:45 a.m.

I enjoyed the slide show of my EJW cover drawings. As I showed the images, I read from the book. The pictures seemed stronger to me than the writing.

Talking about myself, how I can't be more active in service "apologetic, and, of course, defensive. I'm talking *about Bhagavatam*, but not actually presenting it. Of course, if people read EJW, they will also receive my *Bhagavatam* notes and quotes. But I didn't read those sections during the slide show. What I did read had an overall feeling of relaxation, where exactly what was said, or exactly what was seen on the screen, was

not as important as the pleasure of hearing and seeing in Krishna conscious ambiance. I liked that.

Now back at the house. It's still cold and rainy out. I gave of myself, spoke of myself and my writing. Camasa Muni dasa asked whether I wrote for myself or for an audience. Both. He said he used to write, but doesn't now. He thinks he might like to begin again. I gave him some hints:

1. At the end of the day, write down the thing that made you most happy.
2. Write first thing in the morning upon awakening.

I asked Madhu to tell him how he revived his musical career after it had lain dormant for many years. He said simply, "Think for yourself."

When we returned to the house, I read Rilke's letter to a young man who wanted to know if he should become a poet. Rilke replied, "Ask yourself in your stillest hour if you *must* write. If the honest answer is '*I must*,' then shape your whole life, even down to indifferent moments, as contributing to the writing." That's the writing-as-religion dedication I learned from Rilke (and Kafka) when I was young. I can't say I'd die if I couldn't write. No, I'd do whatever Krishna wanted me to do. He could take away this privileged service. I'd die if He wanted me to die though. I don't want to be a writer, but His devotee, despite my shortcomings and any other attachments. I hope that devotion is my strongest desire, the one I cannot live without. Writing is simply the way I have chosen to serve. Serve I must, by constitution and by free will, and by my guru's mercy.

* * *

Hand Writ, 10:05 a.m.

The hand can talk free of the burden of the mind because it's its own man.

I wish that were true.

Look down the pike, the tube, at the ink coming out and then decide.

Rain out there beyond the roof, so look within.

Hand

hand "the associations that word brings. I am free of so much nowadays, and my hands are honorable, clean (despite the ink stains), able to massage Srila Prabhupada. Thank God.

Does the hand have a heart to reveal? It bends, curves, marks, presses, plunges, and grips the pen. It keeps moving.

It *likes* to move, to cover a page in Krishna conscious script.

One time the Supreme Lord was accosted by a thief in Vrndavana. The thief asked Krishna to give him His jewels. "No," said child Krishna, "My mother will get angry." In Krishna's association, the thief became a devotee.

This hand operated the tape recorder that allowed me to hear those words through my spiritual master's mouth. Then it fit the report between the lines on this page.

O Krishna, I'm glad You're okay. I'm glad

You're the Supreme Personality

of Godhead, happy in Your spiritual world.

May I join You there someday? Perhaps by the power of my hand, which focused my entire body's energy into my writing service. That's what the hand does best. It also holds my beads "and again, let's my body's energy out into the grip I keep on them.

Such power! But this hand is not calloused or even large. A he-man would laugh at it, or crush it in his grip.

But the pen is mightier than the sword. So, peace.

Peace. Think of Krishna's toe, His calves, His thighs and waist decorated with their sash. His beauty has peace talks with the strongest and most beautiful things "the bolts on doors and the moon, lotuses and mountaintops. Krishna's arms, shoulders, and His beautiful face "His smile. Krishna, my hand to Thee. I am Your servant.

* * *

2:55 p.m.

Have a developed twinge in my right eye. I think of it like a bird pecking at my eye, drilling in. I should have taken a pill before lunch. After lunch, it doesn't pull the same weight. Maybe the headache just wants to be here today. I *do* have to live with this (or other pain) *sometimes*, you know. Still, it changes my plans. I had hoped to spend more time writing and reading this afternoon, but maybe that won't be possible.

When that devotee asked me this morning whether I wrote for myself or for an audience, I could have answered, "I write for a special audience." I write for the core of readers who have donned backpacks and who plan to walk with me through this entire EJW series. I can write the best for myself, and they will receive it. Don't write trying to reach fickle audiences who don't want "too much" the little adventures of beating wings against clouds of unknowing. Stick with your friends.

They are scraping and cleaning the rooms downstairs so that the linoleum men, who are supposed to come on Tuesday, will be able to do their job. That day should be quite a scene. I'll be lucky if I have access to the bathroom. But Irish people are not so difficult to deal with. In an official capacity, their offices, especially the government departments, are slow and inefficient, but that's not so bad; Americans tend to be cruelly efficient. We stand a good chance of getting permission for what we want in Ireland, although it may take a long time to receive it, what with holidays, pub hours, poor telephone connections, etc.

* * *

"Only by making such inquiries in this world can one be successful and perfectly cognizant, for such inquiries invoke transcendental ecstatic love unto the Personality of Godhead, who is the proprietor of all the universes, and guarantee cent percent immunity from the dreadful repetition of birth and death." (*Bhag.* 1.3.39)

Of course, the inquiries referred to here are not useless hair-splitting challenges. But I want to know God; I want to be able to serve Him as fully as possible, despite my limits. I want to hear about Him "that's *my* inquiry. In my "Comment" in PMrB, I wrote, "*Bhakti* is not a painkiller."

Oh, bravely said.

Srila Prabhupada said that the Krishna consciousness movement is a worldwide institution, and its managerial affairs are not to be considered non-spiritual. He referred to the fact that the temple president in Hawaii sold the building and absconded with all the funds, and that the devotees who remained were not able to stop him. Protection of temple properties is spiritual.

Protection of one's body in order to serve is also spiritual. Therefore, although *bhakti* is not a painkiller, I use painkillers in order to practice *bhakti*. Everything depends on our attitude. Pain, of course, can also lead to spiritual experience if a devotee is in the right mind.

Wild geese forming a V and honking "that was when, March? Stroudsburg in "The Woods." Will I ever return? Probably not.

* * *

4.10 Writing in Time

Let's go "no frills! Who's gonna help us build our house? They tell M., "We're not your *servants*, we're your *peers*. And we've got *plenty* to do on our own." Okay, we have now been educated on that point and realize that we must struggle on alone. I'll tell the story of that struggle, at least its bare bones.

Gosh, he's wordy. Wordy doesn't simply mean lots of words; it means taking more words than you need to hit your truth. Beating around the bush. Going on at too great a length. I can write hundreds of books and *not* be wordy. I don't have to be a word-monger.

The Govinda's restaurant in Dublin gives out red comment cards. People write such things as, "Excellent food, thanx, Chelesa Sunshine, S.F.C.A." I'd write (wordy) ""Am here to cheer and glad you don't serve beer. Thanks for being open and delivering Krishna in the most palatable form and at such low prices. I'll be back some Sunday to lecture on express and local trains in America, and my loving attraction for the S.I.r.T. in New York."

Now seriously, stop writing about writing.

Or can you?

FK had a metaphor when he wrote *The Castle*. His story was about useless bureaucracy and control, fear and intimidation. Could I find such a grand metaphor? I live too non-metaphorically for that.

Then fix your own house. There're no vassals around here. Clear?

This afternoon has passed slowly. I think of words, and they cross the border from France. I reach out for them, a letter at a time. I read my mail, then disguise it or parody it. I need repertoire like any other comedian. I need new jokes, writers to supply me lines. Desperate need for the new in my routine.

Oh, don't worry about that. Someone keeps telling me that. The routine itself supplies subtle varieties, so at least embrace those. "*Bhakti* is not a painkiller." How many times have you said . . .

The same old examples . . .

My spiritual master does that too. Even *Krishna* does it "He plays His flute again and again (although His tunes are probably never exactly the same). And He could do

anything else He would like to do. But He doesn't. He chooses to do just what He likes again and again. It's like that.

Novelty. Limits, I have a certain voice range. I am either a baritone or a tenor, not both. He said, "I believe in Krishna, the Supreme, who sports in the groves and pasturelands of Vrndavana, on Govardhana Hill. I believe in Krishna, who expands into many Visnu forms, but whose pure devotees want Him only as Syamasundara." Then he chants that name that is for everyone, not just for those born in India. May He give me liberation from the confining aspects of my life, and grant me confidence in His mercy.

So I can tell people
as I used to so tenaciously (although always politely),
"Krishna is actually God's name."

Yet what I really meant was that Krishna is the best name "the best form" of God. Although He appeared in India and is known in Hindu culture, He's the one God of all.

Can you do that again "that kind of preaching?"

Reach out and let your hand move freely.

I'm a jerk. No, I'm a special person. I expect Krishna to *like* me. But I'm not the only one who feels that way. Each of us want our space. We chant Hare Krishna, say our *gayatri-mantras*, and turn to Him again and again in the day, hoping to catch His attention. Then another day passes and we realize we have survived, going through the motions of *bhakti*, even in poems. But we want better for ourselves. We want the real thing.

This morning I distributed my EJW covers to the children. I asked them to draw pictures for me. I knew they could do as good a job as I do myself. Today I drew three pens with three men riding on them. Krishna consciousness is for the simple, the creative, the jolly. It's for the plain, the fallen, the scholars, and the young couples. It's for those who like vegetarian *prasadam*, a clean life, and who somehow relate to Srila Prabhupada, who accept ISKCON (with all its faults). It's for free-thinkers, yet followers. For those *clean* in mind "clean and free of sinful life. Who accept the religious codes. Who aspire to realize the soul, and who would like to go back to Godhead, if they only knew what that meant.

Krishna consciousness is for all of *them*.

And for plenty of others too.

Now I have managed to keep my hand moving "go for the jugular.

Ugh "a horrible image" like slitting someone's throat. Go for the vitals, even if that hurts. Cut yourself open and see what lies beneath the skin. Don't censor it, and especially, don't fear it. Take the risk.

Krishna, Krishna. We are a parade of children and old men. Think of the Irish Pada-yatra entering village after village with oxen and *kirtana*. Then, because the Irish villagers tended to become hostile toward clashing *kirtanas* and things got so tense, the Pada-yatris arranged for Irish traditional musicians to join the *kirtanas*. Everything mellowed after that.

I'm going to make it to the bottom of this page; that's clear now.

Gravel Gerty had a baby. B. O. Plenty. What was the child's name? Angel something. She was born with wings? Sparkle Plenty? That's a sub-plot within Dick Tracy. Incredible characters captured the interests of many readers.

And here we are on vacation on Mt. Olive, Wicklow, looking out on the sheep in the valley. I just want to say that for someone who is an artist, a devotee, and an otherwise plain chap, you really do talk about your wounds a lot, and what you want to do.

Govinda's comment card: "It would be even nicer if you got curtains and potted plants."

