ELECTRIONIC BOOK

Every Day, Just Write

Volume 40

Seeing Krishna

Within The Cloud

February 14–March 15, 1999

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the One Big Book of Your Life

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Something Reading or Writing

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February 14, 1999

12:20 a.m., Valentine’s Day.

I love Krishna, Krishna loves me. I love *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, and my spiritual master, Shrila Prabhupada, and he loves me. “I envy no one, nor am I partial to anyone. I am equal to all. But whoever renders service unto Me in devotion is a friend, is in Me, and I am also a friend to him.” (Bg. 9.29)

Begin this new volume with delivered hope and faith. Charity—I give of myself to it and wish it could help others. Krishna is the life force in everything. Even if I can’t “see” Him. These petty eyes can’t see much and are not pure in my head and body. I can see Krishna , I hope, in many ways.

Begin this new volume, mid-February, on the first day of the week, six days before we leave Wicklow for trans-Atlantic flight. Begin by thinking of last night’s dream or rather the thoughts when I awoke—don’t be attached to followers, don’t try to enjoy them and the position they give you. The way to escape this condemnation is to realize your spiritual poverty and tininess before the Supreme Lord. I know nothing; He knows everything. Only by depending on Him can I be safe. Ask for his permission and guidance as you act. The spiritual master guides us and God is in our hearts. The spiritual master awakens us, opens our eyes, plants instructions in our hearts. Creates our good fortune. He has left this world and left his instructions. Chant Hare Krishna mantra, serve in love in the society of devotees. *Satam prasangan mama virya samvido*.

Lord Krishna gives special attention to His devotees who are “always trancendentally situated in Krishna. . . living transcendentalists . . .” (Bg. 9.29, purport) I want to be like that,

in Krishna. In Krishna consciousness. Pray for it on a new day, and take His personal offer, given as Lord Chaitanya, to chant *hari-nama*.

The Lord and His devotees make a beautiful combination. The Lord’s partiality to His devotees is His special mercy. It’s not under the law of karma. Devotional service is an activity of the spiritual world “where eternity, bliss and knowledge predominate.”

4:10 a.m.

ItMs no more. Radha and Govinda always. A little boy jazzer got an alto sax for his birthday. “I have not written to you since your birthday but I think of you every day.”

I’m doing fine. Chant sixty-four rounds on some days and read two hours a day. Hey, then you’re doing fine. I’m not doing so much *bhajana* myself. I don’t even go to the annual . . .

No, don’t tell on yourself. Let’s hear what your heart is. It’s a note of desire to please the people and the Lord and the self but without too much effort—because the H.A. syndrome shapes me. It humbles me down to dwarf size.

He said I’ll strangle the next sympathizer who says, “Got a headache?” because they don’t know the difference between an ordinary H.A. and my migraine. But I don’t get them so bad either, just enough to completely debilitate me.

Hari oats and cereal. Daybreak, me on top of what situation? Got it so comfortable, it might be good to take you away from such a comfortable scene so you can gain a new perspective.

Oh, I know what you mean. Anyway, happy Sunday. I’ve put a pillow out for you to sit upright on in your mantra meditation. But you are so jumpy you won’t stay put for more than a round at a time. You walk and talk and mind roam, write a Post-it. I’d like you to sit—but for two hours?

Names of God given to us . . . by Lord Caitanya. All the same . . . Krishna, Krishna.

Dressed in white with gold trim. I chose one out of four possible turbans, it was a bit small. Krishna, Krishna, the repetition of the mantra requires us to become very simple and give up all other attempts.

Krishna the sports of any person is You. The scandals of any wrong behavior are due to forgetfulness of You. But piety or material success is also not pleasing to You, unless it’s a form of offering at Your lotus feet. This time could be better spent . . . I have a certain amount rationed to me each day.

He went to the farm. He practiced for Y2K. He saved his money and thought what was he willing to do to defend it all, guns? And how much was the impending predicted crisis just a big distraction from simple service and dependence on Krishna.

Krishna antics, I’m about run out even at the start. Happy Sunday when Goloka cooks for me a kind of eggplant chopped and her inimitable scones and a *dal* and rice . . . You will offer all you do to God but what’s in your life and actions and how deep, how willing is your commitment? I see a dawdler, a pleader and yes an invalid who says, “I am stung and can only sit it out in some pain.” Lost my quality of life.

7:45 a.m.

In the shed raining. When we go to America, while we are there, GBC men will be returning from India. Many protocols, controversies and even intrigues to be involved in. In and out in little over a week. Weave my art. My diary. I’ll do what I believe in against any force that tries to shackle me, said Stephen Hero, but my only weapons will be “cunning, silence and exile.”

My weapons are beads, silence, Wicklow residence. Headache on me. That’s why I’m going there, not for fancy meals at someone’s home or a knife in the back or front. I will . . . I hereby . . . fade out. Doctor, can’t you give me a more powerful pill than this? No? You say I should just bite the bullet or learn biofeedback?

Doctor, you sure have big teeth.

All the better to eat you with, my dear!

Sir, *sadhu*, be on guard. Be prepared with food-stocks, funny story, *Bhagavad-gita* appropriate verses. Know who your friends are. A shed full of turf. A readiness plan. Detachment from the flesh will have to be cultivated at a critical hour. And certainly it’s a test for your adherence to *Bhagavad-gita*, Krishna speaking to you. Do you hear Him?—And whoever at the end of his life quits his body, thinking of Me, he will attain Me without doubt.

Yeah, I am practicing but you know it never seems like the real thing. When it happens, then . . . it’s too late to begin.

You can’t go back to Godhead in one life. But if Krishna wants to . . . Pure devotee prays never to forget Krishna. Shrila Prabhupada preaching and I’m tuning in. It’s all right if this one shy and retired person stays at a friendly distance from the power and management of the religious institution. That’s not deviant. He doesn’t say the leaders are unworthy. He doesn’t have a “better” plan he wants to enact. He just says I need to stay apart to be authentic. That’s my way. We need you who stay in the eye of the storm and direct the institution. You are leaders. And we need—or I need—me at the outskirts.

Shrila Prabhupada blessing my effort. Do it in spiritual poverty. Begging him please accept this. You mean every day you just write and that’s your main existence? It’s not even a book, it’s just a flow of days?

No, it is a book, many volumes, as many as I can do. It doesn’t stop as long as life doesn’t stop in this body. Or it may stop for some other material cause or act of God.

Could Y2K stop it?

Could a GBC edict stop it?

Could H.A. stop it? Could a log or whole jam of logs floating in the Fraser river outside Vancouver (as seen from an airplane above) stop it? Could a whim, an inauspicious star stop it? Some black devil or jin could come and stop it?

If the Mafia wanted you to stop it they could. Or a government could throw you in jail and make sure you did no writing.

I could write in my head until I had no head. The soul goes on—like Rahu after his head was cut off. The soul goes on to a next life. Hare Krishna. Don’t be a madman fanatic. Just do whatever guru and Krishna tell you to do.

They said writing is good. So I don’t want to write merely in the standard ways. Courage, lad, embark on the sea you are called for. Write in this way.

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare. In Baltimore, we are going. In the nest of phones and internets and bulletins and crazy people and sane people. Two hundred million people. Wired together and ISKCON a minor counterpart with many of the same features as the country itself.

What do you mean? Oh, sigh and effort, this morning is moving along. Fifty men on a raft. Blow the whistle for help. There are a few crunchy coconut tasting candy bars in the life raft and a light. Let’s hope someone sees us. I remember Stephen Crane’s *The Open Boat* and the way Dr. A. taught it. The universe is heartless, loveless, no God in control.

Hare, hey Hare. I won’t walk the streets to be mocked. Hare is going into the doctor’s office. He’s wearing a saffron “skirt” of India. He’s a man but he has that skirt and black boots, head shaved. One of them Injuns, one of them cultists. A skinny one, old, haggard, delicate guy.

Appears to be. *Upanishads*. Action. Eternal inquiry. The Vaishnava guru tells us *krsihnas tu bhagavan svayam*. God is Bhagavan. Avoid the Mayavadis, the *karmis* and *jnanis* and all atheists said Lord Chaitanya. If you are desirous of crossing the ocean of birth and death in the renounced order, then to associate with women for enjoyment or with enjoyers is like drinking poison.

Lord Chaitanya advised that we associate with devotees and with them exchange the six kinds of love.

God himself has nothing to do and He is unborn. Yet He takes birth as the son of Devaki or Yasoda and he performs acts of the cowherd boy, lover, politician, philosopher. His acts are transcendental and whoever understands his *janma* and karma doesn’t have to return to this material world but goes back to Godhead. Whew. Oh boy.

9:07 a.m.

Sleeping on your back at risk,

eyes on the distant skylight—please be

clear when you write. Remind us of God.

You could pretend you were praying

or perform at prayer, say

“Hare Krishna Hare Krishna,

Krishna Krishna Hare Hare,”—that’s

not half bad.

The travel details are under way—

we will met at NY by JG who

will drive us to Balt. You’re “not supposed

to,”—get off your plane and do that because

you have a connecting ticket to Baltimore, but

no one can stop you. Hmmm. Maybe

we should take that plane

connection after all.

Down the chute. Henry Roote. Be clear!

I’m just fooling. Down the chute . . .

I’m a devotee-aspiring. We hide out.

We tell the same thing as they do. We

read *Shrimad Bhagavatam* when our head is clear.

The doctor will understand me. I’ll pay

him for it, at least $100–$200.

And more for medicine and return

visits, I crave. But he will understand

me as even my brothers do not.

I’ll tell him the facts of my suffering.

Perhaps he won’t. I plan to come back here

where this notepad awaits in the back

room. The poet’s. Clear route words, Irish

Time stuff, lunch afternoon fade

time Hare Krishna rosaries—I seek breakthrough

I’m like them only a little quieter.

9:30 a.m.

“Performing his prescribed duties, one should worship the Deity of the Supreme Personality of Godhead until one realizes My presence in his own heart and in the hearts of other living entities as well.” *(Bhag*. 2.9.25) It’s not enough to do your duties. You have to realize your relationship with the Supreme Lord and the relationship of all beings with Him. Work *and* realize God. Both.

Lord Narayana is in the heart of all creatures. We should honor Him by respecting His parts and parcels. This is the science of God.

He has not come yet for giving me a neck massage. I can still write. Read a little *Shrimad Bhagavatam.* Consider, God, as Supersoul, in each person’s heart. You can’t understand it by material investigation. A small form of a four-armed person, the size of a thumb, in each person’s heart, even in the dogs and insects (and we ask, “Size of *their* thumb or what?”) Incredulous. The scientists and speculators laugh, “Narayana indeed!” We don’t laugh or we laugh at them. But who has seen the Lord in the heart? Just take it. Anyway, we want to see Krishna in His original two-handed form.

Just take it that God is in everyone’s heart and gives intelligence and forgetfulness, can be the guide (*caitya-guru*) and is the Witness of all our acts. If the beautiful, darkish form of Paramatama is “too much” for you, then think at least of His presence as I just stated it. And for us, aspiring Krishna *bhaktas*, we can think of Krishna Himself in the heart. Braja Krishna. The Supreme Friend, Supreme Controller. Please protect us. We don’t defy.

11:40 a.m.

You make little forays into big topics. What kind of a guru are you? What kind of a scholar or teacher of the *siddhanta* ? How faithful are you to Shrila Prabhupad? And to the society ISKCON and its GBC? What risks do you take for your disciples? What is your commitment to them?

Can you answer detailed questions? Why don’t you take a part more in giving them guidance in the practical affairs of their lives? Shouldn’t you promote or invite more that your disciples seek out *shiksha* from other Vaishnavas?

Another consideration: After disciples grow up, after fifteen or twenty years of practice, and they have grown into their forties, shouldn’t they be expected to take care of themselves and take direct instructions from Prabhupad? Should a good instructor teach not only the doctrines of Krishna consciousness, but teach self-reliance to his disciples? If he can do that, it seems a major function of guru.

You are trying to cut your niche. You want to be something unique. Maybe. But I’m also doing what I do regardless of getting praised for it. I want to be honest. I have to face my limits. So I live that way. To learn something from my writings and life is not so direct always. It seems I am not gaining in depth or intricacy in my knowledge of the Vaishnava science. I keep to the basics. Then what more can I teach? I can teach my patience, endurance, by joy, by art expressions. And by being a friend, which I do with those who want to exchange meaningful letters. And you “be there” for them. That means not so much *vapu˙*, be an example of a practitioner of Krishna consciousness who is not after power, stays away from politics and controversies, leads a simple life. Not always coddling them, directing them.

I’m unable to give them a farm to work on, a building for education, a *gurukula* with teachers. I can’t do it. They must figure that out themselves in ISKCON or on their own. All power to gurus who can provide so much. But there are other ways to take risks and show commitment to the guru-disciple relationship.

3:35 p.m.

