

Songs of a Hare Krsna Man

Also from
“Books Among Friends”

A Litany for the Gone

Why Not Fiction?

I am Prabhupada's Servant:
September Catchall

Sketchbooks of Joy

Songs of a Hare Krsna Man



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Series Title: "Books Among Friends"

Songs of a Hare Krsna Man
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Note

The poem series, *Songs of a Hare Krsna Man*, came to me after hearing Allen Ginsberg read on a recording Jack Kerouac's *Mexico City Blues (242 Choruses)*. Kerouac prefaces his poems with this Note:

I want to be considered a jazz poet blowing a long blues in an afternoon jam session on Sunday. I take 242 choruses, my ideas vary and sometimes roll from chorus to chorus or from halfway through a chorus to halfway into the next.

I was inspired by the energy and freedom of these verses and I thought I could springboard off them to write Krsna conscious "songs." I was intrigued by the image of the jazzman blowing separate choruses. That image didn't seem suitable for a devotee, so I made separate songs. As I wrote I thought of the Beat poets and sometimes I preached to them. Stand by for leaps.

1

Regarding Mexico City Blues—
you might say Dad was like that.
God, my dad smoked cigars,
believed in Mars,
didn't like niggers
(but then one night I was upstairs and heard
him say that his son, me,
had educated him that black people
were all right).

I got a propensity
to speak shut-up prose:
in your nose the apple is thigh.
“Krsna, Krsna” comes out honestly
from this source
where I heard it divine
first time in NYC Lower East Side in '66 when Kerouac was
somewhere else and AG at least
brought a harmonium to the storefront
and 200 dollars.
Now that's *bhakti*.

2

Cinnamon bars, candy bars, in England and Ireland
obscene posters advertising a
woman sucking a fudgsicle
I can't believe it. I'm a prude
but know the dirty tricks that ad men
play on innocent babes.
No one is innocent anymore,
screw in college dorms.
When I was a kid we were innocent?

I was saying "Krsna, Krsna, Krsna,"
singing *kirtana* in Samuel Beckett room
at Trinity College. Prithu Prabhu was
blowing the conchshell and running with the devotees
back and forth. He said, "People like it when something
exciting is happening." I lectured in Sam Beckett's
room on eternal truth and some like Manu heard it
for the first time.

Just repeating,
apple of the eye of the guru.
We all want that

and no peat diggers on
hills past Dublin.
There's a devil on that hill—
don't go there.

Ah, Blessed Mary's chapel in Dublin downtown
street mourners and prayer-makers
and Veritas book store and
harinama party threatened by cops.
They pulled his *kurta* and it ripped
but rosy-cheeked devotees were
unstoppable
until they grew older and settled down.

3

Okay, it's bad association I know,
we'll get buried under too many books.
But the rhythm is good
and I thought we could shake it up—we
Krsnaites can have our own band.
Devotee wrote me, says he wants to write a musical
like "Miss Saigon," "*Les Miserables*."
He asked me if I knew someone who could write the libretto
and could I pick the theme for him.

I wasn't satisfied with the inner dome
of Prabhupada's *samadhi* in Mayapur
but many people like it and DDD is there with
Srla Prabhupada moving
his hand to make first Sanskrit letters.
I heard George Harrison cried
when he saw it. The Indians are simple.
What do you want, the Sistine Chapel
with God reaching out His hand to touch the first man?

4

Each one different you change
like an endless stream of linked melodies
from the mind of bop priest T. Monk,
allow everything to come and finally
I discover how to use everything, *yukta-vairagya*
and everyone becomes saved. I use
every paper towel I threw away
all water I used to wash after passing stool
every book I didn't read and all the
bad guys.

Allen Ginsberg came into the storefront
and sat behind me and said, "When does he come
out?" And, "What happens?" He sat through and
Ed Sanders came one night and
very few famous or important
people of the world
come to Krsna consciousness, only plain cats—
the cleaning of the mind at 26 Second
Avenue by *ceto-darpana-marjanam*,
holy sounds inaugurated by Srila Prabhupada.

Gem Spa
chocolate cream sodas,
good-bye to all that
I'm on my way to see the
Swami at Beth Israel Hospital—
he's getting better and we are becoming
friends among devotees.
Who knew where it would end?
Who knew?
Suresvara knew,
me too.
Catch you in the next poem
before we die.

5

I am a jazz musician playing and the sounds
roll off, people dig it, the cash register
rings, he shuts the drawer.

But a devotee wouldn't
be doing that, standing on a bar blowing
a golden horn with the rhythm section of
Ted Kotick, bass, Don Freeman, piano,
Nick Stabulus, drums—
all white men, nice guys.

I rest their souls in my
years teenage and twenty.
No, a devotee would be doing some
other gig or series, similar. Like?

Eating sweetrice in old Boston temple
but I could only eat two Styrofoam cupfuls
before the gang came,
or my sister and mother.
Or I could have been doing something else forbidden
but I was a good, obedient devotee
and that's what I want to tell—
how good I was—

no profanity
no ob-sanity,
no deviancy, not even listening
to ragas of Rach and Sergei and Ravi
(but Harrison was permitted for the
Sunday guests).
No, I can't figure it out yet, what kind
of series (not a World Series)
we would have but for now
we can do it like this
off the *kurta* cuff.

6

Yes, I can do it too—
separate each poem by a cardboard fence
without a title. “This is number forty-two.”
The *excalibur* prose, you heard it before?
On Sundays we did skits. I played
the scholar and Prajapati played the boatman.
I said, “I’m speaking on a very high platform.”
We were game and regular fellas to play like
that, wouldn’t do it now, too tight
and dignified. Then we moralized, “The
purport is if you don’t know soul
and God you’ll drown in *samsara*’s ocean.”

I can tell one story after another
but it’s got to be in an improvised spirit,
like daydreaming
or night dreaming, although you get anxious
your spiritual master might not like it.

It’s the heart that counts—Krsna, Krsna, Krsna.
Let’s go to the arati of Radha-Krsna,
let’s chant Hare Krsna,

and leave all this falutin' jive behind,
let's give our whole selves,
let's forget we ever walked behind Phil
Backoff when he was trapping muskrats
for seventy-five cents per hide.

7

Whatever he's got he's got—

I'm not him.

I'm whim and whipper and whimper.

Examples of wimps:

the Columbia U. football team and George Bush.

I used to get the New York Times every Sunday.

They were so dirty-minded . . .

we grow older and more conservative.

Besides that, I'm a Hare Krsna man

and we don't like illicit sex.

We are sane and get rid of that.

I used to get the Sunday Times

but it was too much, hearing that Ted Kennedy

won nomination for U.S. President in New York

every day more minutia madness and bra ads

and what's-his-name Carter actually won

the nomination but got swamped by Reagan

even though the New York Times favored Jimmy.

In the end you feel cheated for reading

all these rags for the weeks

and months of the campaign

and on the front page they say they've
found a trunk of Cuban cigars
and women smoke them too.
I said, "No more New York Times,"
I'll find another way.

Skirt the pasture
and find Krsna, Krsna, Krsna on every
page in the newspaper of time.
I don't mean IWR which is also okay telling
preaching news from Romania but I
mean some other newspaper they don't publish
yet Krsna, Krsna, Krsna.
Maybe this is it.

Killer-whale sighted—
Krsna, Krsna, Krsna.

8

He remembers stuff, that's good,
trips he took, ran away, went down South—
I too ran away but not from the temple.
I saw guys and girls do it, got memories,
but will not forget wife went out on rooftop
to jump. What'd I do to deserve this? Happy now
without wife and kids—just me
and God (I wish, I wish, I wish),
just me and seventy-five million
people. The letters come in,
me and the leaves,
the leaves wet
solid layered and me,
God and plenty of other people first
and then almost last, me
on queue, way down at the bottom
almost the last (G for Guarino or Goswami)
assigned to the USS Saratoga. (Oh no, not again!)

Assign me to a briar path with
Br'er Rabbit, to the pink cuddlies,
assign me to safe haven
not with Migranol caffeine medicine,
assign me to go to Krsna.

9

I am still loading on things
that are not so favorable to
Krsna consciousness—you can do that if you have
power of digestion
if you can fire it in imagination
for *yukta-vairagya*. Otherwise there comes a time
even for Bhaktivinoda Thakura
when you don't white or at least
shut the outer door and just chant.
For we followers of Prabhupada
it may take another form.

There comes a time
to stop slopping around
keep straight and serious
my friend, joyful
I do like to chant Hare Krsna very much.

In the A.M. it's like wrestling with God
I thought
as I slid over the cow dung,
but one black cow was crazy.

She growls with her gray tongue
sticking out almost choking in her rage
—they say she was always that way
over-protective of her sisters and ox—
maybe something from childhood. I worry about
myself but should be concerned with her too.
The devotees here do care for her
and I care for them. On queue
to get into Guyana and Trinidad,
on cue that's my dharma—
be happy when you're there
and remember old Draupadi
the mad cow of Geaglum.

10

Yeah, I know he says crazy things, Prabhus
and I'm not aping him but I say crazy things,
you think? Listen, Chico Marx in "Night at the Opera"
is a funny film. They play it for sick people
recommend that they laugh so they'll get better.
Hold on. Hold on. Speak about Krsna
there you go again bucking
like a wild horse. Krsna, Krsna,
platinum blond, Krsna
put the words in there, the holy words,
Prabhupada said *nama cintamani krsnas* was a
parallel passage to Saint John's "In the beginning
was the Word."