To me: "It would be better if you could become victorious, speak of taste. And can you write about some other people once in a while (I mean, besides yourself)? Or get into the spirit. Of self. More *sastra*. More poems. Be happy. Don't complain. You seem to know what you are doing. Why don't you . . . "

Please be quiet, folks. I can handle this outburst by myself.

* * *

After reading Poets

They are putting my bed together "slats, headboard,
no four-poster this. . . and blocking the light
from the window so I can sleep. I just told Aniruddha I'd
like him to build me an art room.

* * *

The rain has stopped; the pain has stopped.
I now owe it to God and myself to chant an
extra round. I mean utter speak-ease the
mantra over and over while
the brain watches the clock
and I wear white gloves.

* * *

Night is falling. Old ewe with middle shaved
and ends still in winter fleece
walks on delicate old legs slower
than the rest "her lambs
hop and gambol about her.

* * *

I see I spied on no one "I
had a simple plan.

* * *

O Krishna, You speak. In Vrndavana the devotees think
of You, visit Your temples morning and eve, see
Your *arcas* and bathe in the Yamuna.

A Gaudiya carries a torn quilt, broken
water pot "me here, so far from that
no Hindi, no Mathura, no guru to go and touch
but this *murti*
and Radha-Govinda
on a table.

* * *

Night Notes, 6:25 p.m.

Took Trifalla for indigestion and constipation, and because Indians say it's good for me. (After writing that, M. interrupted my Night Notes mood, but Prabhupada was singing on CD and I immediately calmed down again.)

So folks, the adumbrated Night Notes page hereby gives Kingfisher the award for using pompous English in the wrong way, like "Stout Cortez," the first white man to gaze at the Pacific (instead of Balboa). The extenuating circumstance in this gaze was the interruption by a dear friend with news from abroad. He wanted me to immediately drop everything and to write a business note. With a life like that, how can one be contemplative? A devotee doesn't live alone; he must jostle with others. Srila Prabhupada said that management is also spiritual "so people don't steal things. Hare Rama. 1966 - 98. Heart beating and friends leave. Rajarsi Prabhu of Vancouver is gone on that eventual train that will one day claim us all. These poems are for people of the future, but take care of yourself as far as you can. That's a priority. Work and wait for His mercy. Hare Krishna.

See you in the morning, if Krishna desires. May I recall my spiritual master and pray to be forgiven for excesses, indulgences, and for not going forward in the fray.

April 20, 12:12 a.m.

What is the importance of hearing about Krishna from Krishna Himself? It rescues us from atheism and indifference, from ignorance. It can destroy our doubts. The demons won't like to hear that. "But those who are devotees heartily welcome the statements of Krishna when they are spoken by Krishna Himself. The devotees will always worship such authoritative statements of Krishna because they are always eager to know more and more about Him." (Bg. 4.4, purport)

Linoleum. Bhakta Leo coming today to paint. I also need better lighting in this room. The new translation of Kafka. Collecting books I don't read or which don't satisfy expectations. Distractions. Desire to write better . . . These thoughts while I'm trying to read.

Krishna's many incarnations . . . Krishna Himself. "Please, please," I say.
Please what?

Please, I want to wake up and adore God. Take Him in any form or *rasa*. Wait for Krishna in His original form. realize a tiny bit (more) that he's already here. Stop finding fault with Godbrothers. Preach to help others. Be myself. Play on the *brhat-mrdanga*. Use the one-headed drum Swamiji used to use.

Dreamt of Kirtanananda returning to New Vrindavana. They wanted me to speak to a reporter, but I chose not to.

The Supreme Lord remembers, and the part and parcel tends to forget. "But by the Divine Grace a devotee can at once understand the infallible condition of the Lord, whereas a nondevotee or a demon cannot understand this transcendental nature." (Bg. 4.5)

I understand? I remember? At least I remember to chant *japa*. At least I understand the importance of doing so. My understanding is still mostly theoretical, but there is a core of . . . awareness: This is important to me. It's more important, or more satisfying, than anything else in my life. Throw off doubts.

And take advantage of being alone here, free from the pressure to earn money, from family entanglement, etc. This opportunity is rare; it's wonderful. So take the time to be with Krishna and to worship Him. An active man can serve the Lord through the results of his labors and become purified. I too am active.

Srila Prabhupada explains in the purport that Krishna appears in this world. The doubter says that He appeared long ago and thinks He no longer has relevance. No historian can trace the truth of Krishna's appearance anyway. Only the devotees believe. How could God . . . I am assured by Prabhupada's faith. Why be attached to Doctor Pessen (Dr. Pessimistic)? And "History" or Ancient History, as for Archeology . . . there's *Forbidden Archeology*. There is a conspiracy to avoid the ancient historicity of God on this planet. Atheists say God, or the son of God, never appeared here. They think religionists are hallucinating. Deliver me, O Lord.

And if we are patient enough, Krishna will reveal Himself to us. Be prepared to spend this life, perhaps lifetimes, without a full revelation. Because we have so much personal work to do. We have to become fully purified before we can expect full revelation. And completely faithful. If we want to become purified and to increase our faith, we should associate as often as possible with the Vedic literature and with faithful *sadhus*. Krishna appears to give solace to such devotees, who are eager to associate with Him as Vraja-Krishna. This is a living faith.

O Vrindavana, your devotees walk barefoot in your dust, singing Krishna's names, camping on your hard-packed earth. Even the animals there are special. The atmosphere is surcharged with *bhakti*. It's almost impossible to penetrate it, unless we want to more than we want anything else. But your devotees each pray as they can. O Vrindavana, nothing is impossible for you. Please give me your mercy.

Now to the beads, again, praying as you can. Finger each bead and rattle out your "death" cry like a Hare Krishna grackle-raven-hooded crow "Hare Hare.

* * *

4:30 a.m.

Lalita is causing Krishna's depression. Because she is schooling Radha in the art of jealous anger, Radha has learned not to accept Him even when He places His crown at Her feet. By nature, Radha is inclined to surrender Her anger to please Krishna. Even when alone, She imagines Krishna is with Her. Purnamasi and Vrnda-devi are always on Krishna's side in these negotiations. They encourage Radha to be reconciled with

Krishna. They also request Lalita to stop criticizing Him. They blame everything on Madhumangala. All these intrigues are presented through a flood of beautiful Vaisnava poetry. Suddenly Jatila enters and sees Krishna's flute in Radha's hand. She snatches it from Radha and runs off to show it to Purnamasi, as evidence that Radha and Krishna are meeting. Vrnda-devi intercedes. She tells Jatila to run home fast because the monkey Kakkhati is stealing her butter. Jatila then throws the flute at the monkey . . .

Radha-Govinda are wearing light green soft wool *cadars* with Their pale green outfits. Srila Prabhupada is wrapped in gray, which covers his sunrise-saffron *dhoti*.

I heard Srila Prabhupada speaking on a morning walk. He said chanting is the way to turn the hearts and minds of those who profess, "Do your own thing." He said chanting doesn't mean that we practice Krishna consciousness alone. That may be good for us personally, but it is not high-class. A devotee is unhappy to see others suffering; he chants for their benefit.

I chant for others in prose. I chant in deed. Hare Krishna. Tell of Krishna's pastimes and sometimes of Radha's, although those are more private.

A devotee who is seeking a wife says he loves a woman who visits the temple. She loves him too. Such a love as theirs is rare in this world, he said. The only problem is that she is a disciple of a Mayavadi guru; she is not inclined toward Prabhupada. He asked my advice, but what could I say? I wonder how he could possibly live with a woman (once the infatuation wears off) who is a Mayavadi?

Another writes me that he likes to be alone, and finds relationships with people superficial. He's reading a famous psychologist and feeling assured, although he knows Krishna consciousness is the main thing. I said . . .

The poetry of Rupa Gosvami. I can't remember the details just now. Something about *cakora* and *cataki* birds. He is expert enough to know the nature of birds and how it applies to *rasa*. radha-Krishna's intrigues include threats, lies, and many jokes. Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but His intimate friends forget about that under the influence of Yogamaya. Thus they are able to give Krishna intense pleasure, more so than those who never forget His supremacy. The reprimands of Jatila and Mukhara are more pleasing to Krishna than the Vedic hymns sung by perfectly regulated Sastric *brahmanas*.

The walls of this house are uneven "like a cave, or a Vrndavana house. Think of that. Imagine the sound of many, many bare feet along the *parikrama* trail. Hear someone singing *bhajan*s as they pass. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna.

Hare Krishna. This is the hour of day when I tend to be tired. I say I want to be a devotee in this time and place. It is not unreasonable to ask that whatever I write be bound with gold gilt pages and distributed around the world. I am not writing a Joycean book of a Martello tower with Buck Mulligan, nothing as tedious as falling asleep in a Kafkian horse carriage on the way to the Castle. What I seek is karela for lunch and the devotion of the residents of Kerala, South India, who are devotees of Ramanuja "but I seek it with a Gaudiya conclusion.

I wouldn't mind living in Mayapur within Ireland "this quiet Mayapur of the spirit, away from the bustling, international campus that ISKCON has developed in India, the morning program so big, drums smashing, liturgy rolling on with institutionalized movement from one altar to another and the loud singing in exact rhythms, and

everything on time. It is beautiful there, but I need the quiet of this Mayapur and my own personal seat, my own rhythm, the ease that allows me to stop when the song is over or it's time to sing a new one. Those who live in that other Mayapur are blessed with love for Gaura. Their minds are drowned in *prema* whereas mine tends to dwell on the linoleum. Yet there is something special about this Mayapur of the spirit, this Vrndavana, this place in which I can chant and beat on the *brhat-mrdanga*.

* * *

Considering Whether To Begin Bhakti
& You know you want to be a devotee
and sing the way a man does who is
happy and makes music in his own way.
Destination Unknown some say
and perhaps that can be said
although we all would like to know where
we are headed. We want to go to Krishna
and don't mind whatever ordeal is required
for us to reach our goal.

* * *

Srila Prabhupada, Srila Prabhupada
my master life after life
you told us not to remember Krishna vaguely but
to think of Him as He spoke to Arjuna
that form with two hands "Syama, rain-cloud
fresh, holding a flute. No Michelangelo old-man
for us.

* * *

Krishna science startles the stage! They want
to see, "Can you people play
music? I thought it was forbidden."
And can you dress other than in
saris or *dhotis*, do you have to shave
your heads? "Are you considered
minor devotees if you don't?
Can you follow Sai Someone or Other
and still . . .

* * *

Yes, it's permissive, but here, sit at
Govinda's and enjoy. You don't

have to say prayers to eat. Here's a carbonated
drink made from crushed passion fruit.
And the music comes from Govinda.