Stay indoors this last week. Canceled lecture in Dublin. Savor it. Painting a creative storm to Bach and Vivaldi and Shrila Prabhupada. The nondevotees, he said, may be considered gurus, as we learn accounting, ox control and various skills from them, but because they are not well behaved we should not associate with them intimately. Spell it out, exactly how we should act.

And give me a margin for error. I’ve got the shakes and twitches. I want to paint a boy *(gopa)* flying in the air. Balarama white house paint, dance-cavort, big smile like ordinary boy. Krishna black hair, blue body, the elements, my Lord. He lets us play. I want to paint He and Balaram and may do it again.

If He lets you. Everything is up to Krishna. You use or misuse your free will.

3:45 p.m.

You, painter, you played you welled

up. You said to yourself Now I’m going

to mess it, make a ruckus.

But mostly it came out innocent

cow and very small cowherd boy

like Charlie Brown in “Peanuts.”

You said I’ll attack but it was

not so bad all you wanted to say

got done in paint forms and

oil stick gesture. Dig, scrape,

stab, blob, drip, red, white

reach blindly for any colored

stick and mark and mark until

surprise—it’s done.

How’s your head after that?

Look forward to a snack.

Wish I could say something universal.

Maybe I did. Tacked or imprinted

“Hare Krishna” and *tilaka*.

Now . . . drink water, go down

later and see. If only I can overcome

this head fog we’ll read

tonight, out loud together from

Bhaktivinoda on Navadvipa, two weeks

before Gaura-Purnima.

If not, be silent and glad.

5:40 p.m.

Chaitanya said just a little reading together picked up his harried spirits. He told me he’s worrying about lack of money. He’s painting Irish scenes and hoping to sell them to the devotee-painting salesmen. But he has to compete with Hong Kong prices. Then he said he’s also strained by his dealings with Madhu—“My false ego is stretched to the breaking point.” I told him to communicate this to M. “No,” he said. “I always agree.” But that’s artificial, I said, if inside you are tearing yourself to pieces. I’ll ask them to sort it out. He said the only thing that is balm to his troubles is when we read together. I realize that mostly his chores don’t involve *shravanam-kirtanam.*

February 15

12:05 a.m.

Read and pray. The words shine back from the page and are not always easy to assimilate. Prayer as a separate action, in the mind, or will, asking that I may find perhaps a phrase in the purport that I can keep and stay with. He’s describing how the Supreme Lord forgives the devotee for an occasional falldown. A practitioner who is still in the conditioned state has to prosecute some worldly duties along with his *sadhana*. These two kinds of activities may sometimes come in conflict and the devotee does something considered abominable. “In the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* it is stated that if a person falls down but is whole-heartedly engaged in the transcendental service of the Supreme Lord, the Lord, being situated within his heart, purifies him and excuses him . . . ” (*Bhag*. 2.9.30, purport) If the Supreme Lord forgives and rectifies the devotee, then we should also not deride him.

What if it’s me? Then I too would want forgiveness. But sometimes devotees become so disheartened or so swept awau by *maya* that they don’t rectify. If our good reputation is smashed, it requires a lot of humility to pick up and keep going.

Don’t deride him. All he has to do is remain “unflinchingly and exclusively engaged in devotional service.” The faulty activities of the devotee are like the spots that resemble the mark of a rabbit on the moon. They do not prevent the moon’s defusion of light.

“No one should take advantage of this verse and commit nonsense and think that he is still a devotee.” Regret and improve. Don’t think you have discovered an excellent means to commit sins and be washed of them (the seventh offense in chanting the holy names).

Devotional service is a purifying process and it quickly cleans the heart of the practicing devotee. “He puts the Supreme Personality of Godhead in his heart and all sinful contaminations are washed away.” *(Bhag.* 2.9.31, purport) Hare Krishna mantra does the job. We shouldn’t be, however, like the elephant who washes himself in the river then goes on land and immediately throws dust on his body. Keep clean. Keep chanting. Keep away from sinful life, thoughts and persons. Lord Krishna wants this truth boldly declared by Arjuna and He will personally back it up: “My devotee never perishes.”

When I paint pictures I often like to make faces and bodies that are somewhat grotesque or less than ideal. Then I put Vaishnava *tilaka* on their foreheads, Vaishnava dress and they are usually in some worshipful pose. *Bhagavad-gita* (9.32) affirms that even persons who are socially low born, even those lower than *candalas*, can be uplifted and take to full devotional service in this lifetime. It happens when a person accepts a pure devotee as his spiritual master and takes complete shelter of Krishna in devotional service.

So now I am going to do that as I chant my rounds. I’m going to enter the holy names. I’m going to chant with attention and devotion. Then I’ll be fit to help Bhakta Leo and Bhaktin Jane and not be afraid of the material energy and its demons (although some fear is healthy).

4:05 a.m.

Hard to getting going. Krishna. We are the men in the moon—*yogis* can go there—by speed of mind, you know—but even at that speed you can’t reach Krishna. Shrila Prabhupada telling them in London (Bhaktivedanta Manor) 1973, July. I was trying to catch up to him from Calcutta via Bombay. He is saying only by *bhakti-yoga* can you approach Krishna. Pretty. “All glories to Shrila Prabhupada!” Quickly, let’s get our bags packed. Cabin luggage only, over the ocean, the mind goes there and to the doctor’s office and meetings with disciples . . . Hey people, I’m here, the beloved *shiksha-diksha* old skinny.

Still alive, still writing.

Birds in the cold, the trees painted with “Radha” in Sanskrit but faded now. Patel’s mailbox, about to retire . . . still going on, still afraid to say . . . I don’t know Krishna. Here, let us wash your face and feet. Take a meal. It’s never quite as good as you might imagine. Everything is a kind of duty to perform and you may be glad you did it. But while it’s happening . . .

*Haribol*. I’m here for a moment in the . . . thing about operas and *bhakti* as free-writes get out of hand. We are in Ireland where we write literature and when you try too hard it doesn’t work well.

Just tell—no water in the cup. Clock hands . . . You could stay here but it’s too late now. We are committed. Place the green travel bag, “For members only,” in the room and gradually filling it up. The passport has spaces for immigration stamps and is valid until February 28th, 2000. So you’ll have to go through the thing to see if this body can be revived to enter its seventieth decade.

Fie on you, Jack Falstaff. Rupa Gosvami is our *shiksha-guru* in his praise of Shrimati Radharani and Sri Krishna. He says he wants the direct service of Them in Vrindavan.

Krishna consciousness in all spheres. Shilavati a hit in the Lorca drama produced in Dublin. The *Irish Times* reviewer praised her “impressive intensity” and Shyamananda gone to the city also to dance for the Lord. I tell them do it for Krishna and watch yourself for inebrieties. Tell them discover for yourself who you are. A guru isn’t meant to forever spoon-feed growing disciples, but encourage them to do it themselves—be who they are for the Lord. On the front lines of self-realization we all are.

Hare Krishna, I’ve said my rounds. Bring the mellow tape of Shrila Prabhupada chanting his. How deep is the ocean?

The quest

the crest is on top of the waves. Trinidad airport terminal, places you have to wait. I’ll bring a notebook marked “Extra Candor” and one for drawing in nervously to pass the time, don’t forget earplugs, Pepcid, St. Christopher’s medal, Lord Nrsimhadev too, *sakshad darshan* you can’t get but remember to say holy names. Don’t forget Fibercon, Advil, Anvil, Angel, more. Don’t forget your meds and Krishna is in control. Your best plan is to read *Krishna,The Reservoir Of Pleasure* and Bhaktivinoda Thakur’s last vows while on this transatlantic flight may be dashed by headache and you’ll have to contend with the inflight movies and so you try to close your eyes and fade out and make a few scratches in ink, but there is so much time to pass, trying to get comfortable in this body is a trip.

Hare Krishna.

You know the breathy flute. Krishna is the original player and enchants the *gopis*. Best lines. Oh, you official book writers, you’re okay I guess. My book too.

How absurd to travel from Ireland to America just to see a doctor. In olden, simpler days one would accept whatever doctor was available in his village. Doing it, going there. Burned out by years of management in ISKCON, he said of me. When I heard it I felt more determination not to be brought back into that. Feelings of loneliness and aloneness yesterday as I painted. But it felt right and seemed to fuel my creative expression. Live alone and paint happily and wildly with threefold choice of colors. Share that with others.

They will gather for *sat-sanga* with three senior Godbrothers to give the lectures. I will not be there. Fly, fly to America and back. Don’t eat big meals but frequent, smaller meals. Get sufficient sleep, he said, even if it means sacrificing your midnight rising. No, please, don’t take that away.

We may have to take away everything and later give it back. Are you willing to do the needful to control your pain and possibly vanquish headaches?

If I knew for sure sleeping in would help I might be more inclined to it. But if I give up precious habits and still get headaches, what’s the use. One gets up at midnight . . .

Oh, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna. Literary prize, hokum and smoke. The big, muscular *sannyasi* insisted we all join him in the *kirtana*, run and dance, back and forth, jocular. Well, I refuse.

I recant. I take back my free-write statements, whatever you object to. Please give me the secret files for my own use.

Krishna is on Govardhana Hill. He walks barefoot in Vraja. The *gopis* worry that His feet might be pricked by pebbles on the path. And so they cry for Krishna. They want Him to be always happy, even if that means their own unhappiness.

Hare Krishna green jacket. Walk outside around the house. Too dark at 7 a.m. to see what flowers might be coming up. Someone wished me a happy spring but it’s still winter. Liable to be cold in America. Be motivated for the trip, don’t undercut yourself and say it’s absurd to go so far for medical treatment. You can’t get it here, this lead turned up with Dr. K. in Baltimore so we are following it up.

Krishna is the K. Krishna is the R and the S and then the A and He’s all-pervading in all things.

Krish means He attracts

Rama means He’s in bliss

Shyama means dark and beautiful

Now say the holy names

and be happy in simple life.

Nothing is simpler (or starker) than simply chanting and hearing and leaving all discourse or feeling aside. Don’t dwell on how “I” feel. Just be there and say the mantra. When the mind wanders bring it back to the simple act of vibrating and hearing Hare Krishna mantra.

So we arrived in the city and I instantly wanted to return to my home in the country. It was of no avail. I had to carry through with the karma—of airflight and car ride to Baltimore. Don’t overload your cabin luggage or they won’t let you on board with it. I usually travel with three sets of clothes but maybe I’ll have to do with just two. And two books on Therese of Lisieuxor maybe just one. And a partridge in a pear tree.

Don’t bring your violin or cassettes or pillows. No extra teeth or drawing boards or crayons. Not allowed over excess weight or shape of air-cabin luggage. Are they strict? Nothing you can say but “Yes, Sir.” It’s their world.

Disney world. World Trade Center. Transworld Airlines. Check you at the security point. Why are you carrying so much medicines strapped around your waist? Where is the prescription in your name? Now you can go forward. But don’t take a taxi with an unauthorized person.

Krishna, Krishna, I am not abstract to give you a ride just now. I have one thousand dollars saved. Give me a peppermint stick. Do you have an eye mask to wear so you won’t have to look at the inflight movie? You know how they make their lasting impressions.

Krishna ate a banana and the preps made by Mother Krishna Yasoda. Then He went to the forest with the cows and calves and cowherd boys. The young girls of Gokula watched Krishna from a distance and spoke among themselves conveying the beauty of Krishna and the sufferings of separation from Him. His dealings are teaching and blessing. His dealings are compared to hot molasses—too hot to drink but too sweet to stop.

Oh, Krishna was the cynosure of praise. People were not jealous. Cheating religion is kicked out. His father is next on the list and some people think he is already dead. “Oh? You’re still alive? I thought you died.”

Play with an old fiddler tonight at Govindas. M. on melodeon. He’s pleased even if just a few interested persons come to hear the music, rich food of Govinda’s. Sitting in simple decor. O Krishna, I’m getting cold.

9 a.m.

I don’t hate my fathers. The one

and certainly not the other. Sylvia wrote

“Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I’m through.”

But I don’t want to murder you

because you gave and give me life

and life is good

if I make it.

My father is Prabhupada, he who

I must contend with and love because he

continues in me and I depend on him to

reach eternal life. It’s not easy.

The other father rests in peace, a

1940s–50s dad, 1960s and then I was

gone. He gave no *vani* I have to

follow. I didn’t surrender but defied him

and now forgive him. I made no vow to

him—except to join the Navy and now I am

out of that.

But the spiritual father is eternal and

I have to make peace with him.

He put me through another wringer . . .

No, don’t say it that way. Say . . . I

surrender, I want to be good, I don’t want to

find fault. I have said so much already

of the divine master

of the faults I find,

of what I dare don’t say.

Today . . . I don’t want to enumerate,

I’ve run out of space. So I’ll say

Daddy, I want to serve your *vani*

I’m afraid—I wish to be simple,

I am myself, in this body—

not able to rise to your standard

of surrendering everything to God.

But please accept me as a

son. I don’t defy, I want your blessing.

I write . . . for you

this day. More later.

11:20 a.m.