Pretty far out to present it that way.
O Prabhupada, that was over
twenty-five years ago,
the students and mob revolted that night.
But Bhagavan dasa grabbed that guy who came
on stage and appeared to embrace his back of neck
but was actually holding on to him
brotherly choke-love if necessary.

Your priests, your heavies
your students were a small group on stage
with you
and the mob numbered in the thousands
even the polite ones probably
liked to see us wiped out.

End this one. It's long enough
but don't get me wrong.
I am singing Hare Krsna
in broken *kirtanas*
pieced *kirtanas*, peace-love—
the Boston temple president, “lean chieftain”
is not the center of universe
but Radha-Govinda, Krsna.
Please chant everyone.

11

Actually, I don't let go because
I'm always thinking of you folks
especially those I'm beholden to.
Old lady Florida Maxwell said
in old age our last act is
don't do something that will hurt others.
Don't let them see your suffering,
don't let them think you're not happy,
shut up, don't indulge yourself.
That's a profound thought not to cause
pain to others. But you also got to do your
thing to some extent. Got to find a balance, huh—
to be who you are and be strict Kṛṣṇa conscious.
Don't hurt people means give them
straight truth.

So you say I'm not letting go
with spaghetti flying all over the place
and telling you I ate big thick hero sandwiches
with healthy chompers when I was
twenty years old and doused it down
with large bottles of Coke.
That's a waste of your time and mine.
Instead I sing choruses of sublime
kīrtanas of Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

12

I was not like the rest,
my Brooklyn College crowd from the basement
of *Landscapes* magazine.
I jettisoned out of that,
from being alone to being with the Swami
my prince, my king in
mendicant's Indian *khadi*.

I still am not at home in India
but why talk of me?
Shall we talk of you, Baladeva?
Shall we talk of Kathy Swanson or going
to Carnegie Hall to see and hear "The Messiah"
in gowns and frocks and pants and shirts?
Shall we talk of murder and White House hanky panky
or selling books and collecting money
among the honeys on the mall during an AIDS
quilt protest? Talk about Kapila Muni
talk about Dhruva, and Vrtrasura and
Citiraketu, talk about *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.
yeah I do it in *A Poor Man Reads the Bhagavatam*—
get a copy and check it out.
"Read Bhaktivedanta Purports and become
a strong man."

13

Revatinandana's cooking in the kitchen at
the Manor 1973, Srila Prabhupada coming back from a walk.
I'm there, an observer.

I was a diarrhea boy from India
sitting on wooden toilet seat at Manor
glad to be with the Swami
and Pradyumna and Srutakirti
at the Manor
in the manner of British Janmastami.

The pip squeak mixes up
his Buddhism and jive and word madness.
Let him preach—we will too.

Real *sutra* is *Vedanta*.

Brahma-samhita and *Krsna-karnamrta*
were picked up by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu on His
southern tour. He came back and embraced the
best devotees in His room. They stayed up
all night in glow hearing Him briefly
recount the adventures. The next day He
presented them with Kala-krsna and said he
was discharged from service.

The Lord met the Tattvavadis, the
Mayavadis and the Buddhists and
subdued them all.
Don't argue. Accept it. Stay
away from nondevotees and non-*bhaktas* of Krsna.

O devotees, please be lovely and true.
No politics, no rancor, I wish no
schisms. Let us be true to one another.
Krsna consciousness should bring out the best.

14

Snow-rain falling and I walk in the
little woods on a circular path
high-stepping to get exercise—
no one can see me; I'm all alone at that
time and it's bliss. I come out
into bare land, heading for the house
and here comes a car. It's Ananda-maya and she stops.
I stand there with umbrella.
She tells me the family is
moving to Inis Rath. I'm glad for that.
I say, "It's a trade: the temple gets expert
devotees and you get association of
devotees for which you've been hankering."

Manu dasa is rushing in and out of the
house bare-headed in snow and rain
stashing painting rolls in back
of car, ready to take off for
several-day marathon.
He spends mornings
at the B&B free from family
and reads my books and Prabhupada's

and I'm grateful for that.
And if you get a headache?
You can find good in that too
if you let go expectations
and just go within, breathe and
relax with pain. It teaches you
to wait and to enter *tat te 'nukampam*—
It should have been worse.
Do I believe it?

A squirrel screeched,
I chanted sixteen and now it's extra,
it's voluntary, the
holy mantras free of charge.

15

This is the somethin' thumpin' blues
I'm playing it on tambourine.
I was singing down the rain-swept street
hoping some punk didn't come out of side alley
and poke me, Hare Krsna chanter.
When was the last time I
distributed a book or tried?
You and the managers don't go out.

You mean you stay all alone
with no schedule and nothing
to do? How do you manage?
I fill up the hours.
I read and I am serious
happily praying to my master in the shed.

16

I am a whippersnapper, got an arm-
ful of golden stripes but I could
get demoted to red stripes only.
I used to be an Admiral, would you believe?
But I retired. Am now a
discalced friar who wears green
Welly boots, my own Army and Navy
dreams and imaginings.

Better to make God the center.
He is already.
In your writing the center is
God, Krsna, all-attractive.
You are subordinate.
So why don't you appear less and only to say
I am a turd, tiny, He is great?

You are envious of God, admit it.
I admit it.
That's why I'm in the world but I'm
better off than the atheist
and poet-tasters I am
better than thou.

Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna I'm not afraid
or ashamed to say it but better to say it
in company of devotees. I am very timid
of nondevotees and don't want to be seen
in public at their parties or gatherings.
I prefer to stay at home.

17

You could be a weaver making *khadi* cloth
in Mayapur or making
Balarama *mrdanga* drums
or rolling *puris*, “Here’s another one,”
fast and plenty,
happy and all the time chanting
Hare Krsna Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare.

She could be a *pujari* sewing shiny beads
onto outfits for Radha and Krsna. He could be a
money collector,
a book distributor,
seeing the faces of the conditioned souls . . .

He can be a writer,
he goes to the shed
he writes day and night and wants it
to be accepted.

18

He's just relaxing, being himself
and that's an achievement because when people go
to write they're usually trying to be profound and convincing.

You are not a strict *sannyasi*.
Yes I am. I observe Caturmasya.
Staying in one place I let
a boy wash my clothes and clean my
plate so he can become
a Narada if I am qualified.
If not I go to hell.

Play a game with us it's called
writing poems the easy way, it's called
being more serious than you are
it's called Krsna, Krsna.
"You will be chastised, old man"
unless you act straight.
You remind me of an old man wearing
bright-colored argyle knee socks and
Bermuda shorts, drinking liquor with his bleach-blond
eighty-year-old wife—

you remind me we better have fun,
get serious, get ready to die
go to Vrndavana then
but now, keep trumpeting
“Please accept me
as a member of this *sankirtana* party.”

19

It's not too late. Tell Syamananda
son when he comes here docilely and intelligently
that I was out to lunch from nine to three
dazzled and nervous thinking,
"Oh, here it comes, this is it."
I couldn't function, kept
pushing my knit hat on and off
blamed the aromatherapy, blamed the
cold, blamed Madhu, blamed the
cook, blamed no one
and said, "This is my business; lay down
and be satisfied if you do
just one little thing."

20

He said, "I will only speak from my heart,
no more pot boilers." And so he went on
to become a man of dreams
and made his money that way.

There are enough people who
honor *sannyasis* to give you room and board.
It's shameful if you don't earn it
by speaking the *dharma*. They want to hear,
give a *Bhagavad-gita* class
and show your stuff.

God is taking care of everyone.
If I had to work nine to five I'd do that.
Now I do this, what is important
what is holy.
I am going to keep living
I am very grateful to God
for the health of these last hours
before dark and bedtime.
I lost from nine to three and realized
there will be more days like that—
I'll miss twenty-four hours.

“I am a healthy person who sometimes gets sick.”
Learn to cope,
hope.

21

Srila Prabhupada knew a man in Allahabad
who was gonna die at 54 and requested
the physician . . . you heard that one?
Can I tell it again?

The iron rod in the fire . . .

You heard that?

The hand can't eat the sweetmeat by
itself but must put it in the mouth
and serve the stomach. Heard that?
How about Buddha, the real Buddha
the Buddha who says it's nirvana
"Stop the activities and it's
over"? That's the one, the *ahimsa*
one the real Buddha.

And Christ is the best example in the West
of the compassionate preacher being mistreated,
the best son.

We've heard it all before
except maybe some parts.
You got to listen carefully once again.

If he's repeating that's not a fault.
Hear the ecstasy in his voice, the
desire to change people from *asura* to *sura*.
Believe it and join with him. *Jaya* Prabhupada—
preach and care for them.

22

Anything goes also means common sense—
sock it to them. In Vrndavana
they are building first-class brick mansions,
apartment houses for rich Westerners.
What do the local people think of it?
Depends who you ask.
I feel safe in the fort of Krsna-Balaram.
Out on the dirt trail . . .

Maybe in another life
you will be a *sadhu* living in a perimeter
of bricks only two feet high and no roof
just a *lota* and on the *parikrama* trail
you'll beg from ISKCON Germans, Czechs and Ruskies
and Americans
but they'll pass by and won't throw many *paisas*
at you. At last you don't have to
attend the ISKCON morning program.
You'll finally be a Brijabasi
but not a very advanced one?
You thought you'd be a *mataji* in ISKCON
a temple president, a dog living in the temple?
Ha! The joke's on you.