* * *

They said they were glad to hear
that Krishna consciousness was so nice.
Can you write free, though?
Oh, yes. Listen: A list
went home players
chanted Hare Krishna in the best
way he said words birds and
sighed
the witch became bewildered
only the nondevotee
Rose and first thing wrote on his
wrist with a ballpoint pen. Nothing on paper.

* * *

So.
I see.
Very well.
Then I'll join. But I'll
practice at home. Where can I get
the picture of Krishna and the guru?

* * *

And can my brother come too?
He's a drummer and practices
the cymbals late into the
night, Is that okay as long as he
chants Hare Krishna? "

* * *

Not Nowhere
& *"Where are we? We're nowhere!"*
You and Beckett may say that
but I say better to be on the track
of going back to Godhead
and everything used for that every inch
of the way "yes,
it's better that way.

* * *

If you can move fast, dance,
have pretty girls in your group,
we don't say no but
use it to encourage thirty thousand
people in a stadium to get up
and dance and sing something other than
"Where are we? We're nowhere!"

* * *

O Govinda, please be kind
to Your devotees. A man
once said he wanted to know God
after he went to steal God's jewels.
He became a devotee, just like that.
Even Dracula became a devotee
in a skit I saw.

* * *

A big band? A big painting.
The late-April morning birds
and a silent man washing in the
bathroom. He's an expert tier
of shoelaces. The sound of the washing
machine, children . . . Bring it all
to Krishna and don't leave it nowhere.

* * *

Simple *bhajana* in Vrndavana lane
this white-washed cold adobe
straight Krishna consciousness even
with his off-key phrasing of mantras
not nowhere. "

* * *

9:30 a.m.

"This *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is the literary incarnation of God, and it is compiled by Srila Vyasadeva, the incarnation of God." (*Bhag.* 1.3.40) My PMrB "Comment" praises the *Bhagavatam* with standard references. I would like to retrieve my thirty-volume early edition set when devotees come here from America in May. I propose to re-enter the *Bhagavatam* the way I imagine I used to, one small book at a time.

The *Bhagavatam* is *amala-purana*; it contains nothing but pure devotional service. Lord Caitanya recommended it. I repeat these phrases, not with realization but with faith and hope. Sometimes we say we should speak only what we realize, but Srila Prabhupada says we can repeat the way a child repeats "with that kind of simplicity "what his parents have told him. Children don't know everything, but their statements are correct if the authority they are citing is correct.

Thus "Whatever we would expect to gain by associating with Krishna can be achieved in the pages of the *Bhagavatam*. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* should be worshiped as Krishna." (PMrB, Vol. 2, p. 85)

Let us become friends with the pure devotees whose lives are depicted in the *Bhagavatam*. Someone wrote me that he finds ISKCON friendships superficial; he prefers to be alone. Okay, but don't make it a negative, frustrated renunciation. rather, live with the best of friends: Sukadeva, Prahlada, and the *gopis* and *gopas* of the Tenth Canto.

It's now 9:50 a.m. and I already feel my day moving through its typical cycle. I have already finished with my peak hours (midnight through 6 a.m.). If someone were to ask me to chant *japa* with the same energy I had at that time, I know it wouldn't be possible. Nor can I read with as much attention. I have also bypassed my drowsy hour (8 - 9 a.m.). Now I'm reading along okay, but here comes Uncle remus singing, "Zip-a-dee doo-dah, zip-a-dee ay!" Know who I mean? Of course, I don't mean Uncle remus, I mean Peter Pain. Twinge in the old eye "first symptoms "and today I can't take an Esgic because I've used up my quota. I hope to make a few more notes before I shutdown with the full-blown headache. And some patient *Bhagavatam* reading.

Lord Caitanya did not feel the pain of cluster headaches. rather, He felt the pain of "I don't love Krishna," and, "Where is My Krishna? I saw Him for a moment, but He is gone."

* * *

11:35 a.m.

Emotions more sensitive with headache. I feel we are being neglected over here, despite my so-called position as guru of these devotees. We ask disciples to help us prepare this house, but they come forward only slowly. In the old zonal guru days, I'd have had a team doing a marathon until the job was done, but with it came all those *anarthas* and excesses. I asked for my dictated tapes to be mailed, but they are still sitting here. What to do?

* * *

12:13 p.m.

Draw with colors "don't choose them ahead of time but reach out for them and let them mix themselves "green, blue, yellow, red (risky when I feel pain), and outlined with black. It's a release and preserves a record of this time. It's a gesture. What will make it eternal is that I do it with devotion. Otherwise, *Srama eva hi kevalam*.

* * *

3:08 p.m.

Sharp pain now. Plan to stay in bed from 5 p.m. on, even while work continues on the house. right now Bhakta Leo is painting ceilings, Caranaravinda is scraping paint off the windows, and Aniruddha is repairing the outer wall. Madhu is clearing the downstairs so that the lino men can go right through the rooms tomorrow. I feel pinned to this chair. See your position? Look at your connection with Krishna and make it a prayer.

* * *

9:05 p.m.

Michael, the electrician, wasn't satisfied with the devotee electrician-architect's wiring scheme. He put three lights in the work room while I stayed awake listening from the bedroom. Now Madhu is going to ask him if he'll come and do the bedroom while I shift over to the work room. All this with a headache, but at least it has shifted from the right eye to the top of my head.

I "meditated" "concentrated" on the pain, and told it, "I'm not trying to control you or pray that you go away. I cannot subdue you, although I've tried. I watch you carefully, however, and accept the inevitability of your presence, waiting for any decision you might make to leave. Because I have work to do."

My guess is that Michael won't want to do another room. He has already worked all day, and this is an extra gig for him. Inconvenient for us "his night work" but it's all we could get. Madhu says he's a nice guy. He told him I have a migraine, so he has been working quietly. I'd tell you, dear reader, about the lights and the architects, but it would take too long, and someone might be offended.

As I sat in bed in the dark concentrating on pain, did I turn to God? One thing I did "I visualized the electrician seeing Radha-Govinda in Their beds, and the picture of rupa and Sanatana Gosvamis writing, the pictures of Srila Prabhupada and me, and it gave me an unusual vantage as to my life and beliefs, imagining it from an outsider's viewpoint. We are exotic, intense, foreign. But this time I felt appreciation for it all, not the usual carping I used to feel when we were out on the road.

April 21, 4 a.m.

I stayed in bed with my headache and woke at 2:30 a.m. Then I discovered that there was no electricity on in the house. I thought it might have had something to do with the electricians. Whatever caused it, the house was chilly and dark. I used my flashlight to find a votive candle, then sat in the dim candlelight and chanted *japa*. I got an inkling of how completely dependent we are on electricity. Without electricity we have no light or heat, and we can't heat water or cook. My day is usually so physically simple; whatever struggles I undergo are internal. It made me appreciate those people who have to spend their days struggling for basic amenities "heat and light, food and shelter.

I am also again hearing the remark Madhu made last night: "This is what it means to be a householder. Just imagine how much more entangling it would be if you had children." He was referring to our attempt to turn this place into a home. Why go

through this struggle? When he made that remark last night I thought the struggle was worth it, but is it?

Most of my head pain has subsided. Somehow, I still don't have much can't energy for vigorous *japa*. Otherwise, it would be an adventure to sit in a room lit only by a single votive candle and chant until dawn.

* * *

5:50 a.m.

Waiting for the magic wand of electricity to suddenly come back on. It's a rainy, gray day beginning. Madhu came over to start a fire in the stove. The fire won't warm the upstairs though. Neither do we have any pots we can use to heat water on it. Madhu has gone off again, I think to prepare breakfast next door.

* * *

Dream while I had a headache: A devotee knocked on our door and sankirtana together. There was a group of devotees present. I then told the woman of the house, "I have a headache, a terrible headache. I just wish it would go away. I know that's not a very spiritual thought." She sankirtana.

* * *

Later, I dreamt that a Navy commander was speaking with a petty officer. I identified in the dream with the petty officer, although he didn't seem to be *me* exactly. The petty officer asked his commanding officer, "Sir, will I have a chance to go back to that house where we were staying before the ship leaves? I have lost my teeth in recent months, and I have a full set of dentures at that house." The commander smiled and said that the petty officer's losing his teeth was due to unknown causes. He added that Karl Marx did not believe in God, but he believed in unknown causes. The dream ended there.

When I thought about this dream later, I thought how for me, faith in Krishna consciousness, my religion, doesn't come easily. I have to fight for it against doubts and atheistic arguments. In the end, this ability to fight for faith may be one of my greatest strengths in Krishna consciousness. One great saint I have read even said that he questioned (or doubted) in order that his faith could become that much stronger. That my faith may become stronger "somehow I thought of that when the commander said Marx believed in unknown causes, although he was an atheist.

Also, while in the dream, the petty officer seemed to think he might be able to learn something by following the commander. The commander didn't seem prepared to allow him to get his dentures, however. The petty officer accepted that as an austerity that would help him. He would learn to be detached, to face life without his teeth. Incidentally, the commander himself had rotten, ugly teeth.

* * *

8:20 a.m.

Lucky to get a clear head and some pages written today. Hare Krishna. I lack, I . . . lack love and awareness of Krishna. I told a devotee he shouldn't berate himself so much. I should say that to myself too.

"Do your own thing for Prabhupada," he told the devotees, as he himself blooped and sold the temple building, pocketing the cash. When Srila Prabhupada heard it he said, "If you are going to do your thing for Prabhupada, then you have to obey what Prabhupada says 'or else how is it 'for Prabhupada'?"

Today may be an unusual day "no heat, no electricity, and all day the lino men here working on the floor. I can't even use the bathroom. Plus I still have the leftovers from my headache.

* * *

A Willing Servant

& You wanted to be happy in a house
so here I am/ I made my way by
Krishna conscious somersault.
Are you with devotees? Yes, of course.

* * *

Be on time and if not
I'll ring the bell "this house is cold my
master doesn't scold
because I worship him
malleable *murti*
and the bath water is
cold.

* * *

Oh, the truth is I dozed and
ached some more. I reacted and
Refrained, let loose emotions
come if they wanted to
wrote Krishna conscious sonnets
and woke up to rural Ireland
hoping our lights
would come on.

* * *

Wake up *atma* and sigh
deeply for God. That sigh
will not be free. "

* * *

Report for Duty
& O Krishna, You want us to report
for duty to the best devotees and
to serve them and
gradually learn their secrets.
How else will we develop the Gaudiya mood?
We don't want to be Westerners forever, do we?

* * *

Yes. No. I mean I want to make music
to get through a day honorably
to work like the linoleum men
do "they get on with the job
and go home.

* * *

O Krishna, I'm here for You
if You will just reveal Yourself
to me and even
if You don't. "

* * *

10:20 a.m.