Our trip away is supposed to be a secret, at least the details of where we are going and why. But Cdd knows and asked me in a note, “How do you feel about going to America so soon?” I feel that we have a real good thing here in Ireland and I want to come back. I look forward to the early dawns when I can go for a longer walk, outside the cement wall. That will be very tasty. But this winter mode has been delicious. All day, every hour, I have some nice engagement favorable for Krishna consciousness and creative life. Quiet and so on. Write poems, paint in the art room, everything is laid out for me to work in peace and flow. So I couldn’t do better. And therefore to leave it is a shame. But to go to America is another kind of challenge. It’s a small venture in one sense, just a week, and carefully charted out so I avoid too much stress. But it is stress and it is a gamble. So it will awaken me to that dimension of life and I’ll be even more eager to appreciate what I have here if I can return. Going to see Dr. K. in whom I don’t fully believe. One migraineur said, “Don’t believe a hundred per cent in any doctor.” You have to try it out and decide finally for yourself.

That weekend engagement at SR’s house where three senior Godbrothers are attending, weighs on my mind. M. said, “That’s just the tip of the ice-berg.” America is filled with comings and goings of ISKCON devotees. They could easily try to pull me in again to the way they live and the way I no longer live. M. pointed out that the years I lived as a manager (over my head) have taken their toll on my body and nervous system. They might be said to have contributed to my headache condition. All that stress. I don’t resent it but it’s not wrong to look at it that way. I cannot allow myself to go back into a way of living that produces more tension than I can bear. Those who try to get me back into it may not understand my capacities. They may say, “You should die on the battlefield, as we choose.” But I cannot let them sway me or threaten me to live the “normal” life of a *sannyasi-*traveller-preacher-socializer. Manager, worrier, fighter, partaker in the nitty-gritty.

Instead write and read and chant. I just received an edited ms of an EJW volume I wrote a year and a half ago. I was regularly reading *Shrimad Bhagavatam* better than at present. Seemed to be getting more headaches then and depending less on medication. Philosophizing to accept the pain in Krishna’s service. Lots of straight Krishna conscious reflections from a personal point of view, while living in Geaglum-Inis Rath.

11:50 a.m.

Hare Krishna. Try on sweaters and decide which you’ll wear to America, and which sweatshirt. Nervous. Make a joke: These may be the clothes they bury me in. Make another: I don’t think Krishna will let me die so soon. He wants me to do some great work like start the Hare Krishna movement the way Shrila Prabhupada did. I’m the chosen one but I haven’t received my full charge of power yet. That’s why I’m going to America to see Dr. K. (Sounds like a character in a Kafka novel). If I get better health, not so fragile, then it’s an option for me to do great courageous outgoing work.

Fragile, one of my favorite words for describing myself. Apt. Look it up. Frail is near it: “Physically weak and delicate.” “Easily corrupted or tempted.”

Fragile is, “Able to be broken easily.” That’s like packages marked “Fragile.” In a weakened physical state. Slight, tenuous. Oh boy; fragment, fractious.

I say be calm and strong even though you are fragile. You’re actually tough, impervious, in good humor. You’re fixed up and patched and holy and wholey. You’re a *cela* of a bona fide guru. The connection is strong. But don’t test it to the breaking point. Be a loving disciple. I’m trying for that. Please forgive me. I love you despite my faults and my jealousies. My envies.

3:55 p.m.

Tingling in arms and all over, is it twitches of illness or happiness? It was happy painting painterly, mixing and mixing color paints on the canvas, “*Haribol*.” Ambiguous figures—is he embracing her or hitting? But at least they wear Vaishnava *tilaka*. *Api cet su-duracaro*. The devotion is assured, my connection is assured. And if there is any doubt then I add the sacred word, “Hare Krishna.” And one says “KC life.”

Peace, excitement to Brahm’s violin concerto, all great souls reaching for God. Trying to express, often not in words, the questions or yearning or exultancy of God consciousness. The atheist says, “Why God? These are just the passions of man.” But passions also come from God and are properly directed to Him in passions of devotional service like greed, sorrow, happy, grateful, scared, seeking protection and peace. All is one in Lord Hari and we are part of Him.

4:05 p.m.

Ah quiet here is exciting you

hear the wind peacefully buffeting,

a friend, at the foot of a high hill

we are. Only once in six months did

a salesperson come here, knocked and said

“You’re way up the hill”—then she

tried to sell insurance but no one bought.

High on the hill. We may run out

of supplies. We have to leave we tricked

ourself into leaving—to see a doctor

across the ocean. Can’t get out of it

now. Turn it into a visit with

devotees. But I yearn to return

to the house at the hillfoot

where no one comes

at best.

And where I can paint painterly

figures out of nowhere that I

feel while Prabhupada sings

and lets me play and I willingly

make *hari-nama* and brand

people with Vaishava signs and

make merry

Where we offer *prasadam* three

times a day to Radha-Govinda and to

where Madhu returns late at night and

when I see him I ask, “How was

your gig?” And he tells me and

I go on daily chanting and reading and

writing. O Lord when You take

me away from here I have to thank

You for this and for everything.

Everything equally. But this was

very nice.

5:54 p.m.

Read the end of *Navadvipa-mahatmya*. Jiva Gosvami asks Lord Nityananda if Navadvipa is non-different from Vrndavana, then why make the effort of traveling to Vrindavana? Lord Nityananda describes to him how living in Navadvipa qualifies one to enter the *rasa* of Vraja. Jiva Gosvamî then asks how come some people living in Navadvipa have not attained *krishna-bhakti*? Lord Nityananda says there is a covering of *maya* over the eternal *dhama* and unqualified people live on top of that. They may think, “I’m living in Navadvipa,” but actually they live on that covering. Lord Nityananda then describes how *dasya-rasa* service unto Gauranga results in *madhurya-rasa* to Radha and Krishna. Then Jiva Gosvami gets the blessings of all the Vaishavas and starts for Vrindavan. Chaitanya-candrodaya and I finished the reading and then continued to speak of topics about the holy *dhamas* and the great Vaishnavas of both Vrindavan and Navadvipa.

Earlier we had nice pieces of apple pie. I have had a very good day without any head pain. Able to be active and clear. I should not, however, resent the days in which pressure comes. I remember Shrila Prabhupada saying we should not deride miseries when they come. Krishna says to tolerate them. Be aware that they come and go. You may think that somehow Krishna wants me to experience this so I won’t resent it. Then why are you going to America to see a headache specialist? Because I am a conditioned soul. I cannot perform my service nicely when I get headaches. I will make some attempt to improve my condition but always aware that it’s up to Krishna whether I get better.

You may take some medical measures and at the same time accept what comes. With or without pains, active or sidelined, you must try to remain in Krishna consciousness. Always be aware you are not a great Krishna Vaishnava, you are not a Vaishava at all. You are the servant of a great Vaishava, Shrila Prabhupada. On his order you may chant Hare Krishna mantra on beads. And you may write and you may read *Shrimad-Bhagavatam*.

February 16

3:08 a.m.

Slept in an extra hour until 1 a.m. because M. and Dr. K. say I need more sleep. Shrila Prabhupada says sleep is a waste of time. The Six Goswamis reduced their sleep to one and a half hours out of twenty-four and sometimes not even that. *Bhagavad-gita* says don’t sleep too much or too little. Beat those headaches with extra rest? But the midnight hour has been kind to me all these years, a time for compulsory scripture reading and then any writing that comes from that. And *japa* flowing . . . Still, it can be done a little later.

Hare Krishna rounds. Not like the ideal meditation Freeman advocates in *Light Within*. Simple, hear the mantra and nothing else. Simple, sit up still and straight. With love. To Krishna. Chant and hear. No fantasies, no slipping off into sleep, no plan making and mind wandering. Mine are not like that.

I used to speak of smashing the persona, removing the masks. Now it seems more I want a persona, stay with him, who I am. Why smash him? If he’s false. Why not find him and be him? Eternal servant of God is the general definition. *Shishya* of Prabhupada is still generic. This one, this very one. Oh, he slipped under the rock again, he’s so shy. And now he’s tooting on top of the rock, proud as can be. Smash the personas of false ego. Pick up the pieces. It’s quite a job taking care of you, Prabhu. Now serve the Lord.

4:13 a.m.

Shrila Prabhupada was saying how nice and perfect Sanskrit is, every word in *shastra* is perfect, not like whimsical English. Strict laws must be followed in Sanskrit. I felt pinched while hearing this. My faulty, fault-finding mind wants to rebel. You don’t need to do that. Sanskrit is perfect but surely Shrila Prabhupada will be pleased at a modern, accessible language that can convey Krishna consciousness. He said the *Vedas* are *sruti*, not Sanskriti and thus Sanskrit is not required. Said that to the interviewer in Bhavan’s journal.

So don’t complain and be so unhappy.

Be a worshipper. You are who you are. Drink water. Krishna in peach color. I took extra time making Radha’s crown look nice. Don’t banish the “I.” Don’t use the “we” instead or “The author.” You’re not only an author. You’re a shmerk. A turtle. You’re the very being. Oh, don’t claim so much. You live plenty off the page.

You dawdle. You apply aloe gel to your neck. You wash your inner parts. You turn on cold water. You wash your shmitts.

You are so self conscious you might as well say, “We enjoyed our bath. We then humbly went upstairs and we (three of us at least) bowed down. Me and my kneecaps and the worms in my gut. Me and my eyeballs and foot balls, the squares and triangles in my mind and body, the electrodes and nitrons.

Me and the air. Me and God’s creation. “Everyone and everything is God, except Krishna,” the Mayavadis say. And one of them says, “If I am satisfied then God is satisfied because I am God.”

What do I say? I realize I’m *anu*. He said, “Count how many times SDG uses the word I in each paragraph.” I say . . . If the words Krishna and Chaitanya and Prabhupada are scattered enough on the page then I am not at fault.

Don’t scratch my back. I’m self-sufficient as long as everyone holds me up in the world infrastructure. God is the center. Metaphysical rantings of Dr. Bronnerand I**.**

You better get in tune with the *sastras*. Anything in connection with Krishna is the dynamic *yukta-vairagya*. It’s a subtle understanding. *Sahajiyas* jump over the *Bhagavad-gita* and all Cantos and go at once to Krishna’s *rasa* dance where they have no qualification to enter. Brahma, the original guru of the universe begs to be born in a future birth as a clump of grass in Vrindavan so the gopis might step on him and give him the dust from their feet.

Don’t be angry. We’ll all come out of it smiling if we depend on Krishna. You have to be willing to sacrifice for Him. Krishna is the Rain Maker, War Maker, Peace Maker, the Absolute Good. Whatever He wills, happens. He’s the best dancer and player of flute. He’s Time and Death.

He’s all fired up

the poet and dancer

he looks around for material

to sing and dance—all whimsy

where the Mograves . . .

5:45 a.m.

I don’t know whether I have done fourteen or fifteen rounds. Neither M. nor C. came in to make breakfast. They usually come in by 5:30. I pressed the intercom but couldn’t get C. Figured M. got in late last night so didn’t want to disturb him. I went out in the dark with no coat or flashlight and wearing sandals I found at the front door. Stumbled down the back garden steps and reached the dark cabin. Knocked on the door and C. slowly woke. “Thank you for waking me,” he said and I left without a comment. I didn’t feel so good about it, worried I might catch a cold. So now things are running along and he’s downstairs making breakfast. How many rounds have I said? Where is my head and where is my soul? They say it’s in the region of the heart. Don’t be smart. You think you can find it just by pointing there as in the game, “Point To Your Self”? I am here. Hare Krishna.

Shrila Prabhupada said (I heard this in the bathroom earlier) that Duryodhana went to Dronacharya and said, “The military arrangement of the Pandus is well arranged by your disciple.” He was trying to rile up Dronacharya that the person you taught is now coming to kill you. But Drona didn’t mind. Because we have to die one way or another. Everyone. You should not be afraid of inevitable death and abandon your duty. Shrila Prabhupada said, “Death is God,” and the tape, side B, and lecture, just ended abruptly there.

God is more than Death but He is Death also. That means no one can overcome Him. If you want to be free of death that’s done by reviving your eternal consciousness as the loving servant of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In this age the best method for that is chanting His holy names. In fact there is no other way, *harer nama eva kevalam*. And here you are bartering in your mind, “Did I say my fourteenth? Do I have to say two more rounds today?” You’d like to save the time to use it on reading that manuscript you have to finish before Friday. Or do some reading in *shastra* which I missed this morning.

7:19 a.m.

Another good review for Shilavati in her role in Lorca’s play. Intense, towering performance they say. Bravo for devotees with great talent who can use it and still be devotees—offer their talent to the Lord.

Ah, oh and I? Eh, oh and you? Are you talent-less? Has the talent scout overlooked you? Can you write? I can’t she said and splurged out a poem. If they practice at it they will find their own voice.