As Alice floats down and down past the shelves
of marmalade and jars with little notes
on them saying, "Eat this,"
she becomes as small as Bob Dole after the election.
You become as big as Bill Clinton when he won
and said, "This night of joy" to the thousands
whistling and stomping in Arkansas. I was
listening on short-wave radio in
Albarella, Italy when I should have been
in bed warming my toes
chanting on beads I was listening—
but will it be held against me?
Not if I can burn it up in the fire
of devotional service
burning up the memories.
You who listen to me,
you help me to get out.
I thank you.

23

He's okay, he's trying,
he's sincere. That's what Srila Prabhupada said when I asked,
thinking of Nietzsche and others.

Don't doubt me,
I'm no Richard Nixon or Spiro Agnew,
I am no fiction man on the waterfront
a Marlon Brando, Sidney Poitier.
But I have a lot to say.
Bear with me.

I have long johns that slip off.
I remember 42nd Street Library . . .
I told everything anyway.
You are not interested in my pre-Krsna conscious
life before I was in the coffin.
You want to hear me
berate *karmis*, *dharmis*
yogis, *bhogis* and *rogies*
and tell you, "The *bhaktas*
are best" which I believe.
And there are categories of *bhaktas* up to

the Pandavas, Prahlada, Uddhava
the *gopis* are the best.
Lord Caitanya said on returning to Puri
“I have traveled widely and met
many *sadhus* but I must say
I like Ramananda Raya very much.”
Bhavananda Raya, his dad,
was glad and said, “Consider me
as your family and ask me whatever
You want.” Bhavananda gave Him
his son, Vaninatha, full-time as servant.

I'd like to keep going
like a jukebox of top hits
Krsna conscious oldies and new ones
arranged and served up by their servant—
me, playing my wooden recorder
even though I never learned music.
Please don't punish me.
Like Nietzsche, I'm sincere
no beer or beard or big mustache.
The day before Ekadasi
enjoy . . . ah . . .

24

Hood up monk's writing
tell us your transforming incident
with the mad-affectionate cow. That's one
to remember and relate to the . . . crowds.

Here's another—the tip of the canoe
falling in and me selfishly trying
to save myself even on top
of the body of capsizing
Sneed. Then we were all saved
because the water was not so deep
but I saw that self-survival act
by these greedy hands.
Sneed didn't mention it, we sat
in the house soaked,
changed clothes and laughed
at his old Southern accent.

Please bring this around to Krsna consciousness.
Yeah, well, we weren't chanters in those days,
didn't know Krsna. I was a village atheist.
In autumn drinking one can of beer for lunch

with sandwich and reading Dickens outdoors.
If I were there now
I would tell them, "I'm a Hare Krsna"
and maybe they would fire me.
Did I need the money?
Better you keep shut like Madhava dasa does
but he's happy inside earning and doing it
for Krsna, reads guru's books on lunch
break (better than beer and Great Expectations)
and if they ask he'd tell them—
he's getting up his courage but
it's important to set the example
as calm and steady worker and then
it will come out—"Did you know Mike
was a Hare Krsna?"

This is all. I'm sorry,
it could have been better, a
number one hit bhajana.
I'm the little guy
walking—having
fun, Krsna Krsna, Hare Krsna.
Better get serious soon.

25

My own truth the wiggly telling.
He's alone but not alone with his
guru. It's a secret but I'm
letting it out, he won't mind.
Be true to him, in words and deed.
It's the best thing, the Vaisnava
guru. Srila Prabhupada was that and
thousands and millions follow him
he's the top general and soft rose also.
I got to go out on his account
and tell people Krsna is Supreme,
He is the Person
it's not all void or Brahman impersonal.

They don't know, ignorant pusses
yearn for a void afraid of the person.
They think of person and think of their dad drunk
and tender memories washed away,
cheaters, time lopped them off,
so they turn to Buddha as if he's the top whereas he
taught only a tiny little bit to
save people at that time.

Imagine thinking that all can be dismantled,
that's no more philosophy than the average Joe.
What's the big deal? Give us something eternal,
in love and truth from *sastra*. If you're going
to follow someone, follow the science of God original
in *Vedas* and the Vaisnava *smṛti*.

Follow Lord Caitanya.

I don't know why they don't.

They got railroaded, so intent on booze
(died of it, JK) and women and homos
what can you expect? I'm sorry I'm telling it
like this but I feel angry that they
missed the boat of Kṛṣṇa consciousness
when they could have made it.

Gather in whoever listens.

A little anger is okay too,
slay 'em. Down with the
Number One Debauch who is telling us the
so-called truth he dug up as *nada*, *nirvana*.
I ascribe to more than that.

Krsna killed, Krsna saved it's all
the same whatever He does, He delivers them.
Please, Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami,
don't kick me away,
let me read it again and again
I am tired, weary
from the superficial re-readings
but you keep me. And one of these days . . .

26

People listen to me because they agreed,
the temple commander rounded them up and
said, "Satsvarupa has come here all the way
from Poland. Give him
flowers and water to wash his feet.
He is not here on a
Buddhist preaching trip."

Today I read in fifteenth chapter of *Gita*
that the soul takes another body but
the jerks don't know it.
Krsna has to be accepted
as the source of the sun, moon, and fire.
As I read I found the
transcendental knowledge I was seeking.

27

Draupadi's bellowing while I'm trying to
listen to the American Buddhist poem.
I'll confess to you what I can—
my sock is ripped. I was wondering
who could accompany us on airplane to India
now that my side-kick is so weak and old
from hernia operation.

Draupadi was bellowing
and I could not pay attention to Kerouac's
"Nothing Ecstasy Amida Buddha, etc."
Just as well.

Draupadi's secret is she wants
attention, she is not angry and
doesn't want to attack me with
her huge head and body.
She'd just like me to stroke her head
and maybe transform her into a
Gandharva. That I can't do. We are
each locked into our karma until
the end of lifetime. We move,
as Vasudeva said to Kamsa,

like a caterpillar from one branch
to another.
But you can get out of this
upside-down-tree-world
if you surrender your pride,
surrender to that Supreme Person
go to that place from where one
never returns.
They are so happy there.
But they come here to preach.

Lake is calm,
I know everything is from Him.

28

Little sermons they can be.
Thinking again of writing one book only,
Every Day, Just Write.
Nothing goes outside of it.
But here you can make
your sermonette—
your stories and jammettes and—
be kind, please don't forget
there are seven mothers and
especially never forget that Sri Krsna
sucked the breast of Putana,
accepted her as nurse and
gave her liberation.

These are the sermons of a Hare Krsna man
(or woman) and he better stay
on the rail of *parampara*.
He better not be a Dr. Indologist or even a Ph.D.
of Hinduism or any prof who doesn't believe
in the truth of the Supreme Person, Krsna
the best friend. I rattle off the truth
but if you do it from the heart that's good

enough.

You aren't expected to be another Vyasa.

Praise Lord Hari and be His servant,

ekale isvara krsna ara saba bhrtya

give up false ego

restrain and refrain.

Don't expect

to write a hundred excellent

verses at speed of wind like

Sarvabhauma did after he was converted.

Do what you can.

29

So they are sermonettes and little funny
papers of Sunday comics with devotees
drawn by you, syndicated ISKCON column
of funny faces, "They'll Do It Every time."
Bhakta Bob introducing the little Chota
mouse on the mountain, he talks
(the fairy folk ain't included because they aren't Vedic)
little incidents from sankirtana stories
and imaginings from *bhaktins'* journals
and you keep it all within etiquette.
Don't get Vaisnava *aparadha*,
a terrible disease, it can ruin your spiritual life.
Keep busy in your own row and
you won't think ill of others.
You mean don't think of anyone and that's how?
No, but mostly. Don't think
just serve and think,
Oh I don't know. Don't ask me.
I'm just singing like Tukarama
singing like a servant of the servant
of the servant of the servant singing.

30

One time Suhotra was blowing this
twisted *sankirtana* horn in Boston
temple and “getting off.” The whole library party
was back for a weekend. Claimed to have sold
one hundred standing orders of
Prabhupada’s books. We were welcome
in the temple where women were taught that—

if a man is coming up the stairs
and you are going down,
throw your body into the corner
and try to disappear,
throw the top of thy *sari*
over thy head or just turn around
and run upstairs away from his sight.
That was later changed.

We met up with strange things
in and out of temples and kept driving
our Dodge vans but now it’s over.
The vans are scrap metal
and the leading book distributor

is the vice-chairman of the GBC and
the other is . . . you don't wanna hear.
I'm sumpin'
I'm sumpin'
I'm really something. "Yes," said my master
you are something, that's right. But what are you?
You are the eternal servant of the Lord
a thousand times removed.

31

Krsna mission burnt down. Krsna mission
raised anew. Mayor attends opening of Men's
shelter run by Krsna missionaries,
Food-for-Life replaces Food Stamps,
Stamp out missions, the mission of the seven effective
habits of helpful people.
Businessmen take over
the funds increase,
the fun is gone,
the ecstasy is where?