"Sri Vyasadeva delivered it to his son, who is the most respected among the self-realized, after extracting the cream of all Vedic literatures and histories of the universe."
(*Bhag.* 1.3.41)

The electricity is back on. This room is full of light. I'm wearing two pairs of sweat pants, though, because it's so cold. Jayadvaita Swami's secretary phoned Praghosa (with JS in the background, prompting). He's coming in about nine days to tour Ireland. He asked for me, but Praghosa was evasive. M. will speak to him over the weekend to set something up for us to meet.

Waiting for the lino men, for Godot, for you, for me, and especially, for the passage of time.

[Writing in Time

Crisis: the day had so many interruptions. Start again. A bath! I was able to take a bath! My head has remained clear. Waiting, waiting "*The Iceman Cometh, The Connection, Waiting for Godot*" all plays where people are waiting for someone to arrive. And he rarely does. I am waiting for the lino men to come sloppy and dirty, slow or efficient (I doubt that), and to do the job. Perhaps they won't come at all. Our cement floors are barely in shape to receive them. Leo is chipping old pieces of cement off the floor so the lino people will have a smooth surface.

Get ready for lunch "that puppet show.

Praghosa said he didn't know where I was. JAS must have thought that was strange.

Do I hear a car or little old truck full of lino men approaching?

No, not yet. Maybe they won't even show up today.

You want to drop that dialogue about whether freedom in art is suitable for an ISKCON *sannyasi*? I feel uncomfortable talking about it; I prefer simply to do it. And make a Krishna conscious connection to it as I have been doing. It's bold, it's old, baby, you've been told, slippin' and a-slidin', peepin' and a-hidin' . . .

Professor Stalward ate an egg. I chastised him for that. We don't eat meat, fish, or eggs, I told him, and we follow the guru. *Acarya-van puruso veda*. You must too. Guru is life and soul. You're not floating away from that, are you "by your art, I mean?

No, no, I'll not become another you-name-him (or maybe better you don't name him), not another Arrogant Maharaja, Mad or Aggressive Maharaja, empire-building, sweet-talking, ladies' man. Not me. I'm just sleeking off alone, man.

I will stay if you let me wield my Lyra giant colored pencils and my free-writing pen. That's all I ask.

How can we inspire you in prayer?

Cut my hair.

How can we bring you back onto the ISKCON track?

Get rid of the rack.

How can we make you see the point?

By giving me space.

And so the picture of Lord Jagannatha covered the buck-toothed smile of the authoress of a writing book. Breakfast nook family. Four kids "feed 'em. I'm a householder now because I hold a house. Isn't that funny? We'll see how long it lasts. Hare Krishna. Take him out, throw his belongings into one or two suitcases "no more.

Hey, everybody has a home base, don't he? Even that Swami "I stayed in his room and went through his drawer "he has some Shivananda health book and a special pillow and chair.

Rightful premises.

Heave-ho. This is a challenge to your hermit life. But don't challenge me. Can't you see that my hermit flag is still flying from the lamppost? It says, "For Prabhupada," and "Your source for nectar."

Whew.

Bhakta Leo is making a chip-chip sound with his chisel and hammer. That sound reminds me of India "it's the exact same sound. Even Srila Prabhupada didn't like that sound, and said he would leave Mayapur (and Bombay) until the chip-chipping was completed. It seems to be my penance to hear that sound. They are building something for Krishna, and so am I.

Purusatam: Supreme Enjoyer. He controls all worlds by His glance, which is carried by Lord Siva. He is not involved; His energies do it. He's in His internal pleasure energy. The lino men must have gotten lost.
I'm relieved to have taken a bath. Twenty minutes finished.

* * *

12:32 p.m.

It all depends on my remaining in good standing if I want people to read my books. I don't ever want to become a post-denominational priest like Matthew Fox. Or a schismatic rebel. Or even such wild grass that I'm no longer accountable to the GBC. But I must also be accountable to my Krishna conscious conscience "Srila Prabhupada told me to do that. That requires being able to *breathe*. I'm not mad, so I don't need to be straitjacketed.

Lino men and lunch "both late.

* * *

1:25 p.m.

Better late than never, the lino men arrived. We weren't actually prepared for them until now anyway. Now the house is full of construction noise. No post-lunch nap for me. I'll chant Hare Krishna in my second-floor hiding place.

* * *

2:48 p.m.

Be satisfied to repeat Vyasa's message. Simple. We should be satisfied when we speak (or write) in *parampara*. This implies that we believe the *parampara* message, that we desire to receive it ourselves. The message is a life-saving teaching, and those who engage in delivering it are lifesavers. "It's a living chain of devotion to a particular set of teachings." (PMB, Vol. 2, p. 106) Krishna consciousness is not something you join as a nominal participant; it is meant to be wholeheartedly adopted.

As I write, one of the lino men is whistling a loud, happy tune.

* * *

3:12 p.m.

My desire to fulfill my daily writing quota is doomed today. I also feel it's vain; my thoughts won't live anyway "I haven't enough of importance to say. First thought: I'm too warm right now, but later I may be too cool.

Rain tinkling on skylight.

I thought of taking a walk when the workers leave, but it may be raining harder by then. Madhu is chanting his *japa* on this floor. I say the word "chant" so many times I have become tired of it.

Whistle,
thistle.

The poor lino man is expending his energy.

We're all sad clowns, sitting in the spotlight of our own minds. The crowd waits, so we improvise a joke. Emmet Kelly used to try to sweep up the spotlight. Everytime it moved, he swept after it. But his tricks were all rehearsed.

You were saying? Something about Sukadeva "that it didn't matter what we say, as long as we speak in *parampara*. It doesn't even matter where you speak it "in Trinidad or Ireland "we use the same verses, the same analogies, under the same wind and stars and moon. That's fine. April's cool breezes can cool the same cheek. I don't get tired of it if I can meet life alive, alive ho.

Then death. Krishna will meet us there, we tiny souls who swing out and into our next lives.

It happens all the time.

Hey, this writing session doesn't require such profound thoughts. Here's a video cartoon of a personified denture with legs and arms, a smile and a whistle. He walks down uninhabited roads and feels good. As in his dream, the stereotype commander is usually a cruel, war-mongering person, but an instructor too. He believed in unknown causes. I believe in writing what I don't know "whatever comes.

The lino men are finishing up "it only took a few hours "now loading their truck, getting paid. I'll go downstairs to look at their work as soon as they drive down the lane. Will it be gold-colored? Black with pseudo-mosaics imprinted on it?

Burp. Had *halava* for lunch. "It was good," he said, and I agree. I asked Leo, "Will you have a little *prasadam*?" He replied, "I'm like my brother Arjuna "I need a lot of *prasadam*." All right, a lot. I stand corrected. I meant not that he should eat only a little, but that now he can honor some of Prabhupada's and Radha-Govinda's leftovers. They're gone; the house is ours again. M., I'm sure, will be up to announce that, but I won't wait for him. Let me go down and see what they've done.

O'Henry. Clarks. Chunkie. Milk Bar. Hershey's. Yogi Bar. Carob Bar. Bliss Bar. Clarks. I already said that. Now put candy aside and enter the chapel. Get on your knees and pray, and don't get up until it's time. Dear Lord, let me center myself and be with You.

The dew,
the new approach is

anything goes. God will be pleased with me. God is me, they say, is with me, and I am in Him. That is The Presence. Basil Pennington was teaching my Tirthapada dasa how to center in a garden in Hong Kong, but Tirthapada dropped it. He had thought it would help him in his *japa*, but I guess it didn't.

Talk and talk about who will come out here and help with the house. Talk of being a hermit. Some superficial talk. And always more letters to answer. Accomplish things a little at a time. May this session help unshrug me. May it not renege me (or bring on a headache). I promise to Krishna-ize every moment.

When JS comes, I'll speak about the magazine, not about me. When he leaves, before he comes, tonight in bed, lay your head on a shallow pillow. God is here. Here. Just hear.

I believe Stols and Jody and Jude will come out and bake a pie. The guru on high in his room,
on his ass
I mean or *asana*
will be tolerant and
demanding only
in his mind.

* * *

After reading Poets
After the poets it's mine to sing
tethered to my cause. Then it's just a matter of
time before I spring it on the reader
and myself.

* * *

Who are you all alone? Covered
with influences. Can you see them?
Does someone care to hear
what they are?

* * *

Tell of the *atma* we all share "
you are one and I am one too, each
same spirit, persons, and one Supreme
Spirit. There, I got it out
again.
Rain on skylight
and back
to your routine.

* * *

That's it; that's all that came out. Is it a poem? It seemed to have broken through something for me, loosened up my hand, whatever it is.

Madhu is out buying wood or paint "there's no end to the work here. Where is the easy-going, quiet routine we thought we would have here?

Nothing to say, nothing to say, somebody is coming. Letters to answer "same thing, same thing. Nothing to say, same thing. rain beats down, but now we have heat, so I have no more complaints.

Night Notes, 5:51 p.m.

It's been hard today to feel the EJW energy. Okay, that's understandable "you had to write through the blackout, the headache, the cold, and the lino men, and you just couldn't feel the simplicity of life dedicated only to Krishna and service. Maybe Geaglum *is* better for that. But it may be better here, too, tomorrow.

Night notes, night rider. New bed, old head, all dead, but none of it matters because we got a new floor.

M. said the lino men tried to cheat him; they jacked up the price an extra £50 from what they had agreed on. He says he won't pay that last amount. Don't worry about it, he says. They're not going to come back and rip up the floor over £50, or if they insist, he guesses he'll pay them. Yes, better I don't hear about it. Too many other things to think about.

Let this lad sleep.

April 22, 12:10 a.m.

"One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna." (Bg. 4.9)

Lord, I have come to Your book and to this notepad. Thoughts pass through my mind "what different disciples are doing, etc. Thoughts come and go. But You, and my spiritual master's presentation of You in Bg. 4.9 "if I can simply accept on faith Your statements, then I can attain liberation. I have to die anyway, but if I die thinking of You in faith and knowledge, I'll gain eternal liberation, leave behind all else. So I must practice leaving behind all else now. I can practice while reading and while writing. Writing is how I can be with others and whomever wants my help. I need to have faith in my writing, just as I have faith in the statements of *sastra*. Krishna *is* God, and this *is* my service to Him "my offering.

And my writing doesn't have to be perfect. Madhu pointed out to me many features of this house which appear to be imperfections but which are actually representative of devotional offerings. For example, the wall, the confused way in how the lights were put in in this room, which resulted in the light fixture's wires being exposed, the varnish, etc. All the service is flawed by human error, but if the offering is made with genuine desire to please, then it is perfect.

Spiritual knowledge must be accepted directly from the *Vedas*. Give up speculation. Lord Brahma says that too in his *jnane prayasam* verse. Lord Caitanya accepted the purport of that verse as the basis upon which perfection in devotional service is judged. Hear with faith and remain honest and humble in life. Hear submissively.