Count down, four days including today, before we leave. I asked M. to have a contingency plan in case our van breaks down on the way to catch our flight in Dublin. He says he’ll charge up his mobile phone and if we break down he’ll phone either Daruka or Abhaya depending on where we are, and they will come and get us. Fifty tips on how to avoid stress, distributed by the National Headache Foundation. One is bury a spare key to your house and car. Another is go early to your air flight. And have the right attitude. I forget them. There are special travel tips also. Don’t go hungry, carry your prescriptions in case customs want to know.

Krishna is the Supreme Lord. You can paint a simple picture of Him, knowing it’s not at all His actual beauty. You follow the tradition, as described in scriptures. He’s bluish, like a fresh rain cloud, wears a lightening-yellow *dhoti.* I usually don’t give Him a crown and peacock feather. I like to paint His black hair, slightly askew from His vigorous *lilas*. Always with His flute. And Radha beside Him, the color of molten gold and She likes to wear a blue *sari*.

Hare Krishna words in print. You are moving the pen. The EJW I am reading (from 1997) is filled with reflections on pain and how it hampers *bhajana*. And the attempt to receive it in a Krishna conscious way. I like what I wrote, not avoiding that close topic. Not afraid it will scare away readers or be seen as self-indulgent. Pain is universal. If someone can tell us how to cope, that’s helpful.

Here. Here. The morning not yet bright. The sun behind the hill. You have to leave. Hare Krishna. You never know if you will come back. Happy things. A few days mail accumulates. Open and see. Answer is free, wrenched from me.

Again and again. Look up to Shrila Haridasa Thakura. Give thanks to your master. Check how you feel.

Green coat, porridge oats

were good and I thanked

him. He shouldn’t worry. It’s CC’s turn to cook lunch. Will I be able to paint later today? Someone sent me the remnants of a Deity garland in the mail. It arrived as complete shreds. Another sent a book which got torn off the binding en route. Rough mails in a rough world and time eats the flowers.

Oh, a hearse. Rehearse. I’m all right as long as I have my meals and quiet, you see. And nothing to do. Then I can fill up the space, the page, at a pace suitable to my condition. They say . . . Damn what they say.

Ha, sigh. Mr. McDermott decided. He’d had enough. He went to his neighbor’s door and banged on it with his fist. The neighbor opened the door and lowered his head showing he was ready to butt Mr. McDermott in the stomach. “Oh,” Mr. McDermott said, a little subdued, “I just wanted to ask you to please keep the noise down to a low roar. I’m in a delicate state with chronic headaches.”

“You bastard,” the neighbor said. “Don’t you tell me what I can do or say I make noise. You and the damn Hare Krishna Hare Krishna I hear through the walls at the earliest hours of the morning. Get the hell outta my doorway, you scum.” Bang, he slammed the door. How’s that for conflict? I made it up but it could be true.

Please make some resolution Have Mr. McDermott come back with *prasada*. The neighbor opens the door again and at the sight of Mr. McDermott returned he goes into a rage—“I thought I told you—”

“No, no, Mr. McDermott says meekly. “I’m not here to complain. I just want to give you some nice food offered . . . ”

“What’s it got poison in it?”

“No, sir, it’s called a *samosa*. Stuffed with cooked vegetables and these others have fruit inside. They’re an Indian delicacy.”

“You selling them?”

“No, I wanted to make a peace offering.” The neighbor, call him Fred, calls out for his roommate and she appears—Hair in curlers, smoking a cigarette, wearing a bathrobe—(phew, this is getting out of hand).

“Watcha got?”

Anyway, they begrudgingly take the *samosas*. Actually, not begrudgingly, but with softened hearts. And later they all meet by chance in a hallway and they are now friendly. That’s it. A story. For February 16. Four days left and then we leave for U.S.A.

9:10 a.m.

Spiritual master, I heard you don’t like being one. Writer, I heard you don’t like competition. You want to be the only honest shoot-from-the-hip poet. Your turf only. Sufferer, I heard you’re awfully . . . No, I won’t repeat it. I’ll stick up for myself. I’m okay. I’m not the center of the universe.

Krishna is. And I don’t know Him. Sometimes I read books by Christian saints or humble prayer-makers thinking they might help me. Sometimes I just keep moving along, writing and living and breathing.

She sent me herbal tea in the mail, grown on the ISKCON farm. Looks like withered dandelions. Sent me a page on how to hold a “magic circle” given to her by a Godsister who said it comes from Hopi Indians. You sit in a circle and one person at a time speaks. “Talk only about what you think and feel. Do not talk about what other people have said. Focus on your feeling about a topic.” And she sent me her poem which ends with these lines:

“I wish I could just/ close my eyes/ and enter into/ a beautiful dream of pastimes/ in the spiritual world—/ then wake up/ to realize/ that I’m actually there. From the depths of my soul/ I hanker for nothing else/ so intense/ than to go there/ to the immortal world/ of sweet Lord Krishna. I will never give up/ my determination and hope/ to reach the ultimate goal/ of this life.”

10:10 a.m.

“If people don’t entertain you, Nature will.”

Last line of his poem. Another . . . Mine is

to say I sat wanting a feverfew-caffeine pill

for this dull ache but Dr. K. says no.

He gave me Advils but I save them

for much worse than this.

But the dull, stuffy pressure in the head—

I want you to hear about. I don’t want

you to feel pain but to hear . . . I am

like this. It would be good to

be very honest in writing but don’t

reveal something they could use

against you.

You want solitude in this house so don’t

say something that could take it away.

But then, your writing isn’t given

your full heart. There is something

other than writing.

God doesn’t want my *writing*. He wants

my love. Save it for Him or can you

give it to Him by writing?

Will He accept it? Will He accept

my enduring the pressure in my head?

Will I love Him? Krishna the

cowherd boy. The God in

me. And you. “God damn it,” we say.

We blaspheme. Don’t love.

Poke along. Offend others.

For now I write, endure,

make the offering

to Govinda.

2:05 p.m.

Head hurts too much to go into art room. You’d like to . . . but it’s likely to get worse and shift to right side. Heavens to Betsy write for yourself. Can you do it? White pen. After today, just three more days. Off we go, leave the art room, the house, the hill. It’s like a dream here, idyllic, “too good to be true.” You don’t like to leave at all. Hare Krishna.

Sanskrit. Sansert. Work out three times a week with aerobic exercises and some say it will lessen headaches. But others say the exercise makes the head hurt. “Don’t trust doctors,” says a woman on the on-line Migraine Journal. Have a pain-free day, everyone.

God bless you. So many different voices. Now stay away and just be yourself. Be with God, Krishna, in prayer, in your chair. Sit dumb and not numb, waiting for the afternoon to pass. No relief and count your blessings. Take a snack at 4:30 p.m. Hare Krishna

You’ll be okay. Wear sneakers. What . . . God, good God, I’m just sick of trying the folks are venting . . . As for me, I’m a Hare Krishna *japa* chanter, at least in early morning hours. And I used to usually read the scriptures. I haven’t done it in a while.

I wanted to start a reading out loud tonight in Rupa Gosvami’s *Stava-mala*, but that too may have to be canceled. Can’t cancel the sun or light or life. My own life and yours get eventually snuffed and then the spark of self never gets snuffed but goes on to another body. This is the ABC. Oh Krishna.

Be with Him, He with you. Your body is a temple of Krishna. Everyone is. You have to care for your own, self-realization. So even when you leave this house, “it” (you and God, two souls) goes with you in this body, in the van, on airplane. Even if you get a H.A. you could use that as an occasion to go inside yourself, a kind of pained meditation below the level of discursive thought and action, to tolerate, behave with sitting in the cramped-in airplane seat, unhealthy air pressure . . . Waiting. They say crossing time zones is a stress on ye old body.

Doc, doc K., we came all the way to see you just to say we were on rebound and you got us off but you didn’t give us a med to turn to in our need.

He could say, “Why don’t you pray? What’s the use of being a saffron monk if you can’t pray in your time?”

3:35 p.m.

Glad to be alone and with hope. “I am hopeful,” I told Swamiji in his room in 1966, even before he initiated me as Satsvarupa dasa. He repeated it, “Hopeful?” Yes, that meant a lot to me. Because I had been hopeless—along with Van Gogh, Camus, the gentle assassin did that. Hopeful—infinitely so, that God exists and is kind and is powerful.

Are you still hopeful? Yes but not so innocent. I can’t just rest in peace that my spiritual master knows Krishna so I don’t have to know Him. I can’t assume that ISKCON is pure and transcendental, a sample of Vaikunatha. I can’t assume I’ll simply absorb myself in busy, stressful ISKCON duties and everything will be okay.

I’m more alone, where I want to be. Yes I feel hopeful It’s only a little. Not bodily symptoms of ecstasy as when the four Kumaras smelled the aroma of *tulasi* leaves from the Supreme Lord’s feet. Just a little thing, in the midst of this afternoon’s headache. Looking forward to life, to travel, to return—to writing through it.

4:20 p.m.

Dare to write. Despite head. Help. Burp. Be bop. Brahmns. Brahmin underwear. Springboard. Italian devotees have gone to India. Jaya Govinda says he’ll borrow or rent a camper for my summer visit and inquire about my desire to see Giotto’s paintings in the Cathedral in Padua. (He spells in English Padua and I spell it Italian Padova.)

Help earrings and bracelets for the Lord. How they look in natural sunlight when it comes first beams in morning over Wicklow mountain through the window. Blessed moment.

How They look in Their Vrindavan outfits. Benign disease. Benevolent Deities. Cancer can come. Bad news. Forces you further in to see His hand. He wanted sixty-four crores of soldiers killed at Kurukshetra. But they all got liberation.

Who can understand?

February 17

12:05 a.m.

Took a lot of convincing to get myself up instead of sleeping an extra hour. One main reason to get up is to go to *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*. Lord Krishna said even the low born can reach perfection and certainly the higher placed. “Therefore, having come to this temporary, miserable world, engage in loving service unto Me.” (Bg. 9:33) The world is unhappy for all classes of people. But there is another world which is eternal and blissful. I like the exact understanding we get of Krishna we get from Shrila Prabhupada. I was raised on this from my spiritual birth; it is spiritual reality for me. I don’t want the Gaudiya Vaishnava *siddhanta* without this version. The reality of the mystery of “Back to Godhead,” comes to me from him. And the invitation and order to take to it.

“Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, become My devotee, offer obeisances to Me and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in me, surely you will come to Me.” (Bg. 9.34) Who is that Krishna that I should surrender to Him and think of Him? How do I become His devotee and become completely absorbed in Him? That also I’ve learned from Shrila Prabhupada. Keep simple in this understanding and enter its reality.

The rascal commentators say, “It is not to Krishna that we have to surrender but to the eternal within Krishna.” They don’t know that Krishna inside and outside are one Absolute. “Krishna is not an ordinary human being; He is the Absolute Truth.” (Bg. 9.34, purport)

“One should cultivate the knowledge of Krishna continuously. What is that favorable cultivation? It is to learn from a bona fide teacher.” Think of Krishna, become His devotee, worship Him. Bow down to His Deity form. “This will help one transfer to theKrishnaloka.”

Lord Krishna, You escape me. I don’t insist. I must continue to search you out, even when I get headaches. Curing my material pains will not free me from material life and its inevitable miseries. Please help me to remember You at all times. Help me purify my mind of offenses to the spiritual master. I wish to be a health *shishya* who loves to hear from his spiritual master and who serves him day and night. Hare Krishna.

3:10 a.m.

Did something different. Paint from 2 to 3 a.m. Some fury, frustration—guru-disciple theme, at some points cut loose even from being under his direct eye . . . but the visible forms (although churning) are peaceful, assuring—a man chanting *japa* in sunlight, a big face with *tilaka* and very simple visage, some marks abstract and “HK HK” *parama karuna* . . . some people gnomes and so on crowded on the page and “Mayapur, Vrindavana

—where the hell are *you*?” Did it early in case a headache cancels me later. I wanted to paint.

7:25 a.m.

So I told him, “Look Sonny, I don’t want no wise talk, ya hear?” He said, O man, don’t give me that. I said, “I am in the shed and have to write now for twenty minutes without going to the bathroom so don’t bother me.”

We waltzed home. The sky was bluish, dark, predawn. I had to use the same words, “Predawn,” it says it. Green jacket, military-like. Get on the plane. It’s incontrovertible. You have to go see Dr. K. Hope he’s worth it. I already sized him up as 1. Conservative. 2. Holistic. 3. Seems to know his stuff. 4. Has a manner I can relate to. Good, good. Sounds good. And you are motivated to try to control those headaches, right? So go. Leave your picturesque big cottage with the brown dirt yard with some flowers starting to poke green sharp heads out of the earth. Leave with a promise to come back if it is within your power.

Went over a number of items with M. in our meeting today. I will continue to initiate but only on an exceptional basis. He asked, “If you had it all to do over again, would you initiate? All that burden and given your sensitive nature . . . ” Would I have fallen for the trap, for prestige, followers? It seems I thought it was a duty for Srila Prabhupada, the next thing to do after his disappearance. I even thought I was picked to do it. Anyway, you can’t go back and do it over. You have to go from right now, forward.