It is here in our bookbag we workers
on the street. You can't speak for us,
we got book distributor leaders,
gurus who speak for us and say
Prabhupada wanted this more
than anything else.
Don't let them kid you.
This is the top and bottom service,
this is what he wants and everyone
else in this movement
is a little wimpy

or soft, squashed, laid back not
in tune with our righteous one.
Ah, they don't understand.
Here is the point:
I didn't know what to say
but the poesy wings take me up like
long-necked swans who surprise you
they can fly at all.
Over the water, you strain to see
where they will make their fabulous
on-water landing,
but they glide out of sight.

32

You thought it depended on your
temporary spirits whether you could write
but everything depends on Krsna.
He is the *vaisvanara*, the fire of digestion
and He enables everyone to pass stool,
He gives the veggies taste by moonlight
and He is the object of the *Vedas*.
He is Buddha and Christ but
their followers may not know it,
He is known to few in the world
even Carl Jung
went to India and couldn't find
a guru and the Beats still go there to look
at Buddhist stupas and buy
hashish cheaper and serenade
the generations misleading into
white snow void.

So there is a need for sermonettes
even if I'm the only one standing in,
the pinch hitter,
shot-gun Shuba for the Brooks

and Don Newcombe, although a
pitcher, could also step in
in late innings and clutch hit—
watch out, he's no slouch!

"Hare Krsna Hare Krsna,"
Srila Prabhupada says it and the whole audience
(three hundred) in Los Angeles
joins in reciting the *maha-mantra*,
his boys and girls
looking good in front of him but
scattering when he's out of sight.
I don't claim I'm better
but got to sing.

33

They're rowing across in the blue
boat and I hear
a kid's friendly shout in this
quiet wonderful (keep it secret)
Geaglum where I am staked out
for December. But then I noticed
I had less than a month left.
It's running out and I didn't achieve
Everest or *samadhi*.

But now I ask you seriously
will you be content to just write every day
and not go for persona or extravagant
claims, shapes and structures?
And why read so many other books?

Don't try to be the saint
you are not. The hardest thing to
confess is that you're taking it easy
and don't forget to mention you get headaches,
"He's very delicate." Pain can come
at the mere scent of a meeting.

He prefers to walk on back path
alone breaks ice in overnight puddles,
pink sunrise clouds.
Ain't exclusively telling of
my ordinary self but see the world
as Krsna's.

Coming around now, slow
slow student, old student.
Swamiji, I don't know what happened.
I was praying out loud to you
each day and suddenly I stopped,
either by volition or lack of encouragement.
Perhaps best. It is Kala or Providence—
whatever happens it's willed by God
especially for the devotees.
Hare Krsna Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare.

34

Here you go. Leave yourself behind.
I'm glad the shed wasn't so cold
this afternoon and what do you know?
The gas heater worked under my hand
made a low humming sound
and then the heat starting coming out
and I sat back comfortable
to read *Bhagavad-gita*, no void
but Krsna the Supreme Person.

He's saying don't argue,
above the
fallible and infallible.
I like this chapter and I want to read it again.
He is the source, the Supreme
and He's the cowherd boy.
I can give a lecture on it but
in my heart . . .

They pray to Christ on the Cross
we pray to Krsna playing in Vrndavana
and loving Radha-Krsna pastimes.

I look across the lake and think . . .
feel, please let me be a part of it
because by birth I'm neither Christian nor Hindu,
please let me in . . .

The Christians have Christ suffering
we have the separation of *gopis* from Krsna.
You cannot understand if you have mundane
sex desire or you have been polluted by Mayavadis
and other voidists.

Back to chanting Hare Krsna—
we have to refrain from some impulses
that might come, like reading nondevotees.
I used to buy LP records on impulse—
here, get this, Zoot Sims, it will
round out your collection, go ahead
get this hard bop you don't have late
1940s stuff like that, go ahead get Mozart's five LPs
of flute concertos it's on sale for only two bucks.
And worse impulses I won't mention.
But now you are expected to be as conservative as a

gray-haired venerable. People are
depending on you to overcome their
frivolities so when I come out of
the shed and greet them in India
I want to be thinking
of *Bhagavad-gita*
and help them.

35

I've got to be more conservative
than that guy.
I can just hear them saying
oh, he's not living his life
he's denying his self, gonna
get a hernia or suppressed nerve
shrunk heart. Guys like that are dangerous
whenever they speak to our youth
and tell them no illicit sex,
no meat-eating no gain-taking
no book-searching no reading
of big words and no gambling
and no sex at all
is best. They are dangerous, the Hare
Krsnas and their ilk.

They may say that about me.
But you know, dear devotees,
that it's better I'm conservative.
Yet I've got to let off some steam.
I've been thinking like that lately
since our dear Godbrother left *sannyasa* vows.

I don't want to leave. He said he had to,
for honesty sake, he lived too long with his
emotions pent up.

So I let out steam.

PSSSSSSSH

SPPPPPOOOOO.

The saintly person is a *sadhu*

but I smirk and try

to keep my mind shut up.

Bang it with broomsticks and bricks of Vrndavana

throw sand and chase it

with Radha-kunda giant turtles

numb it with Novocain,

but it comes up like Frankenstein's

monster that didn't get killed in my

dream. Drive a stake through the

heart of errant mind.

Arjuna said it is more difficult than controlling

the wind. And Sri Krsna said

it can be done with

determination and right means.

36

Trust me I will be conservative
this is just me getting steam off
singing *bhajan*s irregular.
It's better than doing on the
sly something devious more than this.
You mean listening to Bach?
"I never did. Who said?"
We saw traces of explosives in your bag.
We found chamber music and
earplugs. We saw ants running
on your floor and concluded you
must be eating sweets. We looked in on
you during *prasadam* and you
sure were munching like a
wolfhound although I admit
you were looking up fondly
bemused at picture of Srila Prabhupada
and listening steadfast to his
lecture.

We are conservative.
We don't speculate.

We're going to read a little *sastra*
every day morning and night
and pause while reading to pray:
“Please, Lord, deliver us
give us the key to the *darsana*.”
As Prataparudra Maharaja gained the
darsana of Lord Caitanya because
he was determined and because he
trusted in guru and got Vaisnavas' grace—so
we will succeed
only in that way.

37

You say go away from yourself.
But don't run away I say.
Prabhupada is talking to the Catholic
Bishop of Melbourne who was a gentleman
and asked questions about God and revelation.
Don't get nervous and run away,
stay and listen. In your
dream you wanted to serve him
but it was not the real Prabhupada. Why
so vague and unclear and a phony instead of
the real thing? Don't I
even deserve to dream of my master?
Am I afraid to come near him?
If actually you saw Prabhupada,
if he visited you
on the pretext of a dream (*svapna*)
that would be different,
you'd be a tiny version of Krsnadasa
Kaviraja whom Lord Nityananda visited
and to whom he said, "Do not be afraid, Krsnadasa.
Go to Vrndavana and there
you will achieve all things."

38

July 1974,
Prabhupada is lecturing and I am
finding Bhagavad-gita verses he wants
and reading them out loud
in my last days as his personal servant.

O master, I abandoned you.
Svarupa Damodara said, "I went
to another country and left
Your lotus feet. But You are so kind
You take me back."

Master, you called me at end of 1973
to serve you, cook for you
and I learned to massage. Now I dream
of being one of your personal servants
and I serve your *murti*.

At midnight I forgot to place the
miniature dictaphone before you.
I went straight to my reading and writing
as if that's all that mattered.
Forgive me,
and give me another chance.

39

My way is clean and holy by his grace.
The Bishop asked, "What about revelation, your grace?"
Srila Prabhupada asked me to read out loud
tesam satata yuktanam and the purport.
The revelation comes, he said,
when these boys and girls
engage in devotional service. Krsna helps them.

"Is this your first visit to Australia?"
"No, my fourth."
"When you go outside, are you feeling the cold?"
"That feeling," Prabhupada said, "is described
in *Bhagavad-gita*" and he sent me
to find *matra-sparsas tu kaunteya*—
a man has to bathe even on a cold
morning. Tolerate it.
I heard it this morning while
in the cold bathroom in Manu's house.

40

Who came from Butler, Pennsylvania
who came from the spiritual world,
who wore a frayed *cadar* to America
who came to NYC with no money,
survived two winters there carried by the Lord
who rides on Garuda, who protects
his Prabhupada.

We were lucky.
Allen Ginsberg, it's not too late.
Before you die you could remember
to chant Hare Krsna again.
You called it, "A monkey on my back"
a bad habit that you wanted to kick—
faith in God.
For that you'll be sorry
if you can't remember it
although you chanted with the Swami
Hare Krsna Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare.

41

You were a wiseguy and got heady
carried away with your “greatness”
(also known as vanity).
You forgot who you were.
You used to smoke L&M cigarettes when 14 years
old but couldn’t stand to inhale.
You forgot to tell Krsna consciousness
straight and narrow and deep.

Forgot your past life where you
never knew the ways of great
heroic devotees. Srila Prabhupada on Venice beach
said, “You GBCs are not strong.”
He was calling for protests
for Vaisnavas like Hanuman to protest
the police stopping Ratha-yatra in London in '74.
No one measured up but Bali Mardan was
giving a lot of free advice,
“We can protest in front of Downing Street,
advertise in the newspapers.”

“All of you go there,” said Prabhupada
and I cringed hoping

it would blow over and we'd get
back to normal not too much pressure on us
and I could get out of L.A. with my new
library party and drink milk and eat cottage cheese
and yogurt which I had not been able
to get as his servant in the Bombay kitchen.