Whatever little strength I have I dedicate, therefore, to my service. Would I like to attain the eternal abode? Of course. The fields of Vrndavana, the houses, forests, cows, birds, and most of all You, dear Lord, and Your beloved friends "I would like to meet them all.

* * *

Lord, I read how You reciprocate with devotees according to their desire to know You. You are with me in my life. I wish to increase my desire to know You. Please . . .

Oh, that I may imprint that plea with real quality. I'm not asking for headache-free days, or even peace, freedom from visitors and violence. Those are impossible and relative requests. This material world is a dangerous place, and I am not going to change it. So please let me turn to You in essence, through the inward core of experience, Krishna, my dearest friend.

Please "the beginning of many well-tuned phrases and good poems. Please. Even if we don't make the noblest of prayers, even if our hearts are weak and our safety uncertain, our prayers sound sweeter when we beg from the heart. Hare Krishna.

* * *

4:37 a.m.

Compose yourself. You don't have to write the first thoughts if they are not worthy. My neighbors got in at 1:30 this morning from their work at the Dublin restaurant.

Sometimes while I'm hearing *Vidagdha-madhava* for more than thirty minutes, I grow tired of it. It's too rich. So I stop. But it's an important infusion into my parched soul.

This morning I heard how Subala dresses as Radharani. Jatila captures the false Radha and tries to bring Her before Purnamasi. Jatila thinks she has caught Radha talking with Krishna. When she removes the veil from "her" face, however, everyone sees Subala laugh. The elder *gopis* roar with laughter themselves, then become angry with Jatila for accusing Radha of infidelity. Jatila slinks off in shame.

While all this is going on, Krishna meets the real Radha, but for a while He thinks She is Subala in disguise. The male parrot speaking from behind the scenes praises Krishna and defames the *gopis*. Then the female parrot sings the *gopis'* glories. Madhumangala throws a stick at her.

Then a bumblebee approaches Radha, and Madhumangala chases it away, speaking his famous line, "Madhusudana has gone!"

I hear, I hear, and I think this is good for me. I listen while I touch the Divine Couple's merciful forms, bathing and dressing Them, today in white cloth embroidered with flowers. The flowers on Radha's dress are blue; Krishna's are yellow and green. All glories to Them. All glories to Rupa Gosvami's poetry. And all glories to my eternal spiritual master who has allowed me entrance into Their service. May I increase it more and more.

Little, little, little life. I was hearing with more submission than usual, I think, this morning in the bathroom. Srila Prabhupada was lecturing in Mayapur on how the Lord appears in five features of the Absolute Truth; the sixth feature is guru. There is the guru within and the guru who preaches from without. Yes, I listened and accepted what he said. Chant Panca-tattva mantra, then Hare Krishna. In Mayapur.

Srila Prabhupada was not a man of this world. He appeared as a businessman or whatever, but that was external. He was compassionate enough to come to us and deliver

taste for Krishna consciousness. He saved *me*. How could I ever leave him, or even think of him in a relative way?

* * *

Little life and the essence of spiritual life. We have to admit we are persons and then live accordingly. We see things, we smell them, and although it is our tendency to see and smell for our own pleasure, we can simply do those things for Krishna's pleasure. Srila Prabhupada spoke often of how stupid it is to live subservient to our own senses. The senses are meant to be enjoyed by their owner, HrsikeSa. Therefore he advised us, gave us practical activities to do, an inner life, a society, and a cause.

What was I going to say just now? That I heated the water for my bath? I was going to say that I answered a letter and told them that it is best to be a devotee and to associate with other devotees. One man is chanting thirty-two rounds a day and feeling it improves his life in other areas. I told him he was a good example for all of us. Another works as a cane harvester on a sugar estate. A few devotees told him he would have to quit his job before he could take *brahmana* initiation, but I told him that every job in this world is filled with imperfections. Another man wants to know when I'll be in India to teach a VIHE course. He doesn't know that my health will not allow that. Hare Krishna. So much neatly lettered correspondence. I decipher them one by one.

O little life, are you the little way of a saint? Are you the path to performing small acts of sacrifice as devotion? Do you love God as one would love one's spouse in the early stages of infatuation?

Or by little life do you mean something else?

The new linoleum floor is simulated wood. I find it pleasing. We can keep it clean with a mop.

O little life, how much of you should I reveal? A novelist tells only that which would contribute to the drama of his story. A painter adds only the details that promise to become rich. O Krishna, my life is scattered "*everyone's* is. There is a limit to how familiar we can become with it.

I am tired. Heard from a *bhakta* who hasn't written me in a long time "another shooting star that flew through space and then cooled. Hare Krishna mantras stream out. Sometimes when I hear Srila Prabhupada chanting on tape, I realize how young he sounds. He lives on in the silence of my own chanting.

* * *

The Promise

& Wake up Madhu in his house
then prepare an EkadaSi breakfast "
words streaming out like a promise.

* * *

He said he once promised to follow the four rules.
Remember? Well, I say do it. It's *got* to be and

don't forget it. The music of life
is good
if we sing it for Krishna.
There are new ways to sing,
to offer of ourselves
to keep a promise of the rules
no pools. I don't have to
count pages to know I am keeping
my quota. Now let the hand move.

* * *

Please, sir, don't off-hand me
I want to be there to serve the Lord our
master. In the temple. In this house
a temple.

* * *

Little life "a flame in a
votive cup, a be-here-now one-of-the-crowd
gathered at the feet of a giant
Nrsimhadeva Deity or the Panca-tattva
ghee lamps flaming.

* * *

O Govinda

* * *

those cool but true young men
grew old and quit their youth
bands moved into
Krishna conscious temples
sorry and run down
and attended bedraggled *mangala-aratis*

* * *

all for the promise of hope eternal
as incense burns
and a single drum beats.

* * *

Govinda promised.
Now keep your honor. "

* * *

Dream: Devotees were at a table with Prabhupada. A Godbrother, who has fallen away, was hosting the gathering. There was an array of well-cooked *prasankirtana*. I was asked to lead. I sankirtana. "It's over now. I will serve out the *prasadam*," he said, and he smiled. We were amazed that he would serve *us* our plates.

* * *

9:25 a.m.

"This *Bhagavata Purana* is as brilliant as the sun, and it has arisen just after the departure of Lord Krishna to His own abode, accompanied by religion, knowledge, etc. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the age of Kali shall get light from this Purana." (*Bhag.* 1.3.43)

Earplugs in so I won't hear Leo and Madhu conversing below about the three different coats of paint they will need to put on the cave walls. Srila Prabhupada says people waste human life; they are "royal editions of the animals." But Lord Krishna came to teach us, to show us the light. Since His departure, the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* has become His torch bearing light into this dark, material world.

The light of the *Purana* . . . "Big holes in the walls . . . " M. just came up to tell me that Bhakta Leo has arrived and is painting. "I know!" I said, and smiled, giving him a thumbs up.

"So these are your notes?" That's what I said to Srila Prabhupada when I bought those first volumes of the *Bhagavatam* from him. "These are your commentaries?" Yes, they are.

These are my notes "not entirely free of pretense; not entirely spontaneous or overflowing with *bhakti*. Just look at the newly published PMrB (which, incidentally, was printed in India and doesn't open like a normal book. Unless you hold it down with both hands, it snaps shut like a bear trap).

"O learned *brahmanas*, when Sukadeva Gosvami recited *Bhagavatam* there, I heard him with rapt attention, and thus by his mercy, I learned the *Bhagavatam* from that great and powerful sage. Now I shall try to make you hear the same thing as I learned it from him and as I have realized." (*Bhag.* 1.3.34)

Do we hear from Srila Prabhupada with rapt attention? It takes an inner ear. I've blocked my physical ears this morning, but will that help me hear with the inner ear? "Now I shall try to make you hear . . . " Somehow or other. Go for it whether reading is a picnic or dry study. Even if you've been reading this same book for thirty years.

I like reading the parts in PMrB describing my life at Saranagati in that cabin. "Now the snow is lashing around the cabin, but we'll be warm tonight. Even if the fire goes out, I can always get up and start it again." (PMrB, Vol. 2, p. 121) I can almost smell the burnt logs. It is a nice place, and that was a nice time.

That's about all I can do at one stretch "two verses and purports. I started a third, but felt too much uphill push. I'll come back to it later. Robert Service in the Yukon, "The

Cremation of Sam McGee"? Hardly. This is an armchair reminiscence of a sweet time both imagined and real rediscovered in the bear-trap book (don't complain) which is really a man-eating flower "if it snaps shut on your hand or nose, you'll only be stuck in nectar.

* * *

10:02 a.m., Hand Writ

Earplugs out now because this is more physical writing "I don't have to concentrate on reading the *Bhagavatam*, just on moving my hand. The sounds of Leo and M. are friendly enough; I can absorb them.

But I'd prefer a silent man slopping paint on the stone surfaces, like I am up here, writing by hand, never making a sound. God gave us hands to perform honorable *bhakti*.

O hand, do you have a passage you would like to give? Can you open a safe or a hole in a wall, reach in and discover the treasure? What if you get bit by a rat? You have to be careful when you reach a hand into dark places. But I am writing in sufficient light, so can my physical hand reach safely into the nonphysical realm? It would have to be sensitive to vibrations.

Oh, bunk.

No, skunk.

It ain't. Don't punch a skunk. Prabhupada said if we kick skunks, we might come away with a bad smell.

O hand, be clean and pure; follow the four rules. Krishna will speak to you eventually.

(Bhakta Leo is singing a baritone *kirtana* right under me on the first floor.)

This book, O hand, will end tomorrow.

When my brother comes to visit Ireland and catches up with me, I won't tell him this: "Norman Mailer told an audience in Boston (SureSvara Prabhu was there) that there is a mystical nerve connection between the hand and the brain." I won't tell him that because I'm no mystic; I'm a simple worker. Swing with it.

Krishna, Krishna. The man downstairs is working, whistling away. Yesterday the linoleum man whistled; today it's Leo. Both of them get the job done. They take a blank area and cover it with color or veneer or whatever we ask. Me too. I cover blank pages and thus cover a patch of the world's blankness. I make it nice for Krishna.

Krishna, I love You, and I want You to lead me. I don't deserve Your special revelation. I chanted a few extra rounds. My arm is aching now. I loved my sister Madeline once, and Bove and Jove. Love sounds like a mushy word, but it's not. Did Allen Ginsburg love Krishna? "Not enough to dream of it."

Too tired to go on.

* * *

12:13 p.m.

Hare Krishna. Leo singing an Aindra tune, and I find myself singing it too. Infectious.