Exchange gifts, love, minds, *prasadam*. I give my thoughts as one struggling to be a devotee. You give me your life, you few. I say, “I can’t repay you. Please take this.” Tea and biscuits with special ones.

What will you do in Baltimore? I’ll write. I’ll feel claustrophobic in that room, hearing the house noises. I’ll jing my jang. Be alert for low flying aircraft and smart missiles aimed at me. Be careful not to break laws. Measure out your headaches and how to deal with them. Commitments. Hare Krishna.

Gee whiskers. The SB again I didn’t read. But read last verses of *Bhagavad-gita*, Ninth chapter. And heard Shrila Prabhupada saying an intelligent person has to look at the dark side of a proposition, not just the bright side. Don’t thing only of how you will succeed but consider the opposition, thieves, enemies, etc., and size it up before you go forward. *Kshatriyas* do it but I do it too. The dark side.

The light in Krishna consciousness is brilliant saving grace. But the shadow can envelop us when we lean towards it. Tell them the message of the *bhagavata*. They want to hear it from you but want it to be straight *parampara*. Eek, squeak, it’s in my own words, raspy, nasal sound of S.T. Guarino.

What’s your Social Security number? How long have you been out of the States? What is your address?

Eh . . . I move around. I live in this house in Catonsville or Gita-nagari. Just now I am residing in Ireland and came to visit my homeland. I’m writing an article about America.

Then . . . then when you read scriptures you tell us what they say. The commanders in chief on the battlefield. Our side is led by Bhisma and is of unlimited strength whereas their side is limited and is led by Bhima (who Duryodhana considered a fool, strong but no brain). However, Krishna was on the side of the Pandavas and the Kurus misjudged how that would cause their defeat.

K®ß∫a. The *sahajiyas* don’t want to hear *Bhagavad-gîtå*. I do. I want to hear Krishna speaking to me. Listen. Take it in. Other events speeding by. But Shrila Prabhupada says Krishna consciousness has jurisdiction everywhere, it touches everything, politics, sociology, art. It is not one-sided. If necessary Vaishnavas can fight.

Then I may write. Penny for thoughts. He’s telling us Mr. Krishna is a smart guy. He has memorized a hundred and fifty verses. He has gotten to the top of the hierarchy in the movement. He wants . . . nothing. Just wants devotion to the Lord and figures he’s got that, but as long as he works hard in the movement.

O boy, chrysanthemums. I am tired of nothing. I am all right. Green jacket, green pants from LL Bean, green Wellies in green Ireland. I don’t smoke. I am going well so far today. My paintings are scattered, quick-done scratches. I wanted it that way.

We took a bus to the terminal. We stood on the queue and felt nervous. We showed the man or woman our passports. Hope M. doesn’t get caught for coming and going too much with his green card. Emergency phone numbers on card in case you get lost. Pin a big card to your chest, this child is lost, send him to a Hare Krishna care center. Give him B rations. This child is in an emergency state. Take a pill from his pocket and put it in his mouth with water. Give him a private toilet and a bed to lie down on.

No, we can’t give you. Krishna is God, we are singing to Him, not you, serve Shrila Prabhupada, not you, hear of God, not you. Hear of pure devotees, not you.

9:45 a.m.

So Chaitanya has to move out. He’ll

set up in the mobile home and can cook

there twice a week. Not in our kitchen.

He’s too irresponsible and . . . something else. Okay

I accept it and so does he. He’s still my

art room cleaner and encourager in that.

Two more days and then we leave.

For a week in America. Are you happy?

One moment and another—find a deeper

purpose that runs through the ups and downs and

doesn’t depend on whether you’re in

Wicklow or Baltimore or enroute.

That purpose is to write honest and head

home to Krishna’s lotus feet. That’s not

an empty metaphor or make-believe. I serve

my guru, my way. Tiny way.

Defective. Sigh. Love. Write. Please . . .

So Krishna has to move out and I can’t tell

you more. It’s personal. He’ll still be

nearby and I’ll talk to him still and

so will Madhu . . . And we’ll go

on living sacred lives day by day

in these bodies, with souls in these

bodies. The difference needn’t make

us angry. I got no more to say

right now. Hare Krishna.

2:30 p.m.

*Purusah purusam vrajet˙*: The individual soul goes to the Supreme Person where both enjoy eternally. This happens when the part and parcel gives up his attempts to enjoy in opposition to the Supreme Lord and dovetails himself with the Lord by practicing *bhakti-yoga*. Close your eyes and will to believe it, to accept it as fact. You used to read like that; it’s yours now if you practice hearing nicely.

Save yourself from the cycle of birth and death by taking shelter of Lord Vishnu.

You’d like to dedicate yourself to regular reading of the scriptures. Take it in, the impermanence of material enjoyment. It’s *maya* to believe this life is real. Time takes it all away. Read with faith. I repeat this all to myself because my tendency is to be an agnostic like most people. I don’t want to be like them. I have parted from the nondevotees, the non Krishnaites. Therefore, stay apart from their agnosticism. Even if they are theists (Christians, Muslims, etc.) they don’t submissively hear *Shrimad-Bhagavatam*. But I do. So I ask myself, please mind, please self, don’t wander away from this regular practice. Don’t think you are above the instructions of the earlier Cantos.

Thank you for the advice. I need to hear it.

3:10 p.m.

Anything you want, you can write in this book. I thought it had to be true and sincere. Yes, and brash, not trash.

It does have to be responsible and not lazy. Because “we” (the author) want spiritual life. Cycle of birth and death! I’ve said it so many times it becomes mere jargon and doctrine talk. What’s real? My white blotter. Fibercon tablets. You mean the world of sense perception. But that’s not real.

What is? The transcendental world I can’t see? Yas.

Real is eternal.

Jig and reel

is not, *neti neti*

neti pot

Beauty put beauty but

they don’t rhyme but in Sanskrit it must rhyme and so Sanskrit is better. Says who? We like a whimsical, flexible English-Amercian.

You are drunk, stoned, sordid, risque, risky. At this rate you will die awry.

I’ll only kidding to pass the time, beating my toe to a rhythm. I actually *want* God (emphasis added). I want to want. I sit here growing old, playing around . . . Snap, snap you serious enough we could do with a few policemen’s slaps to the face and ears. Wise up before it’s too late.

Please God, I meant no harm. I’d like to be a pure devotee and live on a farm with Krishna and Nanda Maharaja. I could be a cow or higher *rasa*. I am a *sannyasi* with a handicap benign. It prevents me, makes me silly.

I’m actually okay.

3:45 p.m.

In process. The choir boy. The angel misfit. The words cruel and slashing. He sent me an article about being a writer. It said you have to have wit and savvy. And you have to know something about life. Someone said, “You have to have something to say,” to be a writer. A vision. And you should write beautifully with wholeness and harmony. And get a good agent. Really be hip and work hard. Be humble about selling and persistent. Writing means rewriting. Kill your darlings. Get your ears boxed by your mentor. Sounds pretty horrible. I don’t want it.

Art of fiction. Get interviewed in the Paris Review. The dream come true. Join a list of mortals who are recognized writers and who worship at the graves of former writers. We ask where is the spirit soul of the dead writer? For a brief lifetime you pursue the art of fiction or poesy or diary or essay, whatever and then you died. Where died your spirit go? And what good did your writing do you for the journey to the next life? The great majority of writers will answer, “We don’t believe in that. We live for this one life and try to make excellent writing and that we also know is impossible. We try. That is our religion.”

Noted his fog head but wrote anyway. The prime man is he who goes his . . . words just flowing in a tumble out fashion. Art is within Krishna consciousness. KC touches everywhere. It’s starting to happen. The KC writers are breaking out of the mold. They are telling of their past lives, I mean their sins and honesty before they joined and became prominent gurus of ISKCON. Stop telling the idealistic lie: as a youngster I was always inclined to spiritual things.

Read a little more of Therese of Lisieux. That’s all right, she’s a wonderful, austere, love-intoxicated saint. But I am me and glad for that.

Glad for the Swami in my life. The bad thoughts, the resistance I feel after all these years. Therese attained perfection in Heaven by age twenty-five. I’m in my sixtieth year and brandishing hope . . . but so low down. Was outwardly converted, did a kind of life career of missionary work. Now writing quickly as much as possible to admit *it’s hard*.

It’s hard to be a devotee in love with your guru who gives hard tasks but is also sweet (as Bhurijana says). Hard to continue believing. To keep hearing the basics, “The same example.”

Hard to live in an institution and therefore I don’t. Desert. Hard . . . Easy. I want easy and peace. Requiem Mass. Perforce. Words for breakfast and porridge and actual honey but no milk.

Hard my eyes. Easy. Dead in spirit. Demands attention, three meals now per day, littler ones.

Admit, admit. A little SB at a time. I gently receive it. I used to think I might be able to attain some fervent prayer. Now I know I can’t.

Rain on skylight.

Have to leave here after two more days. Going to America to a doctor. This volume will tell it. My passion to write. Bring a little notebook to write in and draw in.

6:10 p.m.

Night. Wednesday. Cracking down on CC’s erratic behavior. Call him in. Sits on floor. I sit on easy chair. Give him a lesson. He says he won’t do it again. But can a leopard change its spots? Waiting for him now to come in and ready the art room in case I want to make another very early morning run in there. But he may come in too late tonight to do it.

Krishna, Krishna. Best not to be distracted from simple Krishna consciousness. But when you are and you want to write, you’ll probably have to first write down the distraction. Admit it. Then keep going into deeper thoughts . . . Thoughts, feelings, states, inquiries, word-music, forms.

Life itself. The blood in your veins. The way a familiar room looks when you enter it and it seems not familiar or it seems—something overwhelming.

February 18

12:05 a.m.

When Lord Krishna speaks in *Bhagavad-gita* *(Bhagavan uvaca),* do you accept it as fact? He says all energies are His and under His control. He declares that He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, although fools deride Him when He appears in a human-like form. If His verbal declarations are not convincing to you, then do you accept that He showed Arjuna and others His Universal Form? The answer is that you have to hear submissively and ask questions in that spirit, “The more one hears about the Supreme God, the more one becomes fixed in devotional service. One should always hear about the Lord in the association of devotees . . . only among those who are really anxious to be in Krishna consciousness.” (Bg. 10.1, purport)

God is very difficult to understand. “No one can understand why the Supreme God comes on earth as an ordinary human and executes such wonderful, uncommon activities.” He’s the source of the demigods and sages. It is He whom we have to worship as He reveals Himself in *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

I’m writing this as an act of faith. It would be better to read more or at least better. Better and more. Last evening, we began an out loud reading of Srila Rupa Gosvami’s *Stava-mala*. He prays a “list of requests,” and “a vine of hope.” These are prayers of the topmost truths, Radha and Krishna and very personal statements of Rupa Gosvami’s fervent, humble devotion. Both Madhu and I found this verse to be a favorite: “Although I am the lowest and You the highest, although I am a fool and You the greatest philosopher, although I am wicked and you the most saintly, and although I commit offenses when I think of You, still, O King and Queen, the shadow of whose holy name delivers one from a host of sins, please be kind to this person who sometimes chants Your holy name.” (Karpanya Pandrika-stotra, 16)

Rupa Gosvami reveals the Lord’s unconditional love. We may try to exclude ourselves from this relationship with Krishna, thinking we are too fallen, both now and in the past, too sinful. But Rupa Gosvami says, “The most unpardonable sin is made nonexistent by a small particle of devotion to You. This make me hopeful. For this reason I now appeal to You.” Maybe I can share these thoughts with devotees when I meet them in U.S.A.

I’m aspiring to know Krishna. I can’t claim I know Him already in the perfect stage. Knowledge in devotional service is rare. This most rare knowledge has been given to us by Shrila Prabhupada on behalf of the Chaitanya *sampradaya*. But I haven’t yet assimilated it due to my conditioning. Don’t rest there for at the end of your life, but go on endeavoring and praying. Make this your list of requests and entwine on your vine of hopes. I wish to know and serve and love Radha and Krishna in this life and the next. I wish to overcome my *anarthas*. I pray to Balarama, Nityananda Rama, for strength to receive it for my spiritual master and to serve Him. The service I am capable first of all *Shravanam-kirtanam*. Go on chanting. Life is eternal. Your present time is precious and limited in which to do this. I speak for us all.

7:05 a.m.

Transform, renewal, born again. You want to change into a better devotee, into an eternally liberated soul. But you resist change. Fear of the unknown. Lazy. How to do it? Chant Hare Krishna and surrender your false self, accept the pure servant of the Lord you are.

This morning some silent rounds, feeling tired. Learning a new schedule. Trying to lead a healthier life in hopes it will bring a change—less headaches. Use that in spiritual service.

This is all very well, but . . . Do you live in a community? Do you love other people. Please let me know how you feel. Hare Krishna cornflakes. This man is self-sufficient. This other man has a more dependent nature. They should acknowledge who they are and how they best operate. Then serve Krishna. Some compromise will be required in dealing with others.