42

JK annoys me with his
Buddhist palaver. Pick up
my own ax and
tell the teachings.

Krsna is the Supreme Lord.
I know it because I have a guru
who is bona fide, whom I accept
whom you can't measure
because you are an outsider.

It is raining gently in Geaglum.
My clothes will be washed and placed
in a saffron pile
outside this door. I don't know who
cooked today but it was okay.
I will slice an Irish apple tonight in the
kitchenette and pour out the apple juice
into Prabhupada's little
cup and my larger cup.

He is my master, appears small
because I need to carry him around

place him in the airport security machine—
and not break him, carry him tenderly,
my father and son, my
dear statue in knit hat
signaling to me it's okay.

But sometimes he's stern and always
sits facing me to chant all those
rounds together and he accepts distracted prayers
of food offerings
but I say he will forgive me,
we will live together and I hope
he outlasts me, doesn't break
before I do and
if that happens, someone can care for him.
And if I have to go
without warning?
Then take these poems home
and don't burn them.

43

He had a good idea that
he wanted to be thought of as
a jazz poet improvising
on a Sunday afternoon.
I haven't found an equivalent
but I'm grooving anyway—
I'm a servant
of the servant of the servant—
that's the main riff
and many variations, in Sanskrit too,
like *ekala isvara krsna*.

But are you sufficiently reverent?
Krsna says that our reverent
worship doesn't bring Him
much pleasure.
If all you have is following rules
it's not likely you are receiving
Krsna's mercy. You are practicing religion
on your own strength. But if you
serve with love, then He's pleased.

The devotees of Lord Caitanya
arriving at Puri from Bengal
went straight to see Caitanya Mahaprabhu
not fasting and not shaving their
heads, not even going first to
see Lord Jagannatha.
King Prataparudra was surprised
but Sarvabhauma told him, “Yes, there is a standard
of rules but there is also a standard
of spontaneous love. When the Lord Himself
is giving out *prasadam*
from His transcendental hand,
who will fast?”

Trying to communicate all this to you
in proper fashion, not ripped socks,
not farts and gulps and
being a slob and being a nondevotee
or material enjoyer. I’m a servant
but also serving via this
quick express route.
No more memories?

No more cakes and ale?
Do you think because you have
joined ISKCON, there shall be no more sweet rice,
no more nectar drinks of the
best kind offered to the Deity?
Are you a dry *vairagi*?

Oh please don't force me
I'm not ready yet . . . Prabhupada
pushes me out anyway
and I surrender.

44

I'm really here
practicing to be a devotee.
I don't want to be with
AG and JK, listening to their poems
and getting disgusted. They can jabber,
they can dream, I will go the way
of Vaisnava saints and sages.

There's a map of Bengal and the places
of Lord Caitanya's pastimes in back
of Cc. volume, but I
am here at typewriter in Geaglum,
rain outside . . . slow down.
You will be able to speak in the
temple room this Sunday morn
on liberation of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya.

Temple and Deity room
are so cold it feels like ice
when you touch Radha-Govinda.
A *pujari's* bare feet.
How about a wood burning stove
in the Deity room?

I love Prabhupada when he's speaking
and I can perceive
the kindness and homeliness,
in morning Cc. classes in NYC 1966
and New Vrindaban '69 when he's talking
from First Canto *Bhag.* fifth chapter
it's really nice, him sitting on a
funky sort of *vyasasana*
Nara-Narayana dasa and others laughing when
he says, "Krsna consciousness is like
inoculation against the Hong Kong
flu of material life."

I have to swallow
the fact that he is many-sided
and can get angry at his disciples.
He says, "Why are you asking that?
You've been a student for 10,000 years
and you're asking that question?"
And he repeats again and again.
I am his *cela*, to hell with
those who make fun of me

as they did (or I imagined it)
when I raised my hands for the first time and danced
in Tompkins Square Park.
The laughable thing is my hesitation
not the dancing. They are right
to mock me when I look
fried. My guru is so
strong and forceful. If I accept him
and I'm confident—and if still they mock me—
then I simply don't care.

I am blowing this on a Sunday morning
not a jazzman but
a small, faulty cela who is
actually happy and has something
to share.

45

Jack's going nowhere, went to hell.
I am here and singing these songs
besot with ISKCON controversies.
I walk to shed
I'm selfish, I'm not selfish
I'm in between.
Talk about you instead?

I'm an agreeable person
willing to pose for a pencil sketch,
don't mind if it's a caricature,
showing me with a weak chin and so on
whereas if the cartoonist makes Indira Gandhi's
nose too long, she can cut off
his head
(but she's dead now).

Okay, drop me and go to Krsna.
He's the Supreme Lord, He cuts through
in Bhagavad-gita. He is *banu*
and I am *anu*. He is infinite and I
am the opposite. Right now I am
acit, *nirananda* and non-*sat*.
Actually, I am Sat-svarupa dasa.

46

Let go, get lettuces,
I got apples and pears both—
there are no other fruits for sale in Ireland
except bananas and oranges
a few veggies also.

But it's peaceful on the devotee-owned
land. Got no money
they don't plant taters,
and I'm here to do the business
of the sage
the aloe gel for cuts.

I'm here to sing
to awaken the birds
to go on my own, yearning
for a letter from Croatia saying, "We
read your books and it's funny but
they help us a lot, why don't you
visit? We have a house on
the Adriatic Sea—you could
write there maybe."

Yes, write for the purpose of
pleasing and serving Krsna.

47

She asked
is it all right if you use the form
of Krsna in a fill-in-the-dots game,
and a game where the body disappears?
I said be cautious about that, the
Lord is not a plaything.
I was sober and noncommittal at
the same time. Is it all right if we use
a jug for fiction? Can we eat paranormals,
blue-green algae and chocolate fudge? We saw you
eatin' a peanut butter sandwich
so can we too if it's offered
first to Krsna?

I said don't ask what you can get away
with but, "How can I be perfect?"
I said, "Thank you for your letter I
am shocked, amused, concerned and benighted
by the fact that you are in trouble.
I intend to come down there and
linger awhile with you and
read some *sastra* out loud, I

hope. If the airlines don't smoke dope."
I intend I said,
but there is too much mail,
got confused
laid down on the floor head aching,
got better.

She said yes I'm
much better but not my husband and
the miseries continue, if not one then another—
they move like an epidemic,
like paper money passed around,
disease is for mortals
birth, death and old age. So please
listen to the teachings of Lord Caitanya
please take a book,
it's for your good please chant
the holy names but they don't.
They say, "This is a Hindu trip,
political suicide to get near the Hare Krsnas."
But we make them hear
chant Hare Krsna Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna Hare Hare!

48

“Waiting for philosophy’s dreadful
murderer, Buddha!” That’s what JK
called him and he’s a worshiper,
so-called.

I got back from the shed just now
over the mud flats. Drew out there
two pictures of swans,
it delivered me,
Krsna allowed me.

As I was walking I heard first, then saw
the Army helicopter
high in the sky but coming down
lights blinking at 4 P.M.
And I saw puddles
in the woods contemplating.
It used to be summer and fall here
and I am different. I’m less . . .
“poetic” less “reflective,”
just work and walk in my purpose.

From those enfolded woods where I
was walking and chanting with my

dhoti bottoms lifted up
so as not to get muddied, I heard
first and then saw a white commercial van.
It went up towards Manu's house
on the side of it was painted
"Supermarket." And I wondered
what they could be delivering.
I thought if someone wanted to
gift me they could get me
a new blackthorn walking stick
as this one is starting to unhinge
like an old man who feels his
knee joint starting to go.

But in the shed I was more Krsna conscious,
made prayers and half promises,
read *Bhagavad-gita*
and the wisdom came pouring out on me in
two fifteen-minute reading sessions.
Krsna is covered by Yoga-maya
and reveals Himself
only to pure devotees.

49

They're killers of the souls
killers of the body too
killers of the animals and
I turn from them now
to Lord Krsna and the book.
I know He's aware of reality's
awful woes and the goof-offs and
murderers
the doctors and . . .

He doesn't mind if I'm a little
retired. But there is no guarantee
that I and others will go soon to
the topmost kingdom of God.
Isn't so easy.

You must be completely free
of attachment to this world.
Tapasya—to give up
eating a lot and sleeping
and loving women and
your self-concept, and

do what Krsna wants. It's so hard
and all those jerks and
highbrow atheists saying,
"There is no God anyway
because how could God be so unreasonable
how could He dare
to presume to lord it over and
ask us all to give up our
pleasures, our creme de vermouth
and schemes and big offices?
How could He dare
say it was wrong to enjoy?
What is He anyway?" What the hell!
Their therapist says there is
no God, forget it.

If I retire it's to
get away from them.
But a preacher is bold and strong
goes into their ranks and
gives out books on World Enlightenment Day.

50

Fed up with his void—
“Falling through radiant emptiness” blah, blah.
He could say the same about
Krsna consciousness?
Yes, he can say anything.

I’m concerned to keep going as long
as I can, use the energy even when running low.

You can’t get it from Kerouac—
it’s from your own master and from
the *acaryas*.
Surrender to same old way.
I wanted to be original
write my own words like petals of a flower
wake and enchant readers
who may become bleary eyed from the
same passages.
It’s our fault we can’t see the newness
can’t admit that we don’t understand even the ABCs.