I read the minutes of a disciples' meeting in Guyana. Surely I'll have to return there. Their life seems peaceful enough; neither the government nor the local nondevotees

harass them, as I thought might happen when I was there last time. Most of the devotees live in Hindu villages. Many are my disciples. They speak about me as their guru, and try to understand my books and attitudes. Something has developed between us over the years "a family connection that won't be severed. I'll go not next year, but the year after that. In the meantime, we'll correspond.

The lives in letters cannot be denied. Sometimes I look at the pile and don't feel like responding "it seems too much of an effort "but as soon as I start, I feel the release and the words come. I assume the mode of instructor, but try not to be phony. I manage to keep my integrity through it.

* * *

2:25 p.m.

Just took a half-hour nap. Had some kind of dream "something about *rushing* "but can't remember the details. Up now and go downstairs. Leo is coating the walls with bright green paint "Madhu's choice "in the area where Madhu will have his desk.

Back to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and PMrB. Aniruddha hammering in the bedroom. In go the earplugs. "On hearing Suta Gosvami speak, Saunaka Muni . . . congratulated . . . " (*Bhag.* 1.4.1) If the *Bhagavatam* speaker knows that his audience is keen and qualified to hear the *Bhagavatam*, he will be more inspired to speak it. By his own realization, a speaker maintains the *Bhagavatam's* original purpose while presenting it in an interesting manner. He has to, of course, both believe in what he is saying and practice the conclusions in his own life. This is ideal speaking. Do I follow that advice? PMrB reports, "I'm a passive fellow (organism) taking in the world with my amoebic feelers and reporting on local life, like last night's snowfall." (PMrB, Vol. 2, p. 128)

Yes, it was nice to be alive. But I won't say it was nice to burn my forearm on that stove. Look, I still have the scar where it happened two years ago. It *happened*. The writing is a scar, a wound, a "what? The man who wrote PMrB was trying to read, living, in part, so others would also read "to induce them to read even if they couldn't read the *Bhagavatam* directly. He added in some details of his life to lighten the load.

Saunaka uvaca. Suta suta maha-bhaga . . . Make devotees feel at ease so they will peek at *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Serve them by presenting relevant inquiries. Some devotees trust me, because I heard Srila Prabhupada speak and have read his books for so many years. Now I have the book in hand, this PMrB, and can remember living at Saranagati, what I was then. I seemed to be sounding an almost lonely note as the hours passed with so little happening. I was there for Gaura-Purnima that year, and it was a quiet festival. I wrote, "I want to get out of this limited, snow-covered world, out of this limited universe."

Text Three: Where did Vyasa get the inspiration to compile this great literature? "I am reaching out to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* not realized but desperate."

Shut the book for now. The earplugs allow me to hear every breath I take. I can't even hear the sound of the pen.

* * *

[Writing in Time

Boy, twenty minutes is a lot, and not with the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* to keep it moving. Oh, I opened the window and heard the melodion kid down in his hut pumping away on that simple line. He's forty lines behind my hand. "My mind reels with sarcastic comments." Someone said that. Idiot, you could scour a man with your acidic words. Better you stay alone.

It will never work to try to befriend. Be a gentleman like the noble Rilke. Sir, I am going into the tower to write my elegies, if the muse will allow. You common *celas* may service me, but don't expect to come up the winding stairs with me "although you may sweep those stairs. Bring me muffins, and don't eat before I do. Don't worry, I'll leave you a few crumbs.

That sort of thing. He's rash, he's game, and the seagulls in Avalon cry and die off fast. New generations transmigrate each year, and more Guarinos die off. I'm probably close to the last one over here, and I've already dropped off my name. Now please send me the \$4.32 I earned in Social Security so I can give it the ISKCON fund for Vrndavana widows. I have plans, after all, for my next life, and this will certainly help bring them about.

Sour scour. Deep in the heart is the cave (*guyam*) where the soul lives and yearns to serve and love God. Krishna has no competitor, my master says. He is *ekale iSvara Krishna*. Prabhupada makes strong assertions. *Mattah parataram nanyat* "the spiritual master is strong because Krishna is strong. Don't blame either of them for that.

I just told Aniruddha about my friendship with Baladeva. Each friendship is unique. Aniruddha likes to build nightstands, and Baladeva does other things. I told him how Arjuna was sometimes Krishna's friend and sometimes His disciple, so we can have such a relationship. But, of course, familiarity may breed contempt. It has to be done carefully. Aniruddha said he didn't want to become proud, and felt a good sense of caution about keeping himself humble. We all could use a dose of humility.

We're at less than eight minutes "this has to go for twenty. Keep going.

* * *

Uplift the man who paints, who faints. The wall is now the color of a leprechaun or a bright green Japanese kite. Or grass. Or a punk's hair.

Get on the Krishna conscious track. We climbed (imagine) into a cocoon to escape women, sex. We wanted to be monks, say prayers, follow the guru's rigid orders in that respect. Almost all serious religious cultures agree that celibacy is advantageous for spiritual practice. Conserved sensual energies please the master, raise the semen to the brain, and give strength. O Krishna, may I pray some extra rounds?

Tomorrow is EkadaSi, but today I munch on bread like an animal. It's not wise to come between an animal and its food source. Whew. This is taking a long time.

Soon I will go to the Department of Justice to sing the song of the wayfarer. This man writes no matter where the wriggles bypass.

What's your message? Is it that each person can be themselves and build something for Krishna?

Yes, I guess so.

But don't ask me how they can relate in a community. Don't even *mention varnaSrama* around me. I only know when he began to dance . . .

My message is to chant and hear and do that more and more.

Did I lead that man on, hinting that we could be closer friends? Perhaps. Although I want to be mostly alone. I get deviated from my own aloofness sometimes. Like Abhaya said, when she tells her secret, she feels drained and wants to return to a more solitary communion with the master's books "that inner world.

Is it selfish? Maybe. But you can't just be completely open with others; I agree with that. But we all want to reciprocate. Not to be totally selfish. After all, these people are working free of charge, doing it as service.

M. unshaven; me too.

Four minutes left.

"May Krishna protect us now and at the hour of death." Christian sentiments may be converted to Krishna conscious ones. I am about to die, said Maharaja Pariksit, and I want to know my duty. Srila Prabhupada assured us that we are all about to die, so our duty is to *hear about Krishna*. Just do it.

Making my final speech with two minutes left. People, pray for me.

* * *

3:52

After reading Poets

Outside fingering beads "not a new way "
water of great power pouring down the
country gutters from the hill's rains,
frothy and unclean . . . a bag
of Monster Munch 'Tater Food
Rushes by Praghosa's house
where no one is home. His neighbor the
farmer doesn't seem to be home either,
or his son, and I just realized
six weeks have gone by
just like that. I have written two volumes
of EJW since I came to Wicklow.

* * *

I'm walking the road alone
but of course with friends nearby
all "Leo worked half a
day and is now gone. Madhu building himself
another set of shelves, Aniruddha

making my night table . . .

* * *

If six weeks can pass in an instant "
I see in my mind the haggard face
of a woman growing old. Who
knows where that six weeks "those last six years "
have gone and what loneliness *she* has seen?
She is neglected now, even in the temple,
after having been promised so much.
Those who are married hardly have it easier.

* * *

I had better learn something simple to convey
for such souls, something Vedic
and true in books and lectures,
something they can apply.
People want their lives connected
to Krishna "clearly "so they can see beyond
the froth in their own experiences.

* * *

Night Notes, 6:04 p.m.

Hare Krishna. I wrote a lot today. "Your work is not as messy as mine," Aniruddha said, as we swept up sawdust after his labors in the room. (He built a shelf, the bed's headboard, a night table "all works of devotion.) I replied, "Sometimes my work is messy mentally."

But is it? Do I want to save it all, or is some, like the sawdust, to be swept up and thrown away?

A day, mine and yours. You are alien to me but friendly. I need friends. I need to give to friends. The recluse has an idea of all the people he wants to help, and he knows some, a relatively few, more personally. He keeps his life simple while reaching for the transcendental personal "God and soul. Say Krishna.

Now the house is quiet, the boards all cut, and people have finished their work. None of us were injured. Tomorrow?

Rainwater storming down the roadside in tiny but powerful waterfalls. And they're loud!

Less birds here than at Inis rath. A *sankirtana* devotee writes me, "Now that you are staying most of the time in Wicklow, will you be traveling abroad as much? Will you sometimes come up to Inis rath or Belfast or Dublin? Anyway whatever you do, I hope you can continue to write your books to inspire everyone in their Krishna consciousness." Thank you.

April 23, 12:04 a.m.

"To retire from the activities of Krishna consciousness and to sit aloof making a show of Krishna consciousness is less important than actually engaging in the field of activities for the sake of Krishna." (Bg. 4.15, purport) I leave you this quote to look at later and to decide what it means to you. My first response is to gulp, but my second response is to realize that this is the reason why I should continue to write books. This statement does not mean that the only way to serve Krishna is to be a temple manager or even a traveling *sannyasi*.

But don't be *too* aloof. Ah, me. I want to be free of the many impressions of what seems the pettiness of changing community affairs and all their crises, personality clashes, fights with the outside world, etc. We say whatever they do is part of Krishna consciousness or ISKCON, but sometimes it too much resembles karmic workings.

Surely the *Bhagavad-gita* statement means we should not abandon our duties or initiation vows. Chanting and reading should never be given up either. A *sannyasi* who has renounced family life should not give up preaching and serving his guru as directly as possible.

"The sense of eternal survivorship to Krishna makes one immune to all sorts of reactionary elements of work." (Bg. 4.18, purport) One learns this art in practice from "authorities in Krishna consciousness." If someone poses as an authority and misleads us, we are unfortunate. That so-called authority will not know the difference between action and inaction, and will inevitably make mistakes because he will be acting out of sense gratification. Often when we meet such authorities, we burn out. We thought, after all, that we were surrendered to Krishna.

Then let Him guide you through it, and find work that brings you transcendental happiness. Not work, but service. As Bhurijana Prabhu points out in his *Bhagavad-gita* commentaries, Krishna wants us to take full responsibility for our actions. It's our life, our future, at stake. Are we doing the right thing? How should we act in order to become more Krishna conscious? Don't simply pursue peace in this lifetime; take responsibility for the life of soul.

Sometimes we find that turning our souls over to "an authority" is risky. Unless we trust the authority completely. If we feel we were mistreated by "an authority," we still have to at least take partial responsibility for that. Then we have to take responsibility for what we'll do next.

I'm moving into a house, into a new phase in my life. It's a decision. I thought it out carefully. I'm already seeing some of the consequences, but not yet the ultimate ones. I'll trust in Krishna for those.

* * *

Hare Krishna. Lord Krishna speaks in *Bhagavad-gita*, and we learn to serve Him. Come on, *jiva*, do it.