Scattered reflections. Today and tomorrow and then we leave here. That’s a change. Predictors in ISKCON say world economies will “melt down” by August and on January 1, 2000—as one devotee from the Caribbean wrote to me, “The world will be in kaos [note: GM’s intentional spelling].” What I don’t like is why devotees fully embrace a particular material viewpoint, that Y2K will be the worst disaster. They don’t really know and neither does our *Shastra* or guru tell us this. But they want to act now, “Time is of the essence,”—to prepare. Leave city temples, self-sufficient on farms. And protect your property in the strongest way possible. Millennium . . . doomsdayers. Will Christ come then?

*Haribol*. Go to Guyana as Jim Jones did. I better shut up. Yeah, who wants to hear from me? I don’t claim I know better. I’d like things to continue smoothly in the material world but that’s an illusion. Shrila Prabhupada did say society would fail if they don’t obey Krishna. The accumulated karma will strike. But he didn’t spell it out in terms of time and event. He often said the only hope was the Krishna consciousness movement and that if people took to it the disaster could be averted. So better devotees stay at their preaching posts.

Wind in the trees and birds chirping. The sky still very dark, clouded at 7:15 a.m. Mister, Mister, please listen. Read your book about Krishna. Vyasa didn’t write make-believe stories. Rascals in the name of scholarship interpret *Bhagavad-gita* and say there was no Krishna, there was no Battle of Kurukshetra. It’s all mythology. But we accept Krishna as He presents Himself in the *Bhagavad-gita* and as He is accepted by the *acharyas*.

Hare Krishna. You know what I meant to say. Literature can be left behind and may help people. Here’s a book about someone trying to transform himself. Did he do it? From a caterpillar did he become a butterfly? Did he go from halting *Shraddha* to full *bhava* and then *prema*? If not, what is the use of hearing from him?

Oh, it’s the attempt of a slow, low fellow and it has value because in Kali-yuga most of us are like that. Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In His hands He holds the flute.

Don’t tell us what you did this morning. Tell us what God did. Tell us an earthshaker. I ate the bowl of porridge, my bowel movements are still sluggish, you could call it IBS.

I said I don’t want to hear that little stuff. Give us some cosmic info.

All right, Brahma is creating and Vishnu is maintaining. Shiva is ready to destroy when the time is right. Little people are working out their *karma* under the force of *prakrti*. *Prakrteh kriyamanani*. They think they are acting but it’s actually material nature. The cosmos comes out of the pores of Maha-Vishnu. He glances at the creation and His glance is carried by Lord Shiva who impregnates the souls into the world through Parvati. Something like that. Lord Vishnu doesn’t directly contact matter. Fine points of Vaishnava theology.

Hurry along, a single man. He hurrys to sweet Krishna. Face *prakrti*. Think, “I can’t do it myself, reach God. I will therefore simply chant the *maha-mantra* helplessly. The mantra will act. It is called the great mantra for deliverance. It will deliver me from matter. Bring me back to Godhead.”

Oh, you think . . . Yes, I think it will work. But I can’t say how long it will take me to uncover my layers of false identification. Maybe I am purer than I realize. Give me a laurel of figs and flowers. I may be the prize winner and I don’t realize. Or I may be the worm in stool and think otherwise.

So Krishna will reveal when He thinks we are sincere. We go on trying.

8:19 a.m.

Pole Penance. You don’t feel like doing it but you come and do it anyway, thinking it will be good for you, will produce good results. You trust that you will work through something. You can’t stay stagnant chanting a japa round in six minutes, beating yourself on the head for being so slow. Change. Well, I am changing by going over the Atlantic. Changing time zones, a change of scenery, a change of regimen, a very different country, and so my consciousness will change. A different place to sleep at night. More noises, and different ones. Put yourself through a change, but that doesn’t mean it will be the change of becoming a better devotee. The bored man is restless and seeks a superficial change. Always something novel. He may even draw himself into the millennium bug crisis with that motive of dissatisfaction.

Pole penance. The junior sage has something to say, gather round and he will tell you. I motored my mike. I junked my garbage. I operated without a license. I hope to sneak through under their gaze. Some cops hide guns and try to get past the security guard. If they are caught they show their badge and say I was just testing you. But as for me, I’m operating on the delicate premise that we ISKCONites will be protected by Lord Hari and pass through the borders. And even if we are stopped (as the four Kumaras were stopped) we shall be part of K Krishna‘s pastimes and must find the true meaning of it and not be dismayed.

I see, I see. I am alone in a room at a low desk waiting in between meals. I tell the doctor, not in a self-pitying way, but straight forward facts, how many days I lost time. I show him my enlarged calendar with red marks on it and pink marks indicating bad and semi-bad headaches. Let him peruse. He’ll say what about your neck,and have you tried *yoga*? Do you eat Bran Flakes? No, I’ll say we don’t eat food cooked by *karmis* and we think sleep is a waste of time and sex is a waste of blood, and we want to take risks for Krishna‘s service. So please give me some sound advice but don’t expect me to sail along without meds. That is not possible for me.

The doctor smiled wryly. You have come thousands of miles to see me therefore I am your guru. Now you must do as I say or you are a double fool. Yes, I say, I am certainly a fool, but I will take what you say with a grain of salt.

And I begin to chant Hare Krishna Hare Krishna in a real way, skidding up out of the rut. They could hear it, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, barely audible in the swamp of their ignorance.

10:48 a.m.

*Written while sitting up in bed with right eye twinge, despite taking medication*.

Dear reader, let me tell you about me and Dr. K.

He was recommended to me as a headache specialist by my friends in America. I spoke to him once on the telephone, January 17th. I told him that I had a pretty good handle on my headache pain by taking a medication with a combination of feverfew (250 mg) and caffeine (60 mg). And a couple of times a week when that didn’t work I took an Esgic pill. Right away the doctor told me to get off both of those. He figured that anything you take daily must be wrong, a case of medication-induced headache. Instead, he suggested I approach some of my other problems like indigestion and constipation and he recommended some products for those. He also suggested I get off my rather high power preventative medication and take something much, much lesser. As for the rescue med I could take after giving up the others, he advised an over-the-counter medication called Advil. I thought about what he said and at first decided not to follow it. But on February 2nd I gathered the medications that he suggested and decided to make a bold go for it and follow this doctor. So since then I have been doing it. But today I am decisively disappointed in Advil as a rescue medication. From now until I see the doctor, when I get a headache pain I am going to take Esgic again. I wanted you to know this. It may sound like a lot of mumbo-jumbo, headache pill brands without much sense to you. But it’s vital life for me. My emotions of disappointment over a certain medication, or feeling dependence on another—and my attempt to be active for writing and reading, are my very life nowadays. So if I’m speaking honestly in these conversations, how can I leave this out? I can’t just talk about the Kumaras going to Vaikuntha, or even Radha and Krishna in Vrindavana, without telling you that I cannot think of them because of a pain behind my right eye. And yet I know from experience that there is a limit to the control you can get over this pain. If you *seem* to have gotten a handle on it by certain medications, it may well be that you are in illusion and taking “too much of a good thing.”

So it will be interesting to go and see Dr. K. and see how my relationship develops with him, how willing I am to try something that he says. It’s an adventure and it seems much of it has to do with a kind of “guru” and disciple relationship. I’ve tried this before, very faithfully following Dr. Sharma, and in the end I rejected him and somewhat resented his somewhat authoritarian “all-knowing” stand. As one migraineur said on the on-line journal, “It’s easy for a doctor to think that he is God.”

Lining up a meeting in Baltimore with a few Gita-nagari Press workers. I’m bringing with me some letter excerpts from devotees who have appreciated my books. I think if I read them I’ll be able to springboard on some qualities in my writing that I’m aspiring for. I also started thinking of inspiring quotes about the kind of writing I want to do. I came up with these three favorites.

“On Issa: ‘Not gifted with genius but honestly holding his experience deep in his heart, he kept his simplicity and humanity.’” (From *Wild Mind* by Natalie Goldberg, one of the earliest chapters)

“Regarding Santoka Taneda: ‘There is no dichotomy between poetry and poet, life and emotion . . . since his life and poetry were one, he represents the ideal of ‘No Duplicity.’”

Santoka’s teacher taught him “the theory that it is necessary for a poet to express what is in his heart in his own language without regard to any fixed form . . . ” (From the introduction to *Mountain Tasting* by Santoka Taneda**)**

And Thomas Merton in the prologue to *The Sign of Jonas*: “Technical language, though it is universal and certain and accepted by Theologians, does not reach the average man and does not convey what is most personal and most vital in religious experience. Since my focus is not upon dogmas as such, but only on their repercussions in the life of a soul in which they begin to find concrete realization, I may be pardoned for using my own words to talk about my own soul.”

I also took from Rilke’s *Letters To A Young Poet,* where he says you should write from your own life and don’t complain that it is not interesting enough, and the only criteria for judging your writing is necessity.

4:20 p.m.

I “can’t” write or read due to sting ray behind right eye. You could write, but it hurts too much. Distracts you from any sensitive thing you might want to say. I especially can’t sustain anything. That’s the whole story of my life with headaches—can’t prolong a reading, a written piece, a conversation, a lecture, a tour, a painting. Everything gets done quickly, in and out. And neither can I move fast. But short increments. Get them in when you can.

You have to be also content that not everything you write has an audience. Who can expect that? Write for your own benefit, release. Need. And speak to God, Lord Krishna. Shrila Prabhupada says (regarding why there is no need of interpretation on Krishna ‘s words in *Bhagavad-gita*)—“As if Krishna the Supreme Authority left something incomplete that had to be explained later by a rascal.” Speak to the all-knowing Krishna. He demands. He is also kind. I cannot even rise up to a fervent desire for calling to Him, being with Him. But I ask Him to please find good in me. I want to feel the identity of a devotee. I “wish” (whatever that means) I could utter interior silent Hare Krishna on a day like today when I sit or lie in bed watching my pain. I’m not this body? Ouch.

6 p.m.

Chaitanya C. came downstairs and said, “Prabhupada *(murti)* looks very stern and Radha-Govinda look mild.” But I thought of that incident where someone saw the passport photo of Prabhupada and said he looked unhappy and Prabhupada said, “No, that was a moment of ecstasy.” I said nothing but thought that Prabhupada is mostly not stern. Mostly he looks back at me in a kind and understanding way. When he’s stern I accept that also as part of his *murti* character and moods. I don’t see it as something directed just against me.

February 19

2:50 a.m.

Pain all night in right eye. I got up at 12:30 a.m. and chanted a round. During that time Madhu returned. He had the week’s mail and it included a letter to me signed by the GBC members, dated February 11th. They requested that I give an interview to Nrsimhananda dasa who is making a video called, “The Disciple Of My Disciple.” The letter read, “Since you are difficult to contact, please communicate with him at telephone \_\_\_\_\_ or e-mail \_\_\_\_\_. We appreciate your cooperation in this most important matter.” They also wished that I am well and happy in Krishna’s service. Just seeing the signatures which were actually written in petition style in two columns, deciphering each one and thinking of them, made me afraid of any further entanglement. I really need to live apart. At least they seem to acknowledge my being hard to contact as an acknowledged fact, for the time being. As for the cause of this interview, to give my testimony how Shrila Prabhupada actually wanted us to initiate after his disappearance, and thus help stave off the propaganda of the *rtvik* schism, I’m willing to do it. I’ll talk with Madhu as to how and when we should do this, but probably it would be best if I could meet with him for the week that I am in America. I’m also thinking that I should write things like this into EJW, and not think that they are too something or other, too personal or whatever for writing, don’t think that they are not literary enough. This is my life and I want it to unfold in the journal. I don’t want to sum up significant events later without giving credit to how it happened inch by inch.

9:12 a.m.

Every day, just write. Even if you have a headache just squeeze out a few sentences. *Toujours**travail*.Be happy to discover what you want to say. Catharsis at unhappiness. Satisfaction in counting blessings. You don’t have to be a teacher all the time. And don’t pretend to be perfect (guru). Stay out of the fray. “I’ve been at least on the periphery of Krishna consciousness all these years only because of Shrila Prabhupada and his inspiration in my life,” said a Godbrother who used to be his servant.

Twenty-four head pain behind right eye so I can’t answer letters now. Every letter requires that you be quiet and attentive and enter into their world. Patiently hear the points and the ambiance they evoke: this is what it is like for me, this is what is going on. You can’t answer it by only a quick read and a quick reply. So I’m not up to it now.

The last day before travel. M. had a tire blow out on the way back from Dublin last night. He abandoned the van and now had to go back to it with only a small jack, hoping he can change the tire. The tires are old and need replacement. I am anxious that the van may break down tomorrow on our way to catch the flight to New York. It will be a hectic sort of day today getting ready. We’ll bring the Deities over to Uddhava’s house. I want to meet with Praghosha to get some background on the GBC petition to me to submit to an interview about Shrila Prabhupada’s desire that his disciples become regular gurus. Go over mentally what I have to pack. And I hope the headache goes down or I can’t do any of these things nicely.