Hearing Srila Prabhupada lecture in Mexico,
a perfect introductory talk with

everything in it, proofs of the soul
as when you see your father lying dead
and you say, “He’s gone” but you
never really saw the actual father,
and the three modes, we have to attain to
goodness and that’s done by being sinless
following the four rules.

He especially points out illicit sex,
although we don’t say no sex.

“You may not be able to follow
the four rules because you are
so accustomed to these habits but
chant Hare Krsna.”

I’ve heard all that before but
it was a classic.

We don’t get tired of breathing
clean air and I don’t get tired
of seeing the sunrise at
Lough Erne—the basic lecture
is like that.

The baby sequoia tree
is only four feet high

writes Visakha dasi in BTG magazine
but it will grow 1,000 years—
a unique view on the same teachings.
Look for those chances but
don't wince when you repeat
verbatim what the master said.
If he can do it with *utsaha*
why not you?
You want to walk on your hands
just to do something new?
There is nothing new under the sun.

51

Nothing is new but Krsna
and His love for His devotees.
You've got to trust your own master and
ditch the rest of the world
if necessito.

Dig it, the changes the little
wiggles and piccadilloes and
gingerbread trims and all that.
But trust Him.

Krsna says that if you are devoted
to Me in loving service I'll break
your worldly sojourn, I'll personally come
and deliver you. My master explains this
and I think, "Wow, I just have to become purely
surrendered and not worry how
the transference takes place."

You'll go to the higher realm
and even into your *rasa*—
be briefed on all you need to do to serve
in Vraja, but only if you qualify

down here by unalloyed devotion
to your master's mission.
He wants you to be happy
to love Krsna the all-attractive.
Is it so hard?
Yes, because we are rascals.

I'm speaking his lingo and my own
in a mixture of *halava* and pudding and
Ambarisa and tapioca
and Ford cars and Detroit mansion
and I'm blowing it every line I have
been contaminated by the modes and
think otherwise.
But Krsna said it straight
and clear for all time:
"I, you and all of us always
existed as persons in the past
we exist now and we will exist in the future."
Shoot down the void teachers.

There is no void in God's creation.
The rest is doubletalk.

52

I am just a boy my Mom
took to Garber's clothing store
to the boys' department
where she bought me a suit.
One year I insisted on a groovy white one
and they let me have it
got the pants pegged by the Italian
tailor in Great Kills Village and walked
to Easter Mass dazzling the locals,
myself the most local
blond-haired fool posing
with friend Phil in front of our garage
wearing a clownish cap I'd bought in
Times Square 42nd Street
during a harmless visit there.
We were dogs too young
to die in the Korean War.

I'm telling you this because
I want to get beyond the void
and the multifarious universe
and even beyond dear Stevie

who lived and died a myth
who wrote a diary in blue Esterbrook pen and ink
who's gone and done and
buried in the doghouse in the attic
with all his sorrows
and now he's reborn as Satsvarupa dasa,
who also has a long way to go.

We can all improve.
Sermons, sermons . . .
that's what we're made for.
And singer's paradise.

53

There's got to be an end to this.
Your friends and mentors don't want
to see you consorting with Beats
even if you say you are springboarding off them
or preaching to them.
It's just too unholy an association

I know that.
I'm faltering to keep it up
but sure was good
getting lots of poems.

The way to the spiritual world
is the way of the spiritual master's
teachings. I was
in the shed instead
of being with Kerouac and Allen,
a student
reading the *Bhagavad-gita*,
the eighteenth chapter where He says
surrender to Me.

I don't mean to make it
fun and games
but a dance to lift your eyes
so you'll say, "Reminds us the
Gita is best and
we want to go back to it."
Krsna cuts through,
it's Him teaching there is no denying.
He's asked what is better, impersonal
or personal? He clearly says personal.
There's no way around it
in the *Gita*.

Mount, mount
the overcast sky is fine.
I am walking back,
want to chant.
I saw empty ability in me
cold because of being a rascal
couldn't taste the holy names'
cintamani qualities.
Lord Caitanya

cried for us
in "*Siksastakam*"
and we say He's right but how
to go beyond the desert? Be with Him
and with Gurudeva.

That's what this is about.
Am not a swan ducking for weeds
or flying around looking for a mate
or a black cow just stuffing
her belly, got something better
if only I can
ascertain and work it.

54

You want to say it's all over
but it's not. I'm planning,
for World Enlightenment Day.
I'll draw pictures of book distributors.
Better not even tell you,
you are not my lover-beloved
you are not my quiet friend
who understands.

On that day I too hope to help.
I will keep my mouth shut like that slogan
"Do someone a favor today:
mind your own business."
Enlighten the world
by your prayers,
desires and resolution
to every day be content,
preach your way.

I was going to give a class
for disciples, to speak on twelfth chapter
where Krsna says it is He who picks us up

and He states the qualities of the devotees
who are very, very dear to Him.
But now I see it's the fourteenth of December
maybe I'm not supposed to talk
that way on the fourteenth but just
go out and sell the books
into the hands of the conditioned souls.

As for Kerouac, now dead thirty years
and his Buddhist frivolities—
no thing, no body,
no self—and busting out of that
to stomp his foot and play the blues,
what can I say?
His books are there and
his reputation is rising
but where is the soul of that person?
Who can say?

Yamaraja knows or God knows
or maybe a god in between.
I better just shut my mouth

and play dumb and play smart
and chant Hare Krsna, that's it
tell them by going beyond the bare minimum.
Show you've got stamina
and enough taste, blast
through, be calm, lay down
and play dead to *maya*.
The holy name of God is God
He appears in name form
every day and everywhere
and this is happening in ISKCON too—
we chant and glorify our spiritual master
who spread the holy names
and wanted his books
in every home.

55

Can't truck it, can't hack it
don't want it, the Kerouacian
Buddhist near-vana
he's near crazy and
no, no you just do your own.

Only devotees of Krsna can know Him
that excludes me.

Never think, "I'm a great person."
I am a tiny person, don't even go out
to distribute books cold,
I do it by writing them and printing
and selling them through a catalog
or someone does it for me
at a desk at a festival of
devotees in Vrndavana and Mayapur.

And boldness
may come in speaking naked
the truth. Who did that?
I did it some years ago
writing fast as you can

in a Vrndavana house catching sounds
of the dog howling at the front gate—
he was actually talking in a friendly
slow drawling growl.
No boldness perhaps.
But I will stay with my master
quiet domestic servant sees out the window
the preachers coming and going
while he stays in the master's kitchen
whispering his *japa* rounds
and filching a piece of milk sweet from
the store-bought carton meant for Gurudeva,
coming into his presence when he
rings the bell and wanting to go out
and preach like the others
so he can be rated in the newsletter
as a Big Personality.

No boldness, no hold
no domestic tag, barred not
words just jumbled don't joke—
that's silly, flighty, foolish

daredevil nonsense
but not the bold of old of Lord
Nityananda and followers like Him.
They risk their lives for Lord Caitanya
and Prabhupada. I risked and
hereby give each day to him
I do listen and stick my mind
to the sticking place and I shall not fail.
I am a Prabhupada man blast back
the Beats and academics and all the
nondevotees, hold them off, shoot them
back and calmly talk only to devotees
who are submissive—Krsna is God
and we are both bold and conservative
and blissful and personalist.

56

Kerouac song. No it's our turn. Charlton Heston hosted,
Mr. Mayor toasted and roasted
cut the ribbon, guy with Sikh beard
and other politicians, cut the
cake opened the gate, smiled for
the camera and wrote the essay
good enough for *Back to Godhead* magazine.

But you sit
on your foolish impious ass in
solitude of smirk wonder and say,
"All those guys
and all those girls spending their time why
don't they know I'm the supreme jerk
and the best underground dog artist?"

Then Krsna consciousness enters and all
the scam and cram stops. All the nonsense
scatters and even I choke
on my words and run to the kitchen
to cut up an apple for Prabhupada.
When there was an earthquake in California

they screamed, said Prabhupada. He personally
witnessed it. What did he do
then? He was chanting Hare Krsna.
Then Krsna comes and
we scream *Haribol, Jaya Prabhupada*
Jaya Nityananda Gauranga
Haribol holy boll
we shout and scream.

The Krsna conscious message is in the
book. We send out 10,000 newsletters.
The editor said everyone is talking
about Krsna consciousness
but not actually saying it straight.
Can somebody please do that?
So I stepped forward and tried
but they were bored, “Oh, this is the same old stuff,
the junior beatitude.”

I said
I thought you wanted the core.
We wanted brilliance they said.

We want to be open-mouthed in awe
to hear some inside secret
about *madhurya* and here you are just
teaching us that we're not this body.
Who do you think we are, Mexicans
hearing from Prabhupada for the first time
in 1975 through a translator?
We're from the States
and so they went to Vrndavana to seek
one who would tell them
the top, the coliseum, the inner
sweet essence of *gopi*-hood,

while I faltered and simpered
and boiled and wrote this.
I was happy to recall my master
and stay at his knee and say
yes I will go out, I will stay with your men
I will lecture in temples
I will do it
and take care of your grandchildren.

57

Get in there now and talk for Kṛṣṇa.
Prabhupada's with Dr. Allen Gerson who says
he wants to lead people onto a
path where they won't be cheated.
(Prabhupada had just told him it's
all a society of cheaters and cheated.)
Those are big words,
so Srila Prabhupada says to him
First you know the path before
you can teach it. Yes I am trying
to learn it, the doctor says. Yes, learn it
well or else if you are trying to teach
someone without knowing the art,
you are cheater.