Got a headache? Pound your fist.

Or be silly, or deliberately hurtful. See? You have free will.

Now calm down. You'll make yourself sick. Depend on Krishna. Do your work. Cook your meal. Serve your master. Chant Hare Krishna. Then when you breathe and eat, pray.

He wants to take credit for being a great author.

He wants to enjoy a woman or man, a steak, a French fry. He wants to have his cake and eat it too (enjoy sense grat, yet go back to Godhead). He wants to grow a beard and be a *sadhu* "at least in profile "'cause he's a handsome guy with a strong jaw. But he don't have what it takes. Where's his sophistication? Poetic, yet simple, musical, yet desireless.

Stop. You need to stop and think these things out. The roads curve dangerously around here.

You mean you're not driving to France and Italy?

Not this year. Next year I'll fly somewhere.

Hare Krishna. This place is going to be good for my health and *bhajana*. If any wants to hear from me, let them write to me.

Krishna is teaching step by step how to disentangle ourselves. He wants even the *karmis* and *jnanis* to become devotees.

In this early morning session I wanted to read more as a contemplative "just take the nectar of Krishna's statements that address *bhakti* directly. No need for more analysis than that. I am looking for my Lord's personal presence, not so much His philosophy. My master has already guided me out of the morass of city life. He gave me . . . life in ISKCON. Now I want to be with his Lord, of whom he was so confident. Prabhupada dedicated everything to Krishna; I want to know that Krishna who received Prabhupada's love. I don't have much of anything to bargain for such a revelation, but I'm hopeful.

* * *

3:22 a.m.

Dear Sir,

I saw you writing letters. You replied to their points in a loud voice. You sounded confident when you explained about the other bona fide branches of the Caitanya tree, and I saw that you didn't claim ISKCON was the whole tree. You clarified your definition of a deviant group. Your correspondent seemed to think that any group that was not ISKCON was deviant.

Then you wrote to a man who had fallen down but was rectifying himself. You encouraged him and suggested a more inner rectification, but admitted that you didn't know yourself what that was, although you are attempting to find out.

Inner-inner? The cry of the soul for God's protection and service. The genuine awareness of one's unworthiness. Not to be imitated or easily practiced.

And Sir, I saw you chanting your *japa*. Nice that Srila Prabhupada accompanies you on the tape, but where was your cry?

* * *

4:34 a.m.

Prayers to Lord Nrsimha to end the *puja*. May Narahari remove the impurities in my heart. I wish to be pure in my devotion to my spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada. May Lord Hari throw out any lingering sex desire, jaded emotions, and attachment to empirical knowledge, which causes me to doubt the Lord's pastimes. I am embarrassed and ashamed to even mention these things, but I do so with the hope that I can be rid of the garbage. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, I have not attained love for chanting, but I pray for it. I must not give up my cries for help. So I pray on the shore of the ocean.

When in *Vidagdha-madhava* the *gopis* speak of their intimate association with Kana, teasing one another, we may feel we should not be listening. We may take it cheaply. We may fail to see how their discussions are topmost spirituality. It is this inability to taste the sweet love affairs of the *gopis* and Krishna that makes some transcendentalists prefer to meditate on the Supersoul or even Brahman. We are fortunate to be protected by Prabhupada, so we listen and try to understand.

Padma speaks of her great fortune in associating with Kana. She says when she, a maidservant of Candravali, cannot be with her *priya-sakhi* in her meeting with Krishna, they sing songs of separation about Him.

Lalita says that Radha doesn't have that sense of well-being. As soon as She hears Krishna's name, she becomes intensely agitated. "That fortunate *gopi*" never relaxes. One moment away from Krishna feels to Her like an eternity. They curse the creator . . .

Hear Krishna playing His flute in the Vrndavana forest. He has spent the night (a nighttime of Brahma) in the *rasa* dance with the cowherd girls from the village of Gokula. They have all now sleepily returned home. Jatila (also known as Auriya) sees Radha wearing a yellow cloth and accuses Her of being with Krishna, but ViSakha insists that the cloth turned yellow because the girls were throwing dye.

* * *

Today They wear Their brown and gold outfits, and Srila Prabhupada has a new brown *cadar* to keep him warm. He glances at me when I look to him. Surely he knows that I want to serve him even though I am sometimes bitten by mosquitoes of *aparadha* when I get too close. He can forgive me and teach me how to follow him properly. He may ask, "Do you want to be with me in the spiritual world or not?" I will submit. I *want* to submit.

Don't demand to know him first in his spiritual form before you will agree to serve him. Perfect your understanding of the guru's inconceivable nature even as he appears in this world. He makes us enthusiastic to serve him, just as he is enthusiastic in *Krishna-ananda*. Let me meditate on that esoteric understanding of Gurudeva even while I remember him in his humanlike ways "the things he said and did during those eleven short years. We all wanted his blessings, and pushed ourselves forward. We also wanted to control at least part of his movement, and we called it preaching. He allowed us to try.

After 5 a.m. I will press the intercom button and wake Madhu. Yesterday when I rang for him, he replied immediately and said he would be right over.

It's still dark outside. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. I saw the lambs yesterday nibbling grass. At first they only nurse, butting their heads into their mothers' udders. Then they grow to walk beside their mothers, chewing grass as she chews grass. They learn soon enough, and that ensures their survival.

If I live here for years together, what will I write about day after day? The same things. I'll see them closer, and notice the smaller details. The details have meaning.

* * *

Helter skelter the cat came back and said, "No sense." No yoga by an open window.

* * *

As Best You Can
& He was tired but he tried to stay alive
and awake. I wanted to be with my master
and will learn the way.
Hare Krishna "you too?
Yes, I'm afraid the master won't want
me until he expertly kicks
out my *anarthas*.

* * *

Monkeys even. Don't get left
behind. You need the juice of Vrndavana "
we all do. The truth in that land
and the reality of it.

* * *

Stone's throw away I am now
fluttering like a butterfly in an Irish summer.
No sweltering days here.

* * *

Someone sings of a woman, but we
devotees want to hear Krishna's flute.
We are besmirched but feel cleansed
by *hari-nama*.

* * *

Told him he could clean the bathroom
and I would clean the front hall.

I don't mind vacuuming
or sponge-mopping the floors
but he should do the stairs.
I liked the taste of cleaning my soul
in the days when I scrubbed floors. "

* * *

9:18 a.m.

The *Bhagavatam* describes Sukadeva Gosvami as alert in transcendental knowledge, yet he chose to appear unexposed, even ignorant. Devotees like to associate with other devotees, but sometimes they prefer to remain alone with the Lord in their hearts and their internalized understanding of their guru's *vani*. Srila Prabhupada: "Unless one is able to relish happiness from within, how can one retire from the external engagements meant for deriving superficial happiness? A liberated person enjoys happiness by factual experience." This means he doesn't need artificial stimulation in order to feel pleasure. "He can, therefore, sit silently at any place and enjoy the activities of life from within." (Bg. 5.24, purport) We're more likely to hear Srila Prabhupada talk of the devotee on the front lines of preaching, but he also presents another option, as do the Vaisnava scriptures.

At Saranagati I wanted to reach a stage of constant meditation on reading the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and writing. I admit I was sometimes dull. I couldn't be dull like Jada Bharata or Sukadeva Gosvami "outwardly dull but inwardly self-realized. I cared too much what was happening with my body, senses, emotions, and mind. I was too alert to the outer material levels. Our bodies and minds have to be calm before we seem able to turn our attention to the soul. Even then "when we open a book or finger our beads "how aware do we become of touching our own soul?

After saying that, I become immediately alert that I want to do different things. I'm itching to be the first to use the new vacuum cleaner "it's still packed in the box. I told Madhu we would decide on cleaning stations, and that I intend to do a good share of it daily. But I must have proper equipment "a mop and wringer, brooms, sponges, etc. "appropriate for each station. regular cleaning shouldn't wait until some future date when construction is complete.

But Madhu is on the construction team "he's one of the ones who works and leaves a mess. He doesn't like to clean up after. I'll have to set an example against the odds of daily debris, sawdust, and mud tracked in on boots. As I clean, maybe I'll tell you about it. Maybe I can use it as a way to meditate on Krishna. Srila Prabhupada used to say we should be "revolutionary clean," and of course he wanted us to be completely Krishna conscious.

* * *

Hand Writ, 10:15 a.m.

Fifteen minutes spent vacuuming with the new "Dirt Devil," and oh, my aching back. I might even get a headache from that. But it does suck up sawdust from the crevices if you use the narrow attachment with the volume turned up. The vacuum cleaner came

with instructions in German, French, and English. They don't mention how much exercise it is. I could clean instead of do my yoga.

Anyway, the floor looks happier, and I probably look happier too, because I was starting to dislike the dirt.

It's funny how easy it was for me to assemble the vacuum cleaner "I remembered it from my teenage years when I had to do the stairs and my room every Saturday morning. My mother insisted. After all, she cleaned the rest of the house, so why couldn't I clean my own room and the stairs? And it's true, it wasn't much, despite my complaints. We had a Hoover, though, not a Dirt Devil.

Now I have come to this mystic place where the energy runs down the arm and into the hand in a different way. This energy is not electrical but much more subtle; it contains the power of the soul, if I could only harness it properly. The vacuum cleaner has three or four different attachments; I also have options. The vacuum sucks in; the pen flows out. What shape those words take "that's what creates the sense of excitement. Even the possibilities are unknown. You just have to join the dance.

M. says he's worried how to get along with devotees here who are not so eager to help us fix the house, and of course, he knows they have their own houses and duties. But we *need* help, especially while we are getting ourselves set up. I support him, solace him if I can, but don't want to worry too deeply about it. Neither does he want me to worry. I'm supposed to be free to write spiritual thoughts.

So they don't want to help . . . Can I say that here?

This book will end today.

Yes, we should be actively engaged in Krishna conscious work, not sitting idly and pretending to be aloof from Krishna conscious duties.

* * *

12:10 p.m.

Hare Krishna dasi sent me three cowslips from her garden. I'd like to paraphrase the note that accompanied them, but she wrote it so well from her own love and experience with these flowers that I'll let her speak for herself:

This is a cowslip. It's a funny name. . . . These are such cheerful little chappies that I don't know of anyone who couldn't love them. With their straight and sturdy (though never coarse or gross) stems, happy flowers and bouncy leaves, they can take anything the weather throws at them. I have seen them emerge completely unscathed from violent hail storms.

It's such a rich yellow, and when you look into each flower there is a little touch of golden orange which highlights the shape of the petals. . . . Some people rave about the native flowers of the British Isles. Actually, compared to the native flowers of, say, India or Africa, or the tropical rainforests, some of our flowers are pretty dull. But not the cowslip!

* * *

2:30 p.m.