O doctor (I am thinking of saying). The relationship of a guru and disciple is similar to a doctor and his patient. One first questions the master and when he is satisfied that this is a competent person who can guide me, then he surrenders and does whatever his guru tells him. But what? Say I can’t quite be like that with you, and neither is it required. No, why even bring up that analogy? But where does it leave us if I don’t believe what he says and do what he orders? He already turned my regimen topsy-turvy and one result is I’ve experienced much more pain than before I spoke to Dr. K. But another result is I stopped the daily ff-caffeine.

O doctor, I followed what you said but the rescue med you suggested (the Ibuprofen, Advil) has never once stopped the headache. So I’ve stopped taking it. Do you have another suggestion? He can see me in person, my skinniness yet my slightly protruding belly. My self-consciousness. How I wince or smile (false teeth). Speak briefly because his time is precious to him, he’s *very* busy. (As if I am not).

Doctor, I want my quality of life. I need some support in pain, not just ideal advice by the book. Not just what’s best in the long run. (Long run is what for a sixty-year-old man?)

No self pity. Tell him the facts. In Baltimore. In boots I’ll wear. In his office, at last. And then back to the small room in JG’s house. Where I’ll write to you what happened, what’s happening because that’s what I do.

Be here today in this room. The rain is pattering on the skylight which I have always liked, but now I’ll be leaving it. M. is running from thing to thing in this last day and some things will be left undone. I chanted silently or quick, whispered *japa* rounds because of my condition. Occasionally I thought, “You are saying the mantra. Hear it.”

11:55 a.m.

I just heard that the GBC unanimously voted me to become an emeritusGBC man. I also heard that they are going to publish an apology to Pradyumna Prabhu along with his letter to me in 1977 where he warned against the excesses in guru worship which ISKCON was about to embark on. I did not have the intelligence to follow what he said at that time. So you get some honor and some infamy. And Lord Krishna tells you to be detached from it.

3 p.m.

Last afternoon. I feel I wasted time looking through the two issues of *Cadence*. Now how to recoup? I don’t feel up to reading straight *shastra* or anything really. Still recovering from the long headache. Soon we are supposed to go over to Uddhava’s to bring the Deities. I will put Them into “*samadhi*,” leave Them without direct service until I come back. I owe a great debt to Them because They turn my room into something like a temple.

Just as I wrote this, M. came in and said it’s time to go right now over to Uddhava’s. So it’s like that this afternoon, one thing after another. I’ll try my best now, impromptu to put Them into *samadhi*.

3:40 p.m.

Done. They are on top of a bureau in what looks like the children’s room. Hare Krishna dasi assures me that the children aren’t wild up there. Goodbye for a while, dear Deities. You have been so kind to me, so quiet and accepting the hasty prayers I offer. I am so much in ignorance because I identify with my body. I am not convinced or realized in the fact of my eternality or the eternal existence of the all-powerful, all-loving Supreme Lord. Still, by the arrangement of *parampara*, I can live with the Lord and the pure devotee. Looking forward to coming back to You and back . . . In the meantime, let me be with You. Do I have photos I could carry with me?

5:36 p.m.

Madhu suggested I sleep a little later or sleep in a little later tomorrow morning, start to get in tune with Eastern standard time U.S.A. We leave here 8:45 a.m. in the fallible white van. From point A to point B. Now the hours with “nothing” to do. You don’t feel up to reading or writing or chanting which you keep telling people in letters are your favorite activities. I typically end the letter saying, I am confined in my activities by headaches, coping with it and Krishna kindly gives me time to write and read and chant. Is that the image of yourself you wish to convey? Is it accurate? Not entirely. But yes, that is what I’d like to do with my time. And I also like to paint.

This will be a big change, carting myself over to America. Each hour is precious. I really have fallen, unable to chant-pray the *maha-mantras* beyond the sixteen rounds. Lord, Lord, where am I at? Do you grow more dull as you get older? Is there less hope for any revival? And why are you not turning to others for help? Why don’t you see a counselor, a doctor, a Godbrother, a surrogate guru, an angel psychic, a Reiki teacher, a dope dealer, a rough neck, a woman friend, a disciple haven, a rural helper, an expert on doomsday year 2000, a Christian confessor, a Buddhist nun, a pinball machine. Why don’t you just be yourself, *cela* of Shrilaa Prabhupada and chant the holy names. Huh? You could do it in the airplane tomorrow, whisper or silently to yourself grind out repeated mantras, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna , Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare.

6:34 p.m., Night Notes

I’m just dawdling. Not much of a day, all blessed by Krishna. This peaceful neighborhood. I went and spoke with Praghoßa in his house this morning. That was unusual for me. Also, unusual to go into Uddhava’s house and place my Deities in their altar. I had the lingering headache most of the day, *that’s* why I couldn’t get down to business with more writing or any reading. You see, without painfree I really can’t do concentrated bhajana.

I’m selling myself on this trip to America. Seeing the good in it. We’ll consult with an expert doctor and all that. We’ll get to see some disciples, hold an initiation. And be back soon. If all goes well. Praghosha told me this morning that the GBC didn’t speak at all (in their annual meeting) about Y2K’s millennium bug crisis. That will disappoint those who advocate that it’s doomsday on January 1, 2000.

See the good. He travels sometimes. He writes when he goes, wherever. And maybe by changing places for a while, he gets an insight how to improve. Because we do seek transformation, don’t we? Better chanting and reading, better loving and serving of my Guru Maharaja—and curb that faultfinding.

February 20

7:10 a.m.

Concerns and anxieties:

1. That I write here in a self-serving way, giving a flattering portrait.

2. That I carry rescue pills that will subdue the headaches, but that I not get rebound headache from it.

3. That my walk this morning on the *parikrama* boards was unconscious, not aware of either the mantras, the weather, feeling for Wicklow, for Krishna —I seem to just go through the motions like a robot.

This is because today is a long travel day and takes me away from my routine. So my body and mind are tensing, bracing for what’s ahead. Pack and repack your one lugage bag. Go over in your mind what you’ll need to bring. And worry—I hope the van doesn’t break down, hope the long term car park accepts us, hope the plane is on time and doesn’t crash. Hope M. doesn’t get stopped or denied entrance into U.S.A.

And then and then . . . I advise you (much of my writing is self advise) to try to live in the present moments, one by one. Relax. Keep remembering to relax. And do it in a Krishna conscious way. Not just be here now but be here and remember Krishna. Watch you breaths, chant Hare Krishna, be under His protection, pray and speak to Him. Read and recall from *shastra*. Don’t let so much time pass where you are merely a passenger or a worrier or a piece of luggage, or a bundle of nerves and potential or actual headaches. Now that traveling mode is underway, be with your best Friend, Krishna. And remember He is everyone’s best friend, in their heart.

I’m concerned that I don’t have much taste or conviction for lecturing. I fear that it is because I don’t have *Shraddha* for what I am speaking. Five thousand years ago . . . what Shrila Prabhupada speaks and the way he speaks it. The poison of faultfinding, *guru aparadha*, if it strikes, you are fallen. But I am a fallible being, please forgive me. I actually want to be strong in faith, but I can’t borrow it from someone, a Godbrother or a committee (although association can help). I must find it on my own. I am tiny and helpless. I am not intelligent—not more than the *asharayas* or my spiritual master. Therefore, I need Vedic knowledge. Some of it may seem strange to me and hard to accept. Just accept what I can and live for it.

Dublin Airport

My comfy but funny boots. Peeing in the public toilet. Aware I’m me but I’m not the only one. God, Krishna, is everywhere. This is His illusory energy—billboards for Bombay Gin and celebrating Ireland’s Nobel prize writers. Here you are man, your dear self. The story is you are going to America for medical treatment. We’re just about to go through US Immigration here in Dublin airport. See what happens to Madhu.

You can draw pictures but you don’t feel playful or expansive or wordy just now. Moving along through the changes, trip to the carpark from Wicklow went well. Plane supposedly boards around 11 or later. Go man, go. Walk soft . . . The *dhoti* bottom (new *khadi* first time I am wearing it) bunches up over the boot tops. Two Hare Krishna traveling. M. is kind to take care of me. Carving out my life with as little stress as possible.

10:55 a.m.

M. got through okay. Now the flight is ahead of us. Pictures of Americans of Irish descent. Big poster telling of the Great Irish Famine (1845–50): “The Famine is a central part of our past, a motif of powerlessness which runs through our national consciousness . . . and by which we have been radically instructed.” They know this world is suffering and people can be very cruel.

Americans don’t know that. What’s ahead? I have my coat pocks stuffed with things I’ll use on the plane. We don’t have a window seat, but an isle seat. Long day ahead. I’m not feeling homesick for my Wicklow house. It’s a beautiful set up there and I want to return soon. But it’s like a play house, a rest house. I may be taken away from it. I could do without it. The main thing I want is solitude in a protected environment. And then get a schedule going of reading in Prabhupada’s books. Chanting my rounds and writing each day.

You’ve got seven hours airflight and four car hours to go. Woman says real harsh: “I told you not to do that and you did it again! Something is wrong with you.” Fight, hatred. Bad vibes in the waiting lounge. Have your contact card ready to give at the gate and your passport to show. Stewardess dodges in front of me says, “I beg your pardon.” Young boy with spectacles, a teddy bear strapped to his back like a back-pack. He’s occupying himself with a coloring book and crayons. It seems boring to me to have to keep within the lines and just fill in the colors. Why not make your own drawing.

No smoking. I reside in Ireland for now. I’m coming back in a week. Yes, Mam. I live in Rathdangan, Kiltegan, County Wicklow. I’m a writer and this man is my editor. I am staying at his place on St. Johnsbury Street. I’m a migraineur. He’s coming back with me to Ireland and in a few weeks we’ll return again to the U.S.

What do I write? Poems and prose in honor of God from the *Vedas*. We chant God’s names as the chief means of meditation. I’ll be doing that silently on the plane. All right? Have a nice trip. Same to you, good morning. Hare Krishna.

“Suck honey from fuchsias . . . Nor voices of the sweeter birds. Above the wailing of the rain.” The seats in the airplane are decorated with black handwriting on a blue background. Maybe it’s some great Irish writer’s book. I don’t see the words Krishna or Chaitanya which would be there if it were a page from my book.

People filling up this plane. I’ve got nothing much to say. M. asked me how I’m doing. I said okay. I’m a soul and so are you. I read some verses of *Bhagavad-gita* Seventh Chapter in English . . . Krishna says the energies all come from Him. Not many people know Him. Lord Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Just helped a man and his wife find a gray bag they left by my foot. People packed together. Soft pop music playing. O Lord I want to be a devotee. Can’t write deep or quiet thoughts in this environment. Pretty and competent looking stewardesses in soft green well tailored outfits. My Radha-Govinda’s outfits . . . it’ll be a while.

Krishna men on alert, remember God. A sixty-year-old man better get it . . . people don’t sense urgency, need to surrender to God or the presence of Him. And the demands to simply live are so great they are caught up in that. Material life is all in all for them. Shrila Prabhupada strongly asserted this is wrong and we should pay attention more to the needs of the soul. Live this life to attain the better next life. Work towards liberation from birth and death.

11:58 a.m.

If I were at home in Uddhava’s house I’d be just about to take lunch. It’s Saturday so I’d get Dina’s *dal* and wonderful bread. Eat in front of Prabhupada and Radha-Govinda. Instead I am packed in a tight seat and row listening to electrical guitar music I’d never pick. But so far I am not suffering in the head. It’s cold here though.

Captain just said there are unfortunately strong headwinds and it will take seven hours fifteen minutes to New York and cold and blustery and snow may fall. But the plane will get through by God’s grace.

12:45p.m., (Irish time)

My buttocks hurt. I put a pillow under them but still they hurt. No relief from that, sitting seven hours. Endure. A mere seven hours. *Matra-sparsas tu kaunteya*. You identify with your body as yourself and thus you say, “I hurt, my buttocks hurt.”

News video, impeachment trial: perjury: forty-five say guilty, fifty-five not guilty. Obstruction of justice, fifty yes and fifty no. I can’t hear what they are saying. A judge with gold stripes talks in front of all the big politicians. Is he making a final decision? They applaud him. Then we see President Clinton make a short speech. From his looks it appears he didn’t get impeached. Then Kosovo. Then Sinn Fein.

They serve drinks. We take two empty cups. The bum, Clinton. You didn’t want him impeached, did you? Old powerful guys. But all die, worthless. Who helps the United States? What about the Hare Krishna movement? What about me? Specks in the universe.

1:05 p.m.

Took my dentures out and glued ’em and put them in. I don’t know if anyone saw it. I don’t care. I had to do it. I usually urinate once every two hours but I’ll have to hold it in. Main thing is the head, so far so good.

Krishna Krishna Hare Krishna. I am reporting.

He said we’ll keep going and maybe in four hours be approaching Novascotia, then down to Massachusetts but I think it will be a long time before that happens. You look up and see the video newscaster speaking something, outdoors, but you don’t know what it is. Then a soccer game. Bounce, bang, kick, rough look, dive race, kick ball high, thrust.