Tough and heavy the words of the *sastra*,
mowing down sex life as illicit—
even licit should be given up
after no more than twenty-five years.
Give up this world it is
a place of misery.
Down go the idols of joy of life

without God as reference,
down go
the sense enjoyers and the leaders.
“You are worshiping the best nationalist
but he is an animal so what to speak
of the ordinary man?” Heavy, heavy
in the garden in L.A. while children play
and the karate school operates, “Ugh! Hah!”

With each chorus of Kerouac I'm getting more tired of it,
he's up to two hundred something, Allen reading strong but
it's all over for me . . . I had to get it out
of my system. Prabhupada wrote to
Hayagriva in 1968, “If you have any affinity for
the hippies, give it up. Don't put it into
Back to Godhead magazine.”

I'm getting rid of it,
too much eating, no sex (spit at the thought)
and gambling and meat-eating are gone
don't gamble take the sure bet
place your head at his feet.

I am writing free home to
teach Krsna conscious *sutras dharmas*
wail away if you like it's the same mind
but it's Krsnaized. Get it, doctor?
Get it, Steve? You know what he means.
Then do it.

58

Sometimes Jack's got it when he's talking
of the meat wheel and all the pains
of living beings and he wants to be
liberated from it, go to heaven, *nirvana*
and he's telling it effusively
but he blows it.

You go awhile pitching a no-hitter then
lose the game. Garuda dasa said reading Sankara's
eloquent Sanskrit is like driving in
a Cadillac limousine but suddenly you
swerve and crash off the highway.
It's not enough to groove for awhile
playing 242 choruses on a
Sunday and then what? You pack up your tuba
and go home to a cold water flat
and whore arms I mean wife meat
I mean masturbate I mean he's not an angel just
because he's a celibate, he could be a *jnani*
I'm not the judge or condemner of all these people.

I have not become better than them
see spirit soul in all living beings

see with eyes of scripture that's
best enlightenment,
act it out by serving the spiritual
master by chanting the holy names of
God, *harer nama eva kevalam*.

59

Go further, to Lord Caitanya,
ideal preacher of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*
whose teachings are summed up—
He worshiped Vrndavana land
and the best worship is by the Vrajavadhu,
gopis of Vrndavana
and *Srimad-Bhagavatam* the best scripture and
krsnas tu bhagavan svayam,
His tenets and ecstasies and
His Six Gosvamis . . .

Sloping in the sun, I will go again
to Vrndavana in cold weather write some poems
but not free of this Western influence junk.
If I meet an ex-American living there
who seems to be now a Hindu Gaudiya
I won't believe him and that's why I
blow these choruses of my own I mean
play-sing them to right notes and
beat, it's for Krsna consciousness
we desire, good-bye to all
else. We've been gone from the world

thirty years and millions of years and species
so now it's coming right and you
want to play it strong until your end, no harm,
don't skip it, tell it
what *Bhagavad-gita* says
and how you tried but missed.

60

We know you, old sailor we know
you. As I return to house, Madhu is
laughing on the phone and I sneak in here.
Room-warmth fogs my glasses
and I don't know. (While sleeping for
fifteen minutes after breakfast
I was sure it was nighttime
but gradually convinced myself that
I still had morning shed time and lunch
to live for.
But it was also sweet thinking that the day was over
and a night of sleep and dreams lay ahead.)

The spider the hider
I hope when I go back there
he's not in the same place,
then my karma will be relieved.
You think you are free of all
reaction knowing that you are an
admiral retired from the Naval
Air Force of Candy kids ISKCON.
But you could still get it for killing

a living entity. You know what happened to
the *rsi*. He almost got shafted
in real life with a real sword.
Spared at last minute.

I don't want to suffer for killing
the liddle widdy spider,
the beautiful disgusting spider with
his umbrella-like unfolding joints
He entered my life so
gallantly gliding down
the column of cable spit.

61

Reading *Bhagavad-gita*,
you came to the end.
Morality is with Krsna
even though He asked Arjuna to fight and kill.
Victory is on the side of Krsna and the Pandavas,
and riches too because He is God. Read that book
you fool, and stop fooling around so
much thinking you'll get revelations in
dreams and nature scenes
and from the text of your brain
to the spot in your heart. You'll be forgiven for
the accidental manhandling of a spider
if you engage yourself fully
in the Lord's service.
Chant and hear the names of
the Speaker, Krsna, Krsna, and be aware
you are tiny
and you love Him
and He loves you.

62

Words can grab you and flash new
realities by their combinations
but Krsna and Vyasa have put them together
in the best language, Sanskrit,
and with the ultimate *siddhanta*
so what are you looking for
in the garbage heap, the *jnanis*
mud pile, the sandbox
of errant motions and emotions?

Srimad-Bhagavatam, I've been through it
sixty or a hundred times maybe.
I can keep going back to Prahlada and Dhruva and
the Visnu *avataras* and I don't claim now
that I'm only interested in the Tenth Canto
and only in the *gopi-rasa* chapters.
I like that Krsna in Vrndavana
is the ultimate but
why go into extra books?

My friend Bhurijana said in all cantos
Krsna of Vrndavana is actually the goal.

You can see it if you read carefully
in sequence connecting the
chapters and the flow but for that
you've got to study hard.

Another way is to just read my master's
purports because he's always coming quickly to
Krsna in Vrndavana no matter what book he's
writing or translating. You soon
hear Krsna's names, Krsna's service
and some mention of the pure devotion of
the gopis which was never surpassed
because they loved Krsna in
separation all the time, they never forgot Him
even when they were angry in lover's quarrels.
They worried that His soft feet might get hurt
by the pebbles in the forest.

My master says it
and I don't like to hear others touch on
these topics.
Such a tender *lila*,

it's to be uttered by the one you love
when you revere and trust. I can't
explain why it's so
exclusive but something just dissolves
and disappears when I hear from someone else.
(And my devotion to my master
starts to be shaken.)
It was that way
when I first heard an Indian *karmi*
telling me some *krsna-lila*
in Boston. I wanted to plug my ears.

63

I told you about the spider
and about Draupadi's bellowing
waiting to be petted, fat
solid tons of cow just outside
our door and young Jayananda
talking to me in twilight as
I come home. He says, "I just got
back from school." They don't have
much school but I can't understand what else
he's saying because he's Irish
and I'm from New York
and he's jabbering like a kid
at the door to his Mammy's house.
The only word I could make out
was "Moksa-rupa," the name of his teacher.
As I smile falsely, pause
with my stick and start to walk
to my door, he says
tenderly, "*Haribol*,"
and I say the same back.

The Irish robin is a cutey
smaller than the U.S.A. one and with a

subtler tint of orange-red only on his head
and neck. He's a little fella
on the branch of a tree
where I walk by. Oh, it's mid-December
and this land is still like autumn with
leaves wet and piled but it gets frosty
near every night. I say, "Relax Stefan,
relax." But also, "You're not Krsna conscious
enough so how can you relax?"
Srila Prabhupada says the devotee
is daring and active
he doesn't get caught up in material upheavals
good or bad, he takes misery
as his due and figures it's minimized—
he thanks Krsna for happiness
to comfortably serve Him,
he's *sthita-dhi-muni*, and
like the tortoise, he pulls in his limbs.

I spent an hour in that shed.
The sun was coming down.
It is very nice to be alive with

a safe heart beating in your chest and
contemplating going to India
where you'll wear a winter coat
and where you will step
in cow dung as you do here
and you'll be lucky if you live
to write of it. O Krsna,
this servant is light-years away yet
catching Your beams of mercy,
tracing the frosty lines,
my words like matted grass frost,
like frozen panes of ice
and me inside with You
and Your *Gita*.

64

Little dreams reveal residue of each
day. Little writing may be like that
too. I only go deep enough to recall
what I read fifteen minutes ago and
what I saw and felt today.

Lunch menu was pasta for a change
and bread and butter and the rest . . .
the feast for minnows,
the words that don't belong
where do they come from? Your aunt and uncle
your Godparents way back then,
and you can't remember past life.

It doesn't matter. You better remember
Krsna at the time of death.
But it's a *bhava*, a feeling
and you will be calling and recalling
you will be bawling and crying you will
be crying and just gritting and grinding
the end will do you in,
the mortal death of pain at every stitch
and moment.

You pray to transcend and be with
your master but you have to have
loved him and served him
from the heart otherwise
out will come, when you don't want it,
desire to read more dream workbooks,
desire to love a woman in seven countries,
desire to rape and incest and
smoke a cigar you never did,
desire to remember the truth of Public School 8
desire to be the hero of material realms
and desire to be free of GBC
once and for all, desire to be
accepted as Good Citizen by your Godbrothers,

desire for malted milkshake
"a black and white soda please,"
emeralds and seashores
another writing retreat in Kerry,
"Doctor can you give me four more years
so I can realize my plans?"
Desire to be a book distributor

and temple president
to buckle down and do the needful
to sleep and wake again, to be
my master's personal servant
to give up the money, give it back
be a pure servant work hard
do as asked by superiors,
or something else.

If I had only attained ruci
for the holy name and found my home
in reading Srimad-Bhagavatam
the pure way. I blew it
I should have done this and that
I should have just been a good boy
and never left Boston?
Should have traveled until dropping dead in tracks
or stayed at home and spent last years
writing something even this.