"We cannot expect that a wandering preacher will always stay with us." (PMrB, Vol. 2, p. 155) Then follow his *vani*. We wanted him to stay at least on earth, but he left us. Now we have nothing but his *vani*. "He lives forever by his divine instructions, and the follower lives with him." Srila Prabhupada personified this concept as he lived for his spiritual master's order. He was so strong, so confident about it. That *vani* was not a mere, thin presence in his life; he came to know himself as the recipient of his spiritual master's full mercy. He is always with me, he said, seeing and approving what I do.

We may not be able to make such a strong assertion in our own case, but we do know, or should try to know, that we are, in fact, connected to our spiritual master. No one can take that connection away from us. Srila Prabhupada will honor his side of the connection, and so will Krishna. It's up to us to protect the sacred trust. Crestfallen, we admit to follies, mistakes, falling far short of the heroic, and even to doubts, but we know within ourselves sure and simple, strong and enduring, that we are theirs as long as we want it *"and we do want it"*. I asserted that connection for myself one snowy morning in March, when I was at Saranagati.

Connected. I'm in the bedroom, displaced again from my workroom while Aniruddha does some more carpentry work. Madhu is driving the dirty white van to Dublin; he has to reach the post office before 4 p.m. to produce his personal ID. Then they'll give him a card to claim ownership of a post office box. Everything belongs.

How did it happen that Maharaja Pariksit met the great sage, making it possible for *Srimad-Bhagavatam* to be sung to him? I like Srila Prabhupada's short and frequent assurances that *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is not fictional. He insists we accept the authority of *Sabda-brahma*. The atheists argue *against* God's existence, but we have this beautiful book that speaks to the real self.

Maharaja Pariksit and Sukadeva Goswami met by Lord Krishna's arrangement. Krishna intervened in my life too, and in the lives of everyone who has had the chance to free themselves from *maya*.

* * *

[Writing In Time

Superficial. Super official. I am not a clerk in a Dublin office, writing something on a form. Not a prof at Trinity College either. I haven't been shot down "not yet" and haven't yet run my full course of breaths. I don't know how many more I have left. It could be another forty years's worth, but that doesn't seem likely. Be kind to everyone no matter how much longer you have. The Christians are taught this as half of the Great Commandment: love God wholly, and love your neighbor as yourself. Everyone has a neighbor, even a sinful one, even a Hare Krishna.

And what do we say? Be kind to everyone. And if you presume to actually love anyone, the best kindness you can show that person is to give them Krishna consciousness.

I'm trying to.

Can I go out into the rain now? I'm feeling a little dried out.

Not yet.

Devotees write. They seem to have such difficulties. A mother tells me of her life with three kids and what a tough job it is to raise them. The children throw their belongings everywhere in the house. They make a mess and plenty of noise. They demand food, to have their clothes mended, to be cared for when they are sick. Perhaps the mother mentions to her husband that she is not chanting her rounds anymore, that she has no time, and she feels her dissatisfaction rising. She doesn't want to burden him with it, because he's having a tough time too. Most people struggle to cope.

"I write to cope," I told them last Sunday. Someone said, "What do you have to cope with? I thought your life was serene?"

Syringe. At least it's not too bad. It has become better since coming to Wicklow, more sattvic. The brahminical curse on savage passions "the driving away of mad *asuras* once and for all. "Child, leave me! Leave me!" I chase her away, that Putana witch.

Milestones: the move into this house is one. Krishna conscious lyrics written to a rock opera in Switzerland "another one. It will be a big stage production. There's also a film version of the *Ramayana* produced with the latest laser computer special effects. Big, big results reported in *ISKCON Journal*.

But scandal in the White House. Just imagine what your average man takes in as news in a day.

Branches budding. I want to see them. And chant. release one bead just as one mantra ends and the next begins.

3:31 p.m.

* * *

After reading Poets

Me out there with beads "monk, monk
don't even think the house is yours "two men
one painting, one cutting lumber "I look at what
they're doing but have nothing to say.

* * *

Our neighbor still has a few daffodils and one
tulip left. A fat bumblebee hangs on
a dandelion stalk "so briefly.
Did our master say to give this one life
to Krishna? Are we?

* * *

O Krishna, why am I thinking of roadside water
straight from the hills? Is it because I saw
that empty bag of potato chips

and the junky old Ford, the carpenter and
the cracked wall and
the same old minor dissensions
among men?
*Don't you know what I'm
carrying inside me?*
I thought to say that
on my way past.

* * *

It doesn't matter. It's too hard to reach this desk
with such precious cargo.
I stand at the gate and flash on their faces
one by one "clear sometimes
of what life is actually like.

* * *

What am I carrying? In my pockets, black
gloves; in my silence, waiting;
in my dogma, routine; in my heart,
sobriety. The carpenter says,
"I just need ten minutes
to hammer on the legs."
He was sober as drinking water.

* * *

Night Notes, 5:32 p.m.

This volume comes to an end. The end is an arbitrary one "I write for twenty-one days. Tomorrow we'll still be "moving into a house." Maybe in the next twenty-one days it will begin to feel more like a home.

Don't have much more to say. A devotee just wrote me that she's trying to write honestly but finds it very difficult. Krishna, Krishna "the simple, naked intent to want to love Him. We underachieve. But let's not mislead one another. The first sign of a misleader is pretense.

I just read a true story a devotee wrote to me. One Saturday night, she and her family were driving home from Bhaktivedanta Manor. They stopped at a Welcome Break to use the toilets and to get something to drink. As she was entering the building, she was impressed with the large potted plants the management had placed at the entrance to the building. The pots were about four feet in diameter and contained a small tree surrounded by a ring of primroses in various colors "pink, yellow, red, maroon, and blue. "It was dark and cold outside (it was spring), but I thought how lovely those flowers looked. Although it was dark and cold, and the children were tired and grumpy, I felt cheered by the sight of those colorful primroses."

Then she and her family sat down at a table and ordered some juice. "Suddenly we heard a lot of shouting and loud men's voices singing. Of course, it was Saturday night, and here was a coach-load of football supporters on their way back from watching their team. Many were drunk. They burst in, pushing and jostling, singing and shouting (I guess their team had won). Although fairly 'jolly,' one could see that the slightest upset would result in them all turning nasty. They were aggressive and intimidating, especially when I had to walk through their main group to get to the bathroom. I saw members of the staff in hurried consultation. We finished our juice as quickly as possible and went back outside. The first thing we saw was that all the huge pots had been overturned and the hanging baskets ripped down. The plants were spilt out over the concrete pavement and road."

This devotee went on to make some typical reflections of a sensitive Hare Krishna devotee about the violence. She so much loved the flowers that she thought of their fate not just at that moment, but all the way home. "Did anyone try to replant them when the pots were set upright again, or were the plants left lying there all night for the morning shift to deal with? Maybe they were all just swept up and dumped into a bin. What an inglorious end for something so harmless and pleasant."

Her story touched me. I appreciated that at least in writing, she defended her love for the offenseless flowers, and recoiled from the violence. I'm like that too. We can't make the world free of football supporters, but we can spread Krishna consciousness and work to go back to Godhead.

* * *

Rain on the skylight. Drink in the quiet. It's not eternal, but in another way it is "because we are never away from Him.

Appendix:

Short Notes File, April 14 - 17

April 14

Anything goes "I want to give impression I'm a careful writer, but I'm not.

Let them serve us

hotenany

M. doing *japa* "where's my
breakfast?

kissing his brother's wife while

his brother was still alive

this is fiction and not a fantasy

Let them serve us

A Hare Krishna priest should be careful. Write to the Executive Committee and ask if you can go to the bathroom.

So begins the Denver prattle

just to be free

I did it

with a hole in my pants
where's your *dhoti* , son?

Ask your mother. Ask your smallpox hive survivor. 90-year-old *sadhu* smiles (toothless): "I will not initiate," he said.

* * *

April 14, 1:40 p.m.

Carob cake, Korella, Katy gone, katydid . . . Indigest. Digest. Head fog. Electric space heater. Man with cigarette in mouth in our yard, burning wood, staggering around. M. brings him piece of chocolate-like cake with vanilla icing. The man eats it and thanks God. My walking cane on the floor. Neck stiff. You got to do penance and it will be all right.

* * *

April 14, 3:27 p.m.

Fog vise helmet. If I could I would write in another world a grand work. See my way through. But you can't cut off (don't want to) from the body and world to which you are connected. Sunshine wavery because the tree branches are wavery, illuminating this index card with light from the sun "and then it fades. You are part of the world, yet a spirit soul. The *sastras* inform us of that fact, and encourage us to know the difference between reality and illusion. Hear of Krishna's pastimes "that nonmaterial reality "and you can play with Him.

Little man, run to the left
behold Lord
Hare Krishna
head pressure prevents
you and there is no way
out of it.

* * *

April 15, 9:45 a.m.

Your life as you know it could collapse like a house of cards, and you'd be surprised it was so unsteady. "Oh, but I always take rest at 7 p.m., and at 11 a.m. I perform a twenty-minute *puja* for Srila Prabhupada. I've always found these activities meaningful. What do you mean they have just collapsed? Do you mean that forces outside of myself would render it impossible for me to be who I think I am?"

* * *

Persona. Write as you think you and your readers are accustomed to hear it. The legend of a fellow in his own days.

"Master, I am sick at heart. Who will betray you? Is it I?"

He replied, "He who dips his bread in his soup as I do will betray me."

* * *

April 17, 10:50 a.m.

Spare moments "while heating a *gamcha* on the radiator "do we need another man on our party of two, and who could do it? Are there thoughts that I don't write in full in EJW but would like to note? Such as my attitude toward Srila Prabhupada, and the little ways in which I might improve it? Writing more you develop proficiency. How to use time properly? You have five minutes right now. read? Chant? Draw a pic? Breathe in and exhale?

Short Notes File, April 19 - 22

April 19, 12:07 p.m.

Slight twinge in eye. "You've been in this house almost a week, how does it feel?" Good "almost too good to be true. I write and live here, and no one disturbs me. Everything is fine.

Talked with M. about whether we need to increase our party. Whoever came would have to be his assistant.

Yes, it's going to get better. Don't be sorry. Krishna is with you.

* * *

April 20, 5:53 a.m.

Rain. I could go out early for a walk. This is a cold, happy house. All alone with my imagination about God. Praise Him.

In these five minutes before breakfast I could read a serious book. I could try *Cloud* or *Four Huts*, but no entrance.

It's been a good morning, thanks to God "no headache yet.

He writes for the age

as if

he's good himself

and could overrule even God

put him back on the Staten Island ferry

with a hot dog. That'll learn him!

Get humble: a shot of whisky

on the Bowery. Now give it up again.

Meet the Swami. relive it all.