Now I just pray, Prabhupada
take me and bring me to you
for my next program of work.

65

Say what you want, you are not
independent. Nature is down on you,
forces you to feed to starve
to eat stool in the body of
the hog, forces you to hide
and dream, forces you
to face yourself.

Dr. Allen Gerson says that
psychologists are teaching people they can
be what they want,
they have that power.
“It isn’t true” the devotees
chime, in the little walled-in garden
while outside you hear
children shout and play.

Prabhupada kept talking until the tape
ran out. Then they dubbed in
him singing *hari haraye namah krsna*.

Billy goat gruff. The troll stopped the goat
and then asked him questions

not unlike *Mahabharata* where
a Yaksa questioned Yudhisthira
and he answered everything perfectly
because Krsna was dictating to him
in the heart.

Waifs and waffles, the material side of life
diminishes as the spiritual rises.
So speaks Bhaktivinoda Thakura.
And the spiritual side wins out, is eternal—
after death of the body the soul takes
another body. I have nothing to add to that.
I don't know anything.
I'm not a *muni*, not going to open my mouth
but walk in semi-distance behind my
guru and hear him and control my mind
and relax.

I will repeat on the right occasions
what he teaches, tell the people
“You can't live here
you have to take another body.”

Tell the people, repeat it right away
or you'll forget the next moment.

Oh, but I won't forget
my master is my master
and I will sing the glories of *Bhagavad-gita*:
You take another body and the soul goes . . .

Just repeating, that's my style
don't claim we know, don't be a cheater
don't claim I know anything
but *sastra*, guru in the heart and
Lord in heart. They can tell me all I need.

Wesson and Smith and other
vested interests lobby in D.C. but I am
saying if you are going to talk
and flatter someone
then flatter Krsna.
Really you ought to chant
holy names even if you only
count them up.
It does you good.

66

If you're going to praise,
praise Krsna.

Kerouac was admitting in one chorus that
if everything was nothing then what
was he supposed to do while waiting
for death? I thought right away
you don't know devotional service.
Don't just sit around "enlightened" in
so-called void, you can't do it
anyway. His blues choruses prove it—
he says it's nada, it's nothing but then
he can't stop talking of his writing,
his words tumble out, "Praise be the
lights of mankind, praise be the watchers."
He's very unhappy too
but consoles himself that everything is nothing,
thinks that's what the
Buddha said and he read it.

Praise be the material energy,
the energy of the Supreme,
praise be the parts and parcels.

The whole world rejoices hearing Your name
but the demons run in fear. All
this is rightly done. *Brahma-satyam*,
spirit is eternal, *jagan mithya*,
the universe is temporary (but not false).

67

A song is a penny each,
I have a bag of pears and a bag of apples
it's December 14th, World Enlightenment Day
and devotees are giving out books
by milk of kindness, read one page
and your life can become perfect.
They laugh at us, joke and demean,
"They're just out selling books for money. It's a scam."
But devotees don't care for that. They know
the founder-acarya wants this and
the Six Gosvamis and Lord Caitanya
are happy to hear the books are going out
into the hands of needy persons everywhere.
We need to hear Krsna
we need to be near our spiritual master
Prabhupada is the one
he's writing it and we are reading it
from Vyasa.

"I'm okay you're okay," the psychologist said
but who is actually free?
If you think of Krsna you can get

a spiritual body at death
chant His holy names and hear
Srimad-Bhagavatam—Krsna in His appearances
and His pure devotees.
He's the goal of yoga and sacrifice
and Vedic study. He's father, mother
and best lover, cowherd boy.
Devotees can know, I don't know
but at least I've got a chance to
work in this devotional camp
for controlling the wild mind
to glorify God.

68

Walked back to Manu's house.
He's here for the weekend
telling me he bounces off the materialists,
selling paintings.
He smiled, wrinkled eyes and balding,
says he has fun telling some of
them he's a devotee.
And here's Bhagavata dasi visiting from Belfast
and her daughter. I say, "Hello!"
I walk into the hallway
where garbage bags are crowding
and into this room
where heat waves roll out—
they've got the stove going and it's running
to these radiators.
I sit and play
Ginsberg reading Kerouac
but it's awful, Buddha mechanics,
it's all dying and death and
tenderness has no purpose but
he's tender and silly also
"wet leaves against wooden boats"
billions of dead? Already dead?

I turn to this machine and
sing the Hare Krsna man.
Take off another sweater throw it
hard to the floor get down to work
ravishing . . .

Krsna, Krsna the magic word the
words divine the absolute the fence-
sitter I ain't. I'm a Hare Krsna
man singing in this body.

Next life I could be a woman or
angel or something of no sex?
Next life I don't know but this
life I'm a Hare Krsna man. Met my
spiritual master '66—playing that tune
again and the violet and blue and
gray and light blue and aqua green,
the sky and water of Lough Erne
here and now.

Hare Krsna man toots Hare Krsna mantras
calls to Mother Hara,

calls to the Lord Supreme
and to Rama, to Balarama
and Ramacandra and Krsna is
Radha-Ramana.
Play and say it. I lost
time drowsing and merely
counting the rounds, but great devotees
swoon and cry with holy name's
sweetness and I teach it too.

Got to lecture tomorrow
twelfth chapter
about who is very, very dear to Him—
one who is neutral to suffering and happiness
because he's always serving Krsna.
My offering, my tithe
for World Enlightenment Day—
let the world be lightened of karma,
let it be heavied with his books.

I just want to finish this listening
 to his ranting since I started it
 and am indebted for the springboard.
 But I won't do it again,
 I will read the dream books
 I will work the dream paths
 I will not get too serious in the ways
 of the Shaman, all the tendencies in me
 to go on detours . . . or will I end at
 this rate in not making it to pure
 Krsna consciousness, although
 a little girl could do it just by
 simplicity and trust in her guru
 like that girl who passed away in Vrndavana
 and said, "I have a material desire."
 She wanted a tomato, that's all.
 "I want an éclair," said Therese of Lisieux.
 I want what? A dream that Prabhupada
 on pretext of *svapna* actually appears to
 you and whips you for being errant?
 Naw,
 I want to serve. Talk away.

Krsna will take away, will protect you
no effort on your part can do it
He rectifies your errant will
because of your sacrifices because
He loves His devotee
and you are related to Him by
eternal self and by pure devotee's
care for you. You did some service,
He won't forget. You do some service
when you chant holy names.
Please give this message to others:
then you are the best servant.

70

On World Enlightenment Day the books
drop like bombs, smart bombs,
carpet bombing. They
try to stop them but
they sail out anyway into
the hands of hapless souls into
the homes of cheerless hovels and
big atheist's chambers,
the books go and some just rest quietly
in a room for decades
to be opened at the right time
while some are read today
and forgotten
until the right time.
The distributors can't figure all this out
but they distribute books, distribute books.

They get the song today and every day.
I'm just begging pennies for them
serving them with bread, butter
dal and veggies and sweets.
Give them the credit in your

miserable poem, give them
the credit. Step aside your ego,
they get the credit.
We can just imagine how fortunate
they are, they go back to Godhead
after finishing this life.

This one is for
the boys in the vans
for the girls in the parking lots and
malls and airports. This one
is for them,
my humble obeisances.
Sweat it out.

71

You want peace. You can't be happy
without it and you can't get
peace if you don't know
Krsna is the friend and the
owner and the object
of sacrifices.

This spoken on the highest authority.
I am nothing, what is
my worth? I am only following
my Guru Maharaja.

They say, "Don't you *ever*
differ from him? Don't you *ever*
wish to be free of him? Don't you *wish* you could
just be yourself and listen
to whatever music you want to
and eat what your body wants
and go love a woman? Huh?"
I say, "You don't understand."

I don't want to get caught in this
samsara.

“Yeah, but you say you’re gonna
get caught in it anyway because you
don’t love Krsna purely and sufficiently.”
True, but I want to make progress
in that direction. I will detach
from the pleasures of this world and make
progress towards Vaisnavism, see?

“You are staking your bets.
You don’t sound like you’re motivated by
pure *bhakti*.”

I admit that. But
practicing *bhakti* is plenty powerful
it’s way above what you call
Buddhism, Buddha-hood and
all your “in between existence
and nonexistence.”

I don’t feel a thing but I make gains
That’s what scripture says.
A little *bhakti* never suffers
loss or diminution and can save
you from the greatest danger.

There you go again,
memorizing, speaking memorized verses.
Even a little can prevent you
from falling down into the
cycle of birth of death.

As the gull flies over the lake
and glides down, your own words
are also borrowed plumes because everything
comes from Krsna
everything is Krsna
everything is stated in *sastra*
and you are free to do
as you like
and get the reaction.

72

All's well. We are serving and
that's the best time-serving.
But He wants your heart,
he wants you without any
desire other than to serve
Him. Pretty demanding God
that Krsna.
It's for your own good.

He wants to save you.
You have to give up
all your false claims
and—very important—
you have to give up
your impersonalism
and voidism
which are even worse than
plain sense gratification.

We have a lot to sing about
we have a lot to work out
we're on the ground floor still

of this movement called ISKCON
the society for Krishna consciousness all over
the world. Anyone can do it. Me too.

Hare Krsna chanting is the only way
in this age. Shame it isn't spread yet
but it will happen because He predicted.
Prabhupada did the most work for centuries
and we are following up his orders,
lifetimes to do,
please accept me.
Haribol.