Aer Lingus in the air. The news is over. You better stop the habit of looking up at the screen once the movie starts. That means look down at your lap, close eyes, read your books . . . chant within, a kind of prolonged meditation and asking Krishna to help you come to Him and be a devotee. You feel you are not much of one. But you say this is all I can do. Please accept my service. Please purify me.

A Godbrother said Krishna sees how sincere and determined we actually are. Preachers prod us to do more. Or sometimes they assure us God loves us just as we are. Or they read straight from *shastra* *(Shrimad-Bhagavatam*, etc.) and explain what it says. Read what Shrila Prabhupada says.

2:25 p.m.

Went to toilet, long thin stream, temporary relief. Relief in one part of the body and discomfort in another. Snippets of the inflight movie. I walked the long isle to the toilet. People look up at me. Make my way. The realities merge—the film show, the people in their seats, me, me in the mirror, the plane trip, the President and the White House . . . almost thrown out. His chin puckered as he spoke, ashamed, moved to emotion . . . write, Stephen.

Thought of saying something to M. about my lack of prayer, devotion or knowledge of Krishna, my complete absence, even absence of sorrow. But how can you say that to someone else? So I don’t. When you lecture, just deliver the goods as you have heard it from Prabhupada and in your own words. Don’t think you have to make some confession or extremely personal statements or amazing, unique interesting human point of view. Just the routine. Don’t open the abyss, since you really don’t experience that. Krishna knows, knows me. The struggle to be just a devotee who is peaceful and dedicated to his spiritual master.

In flight movie soaks you in the mundane and plenty sex appeal . . . The films go by, seem to be short ones. One is over and another follows. You take furtive glances. M. watches too.

Hey, we want to be devotees and chant Hare Krishna and believe in it and leave the material world. Be tiny part and parcel of Krishna. Offer respect to others not for yourself. In such a humble state of mind, one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly.

Some devotees are flying east to India, to the *dhama*, we are going west to NYC.

Man, I am in a bad atmosphere. An old man used to being alone and not bothering with the modes, certainly not watching man-women sex films as they are showing here. Stay in my temple-room before my master and Radha- Krishna. And here I am thrust in with two hundred people on an air bus with entertainment films. Different. At least this is a No Smoking flight. When I am alone . . . Krishna Krishna. . . please be with me and guide me. I am astray.

3:30 p.m.

Time goes slow, not half way through yet. The feature film is on now. Try to avoid it. It has flashbacks to 1950, “Pleasantville,” but a modern setting too, all love-sex, can’t figure out the relationship of the past and present . . . but better I not keep looking up at it. Some glance is inevitable but not deliberate watching. Seems you can’t go deep into your own reading. Afraid it may bring eye strain and then . . . so I shut my eyes and utter silent *maha-mantras*. Talk of myself. Can’t help that. When I hear of my Godbrothers I become envious.

Once upon a time . . . an Aer Lingus plane flew against strong headwinds over the Atlantic, bound for NY. Many lives, many stories, but I only know one. And I know that in the *Bhagavad-gita* Lord Krishna declares He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supreme Controller, inconceivable, always a person. Those who meditate on Him with devotion at the time of death, go to His Supreme eternal abode. This you should accept. I looked up at the film and see it’s a science-fiction in that the present day people were somehow forced to go back in time to live in 1950s as “Pleasantville” people and this is shown in the movie by switching from color to black and white, etc. Got you caught. Are you gonna keep watching it and get left cheated at the end? At least they could have shown you something spiritual, people going back in time to the ancient sages of India and some Krishna consciousness. But no, the mystery land to which they are projected is black and white TV 1950.

The two kids who went back in time to Pleasantville gradually begin to corrupt it and it loses its all goody-goody innocent potency. The basketball team which never lost now loses, the chaste girls go unchaste, etc.

Instead of watching the film I could turn on my seat light and read *Bhagavad-gita* or the private edition of *Every Day, Just Write*. But I’m gradually feeling a fog sensation in the head. I’ll probably have to take a pill. I’ve got Esgic with me and ff-caffeine.

4:20 p.m.

Esgic. Captain tells us latest scores of Ireland-Wales rugby game. People in 1950 Pleasantville gradually turned Technicolor after the two people from the future wised them up in the ways of carnal desire, cheating, etc. What moral does this movie have? Is it better to be artificially sexless or 1996 addicted. Is there any God talk in the film? I don’t see it yet. Sorry I’m peaking more than I wanted. Take an Esgic, Pleasantville.

5:30 p.m.

Head pressure didn’t go down. One movie over, another began. I springboarded—as the people in the “Pleasantville” movie magically transformed from black and white to full color, could I change? Could I “go back” and see Shrila Prabhupada as I loved him? But I wouldn’t want to “see through it” with cynical eyes of the 1990s. Could I learn to love God? Could He become real to me? What do I need to do?

Or is no change possible? Perhaps magical or radical change isn’t even desirable. Perhaps living as I am is okay and is changing gradually. It *is* as I desire. But is it as He desires? I thought, “Should I live in a temple again?”

No, not possible. But the film got me thinking in those ways.

5:45 p.m.

Waiting it out. The second full length movie is a football movie. Bullies pick on a weaker fellow. He gets very angry and attacks them back. Better not watch it. Doesn’t help my head pressure either or my Krishna consciousness.

You have to hear Shrila Prabhupada’s books. It takes peaceful receptivity. If you can do it, you are lucky. I can do it. Do it in Wicklow, despite the “mosquitoes” of finding faults. But those mosquitoes are very bad and dangerous. I agree it’s better to keep listening in any case. But please, I say, learn how to do it better, with love and awareness that you need it—the basics, the depth, the heaviness, the whatever it is he is giving. Hare Krishna. *Haribol*, just be who you are.

Head pressure but not on right side (yet). So I am writing to You. God. Be with me. You are. The writing is for You. Can You read it? You’ll let me. I shouldn’t be self-centered. God-centered be. Sacrifice yourself for Him. God is love is Krishna as the Swami Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada who taught me.

You’re watching the movies. That’s not good. It’s about a silly boy who when he gets very angry can knock over any player. But when he’s not in a rage he’s a fool on the field. No lesson there for me. You keep looking up at the film and it will stay with you later. I’m sorry Lord, I would never look at it at home. It’s just that screen is sticking right in front of us. I *am* thinking of You. I want Your presence, the one who I talk to and in all hearts.

The magic is when Krishna works through you. Don’t think it’s your own. It may feel like complete freedom of false ego and that’s okay, but don’t claim the “unconscious” is something apart from God. Everything comes from Him. This is our teaching and I adhere to it. I speak what our teachers speak and I desire to have my own conviction of it. I don’t want to blaspheme or disbelieve but it’s not enough to say it *only because* they say it. I need to say it from my own. *That’s* what’s happening with me.

As for “dislike” of Shrila Prabhupada, it’s something I can’t fight head on. He will have to help me. I must put my full devotion into it as I can muster.

6:17 p.m.

I think I’m going to make it. Maybe only one and half hours more. Head pressure is heavy but in front of head. It might even go away when we land. Just think whatever happens Krishna is with you and chant His names. *God is with me*. It’s not a lie. He is. I just have to feel it. And the beloved form of Shrila Prabhupada too, his *vani*. He who saved me. I need to revive the sweet memory of it. *Jaya* Prabhupåda.

God is kind/ God is accessible/ like a father/ and yet He is a cowherd boy. You can know Him.

He can allow you to chant His names with attention and devotion. You have to ask Him. Plead with Him. He’s so great so don’t be familiar with Him. He lets you play like the drawing on this page. But you have to suffer too. And learn to give up this material world. Love your brothers and all *jivas*. A tall order. But I can try. Curb the bad thoughts towards Prthu and others. Lecture “as it is,” as a humble duty.

I’m watching the football game fantasy which is the movie. The hero is a crazy sensitive guy and when he gets very angry he becomes a superstar. Window blinds open on the plane, sunlight pouring in. You wouldn’t want to die thinking of the silly device of this film. They look at the opponent and hallucinate a head of someone they hate. Then they get so angry they charge him and knock him out. Violence triumphs with anger.

Please forgive me Lord for watching the films too much. But I do think I “found” You more as my unconditional friend who understands me and the difficult situations we are put in. I do wish to remain your servant and do the guru duties (if You sit fit) until I die. Also, let me be open to correction.

Hare Krishna mantra should be chanted at all times and thinking of Krishna by His name and His presence.

February 21

2:15 a.m.

Jaya Gaurasundara’s house, St. Johnsbury Place. Slept a few hours soundly, after that not so much. Found a couple of legal pads here, crayons, sketch pads, a sweater from stuff I stowed here a year ago. Now trying to follow up on a feeling you had on the plane, that Krishna is near, your best, closest friend. Practice the presence Krishna. Can I be bold and confident about it without falling into sentimental imagination? He *is* here. He *is* my friend, He desires that I turn to Him. These are all facts of the theology. It seems the main reasons not to do this are 1. Doubt of His existence, and 2. A false assumption that I’m too fallen and He’s not interested in me. In *Bhagavad-gita* Krishna repeatedly says *man-mana bhava mad-bhakto*, Always think of Me. “And of all *yogis* the one with great faith who always abides in Me, thinks of Me within himself and renders transcendental loving service to Me—he is the most intimately united with me in *yoga* . . . ” (Bg. 6.47)

“ . . . by practicing yoga in full consciousness of Me, with mind attached to Me . . . ” (Bg. 7.1) But is that *yoga* a very specific and technical act? Even for the devotee doesn’t it mean chanting Hare Krishna mantra incessantly? Yes, but as you chant and even at other times, feel that friendliness. Talk with Him. If not a long conversation, the feeling, the turning to Him. I propose.

5:54 a.m.

Comfy here.

8:07 a.m.

I have time but no schedule. My brain, mind . . . off center. Keep replaying the inflight movies. Went on cold walk with M. where we usually go, the senior citizens park and baseball field in Catonsville. No one knows we are here. First priority is doctor’s visits, then meetings, initiations. M. on the phone. Talking with Jaya Gaurasundara and Kaumodaki how poisonous and impersonal e-mail is. Hare Krishna. They impress me with their Deity worship, up at 3 a.m. to perform it. My own worship is so brief and casual by comparison. Krishna is kind to me.

Krishna Krishna. Where can you go? Who knows you?

You have a *Bhagavad-gita* in this room, the only book of *shastra*. Why don’t you read it?

9:32 a.m.

Hooboy. Young girl is queen o’ this house. I chant my “last” round and before it’s over I don’t remember whether I was going forward or backward on the beads. The last round. The last round. What do you mean by that? Don’t you have a post-grad hat? So you never got your MA but you could have. You were a good enough scholar in English Lit. Could have even become a college teacher. Doctor A said it’s better for a writer *not* to go that route. Better to be a dish washer and learn about life and write it into your fiction. Oh, fiction mill and trying to get published and would you ever? Anyway, before that became an issue, I lost my nerve, I mean I lost my material life entirely. I entered the Swami’s army, the transcendental world. Me and Keith and Howard and Chuck and Bruce and Greg and Wally and Weg. Actually I came alone. But did join them and so it was.

Prabhupada, our Swami. Nrsimhananda of ITV wants to come and interview me for a video he’s making, “The Disciple Of My Disciple.” What am I supposed to say? I can try to remember old days but not the pangs. Not where I am at now. In fact, I can’t make any interview if the twinge or vise pressure comes. Tomorrow’s my chance to tell the head specialist about this. Tell him his Advils don’t work and I’m back to Esgic. What does he have that’s better? Shall he be my guru? Or back on my own on the trail for relief?

Speaking of corn,

I ditched the mike

I sang all night in my sleep, on dream had two versions of Vrindavana, one very austere and one very comfortable. I wasn’t sure which was best or for me. But you are free and eternal in your self. You are the eternal servant of the Lord.

The straight *parampara* I’ll speak. But if someone questions me what I actually know I’ll admit very little. Or if they say they don’t chant sixteen rounds I won’t say, “You’re an animal.” I won’t say you’re a dope for not loving Krishna. I’ll say, chuckle, “Yes, I too have problems.”

10:30 a.m.

Sounds in this house. The career man in non-plus ultra, he depends on Krishna,

graffiti,

Egyptian wall art with hieroglyphics,

whatever occurs to me is exciting way to go

But best of all it to put it all before Krishna —talk with God. Don’t expect that He’s giving you replies to write down as that man did in his best seller, *Conversations With God*. But do talk with Him, say, “This is what I am doing Lord, I don’t know if you approve or if it’s best.”

Krishna plays His flute.

Doctor, examine my thorax. Give me permission to take caffeine. Bless my encyclicals. Ha hoo no doc can authorize the soul.

Please forward my mail to Virginny and places West. I don’t hesitate so why should you. M. just told me when the video man interviews me he wants to know my *feelings*. Tell him I am a guru all these years . . .

My feelings—relief from pain. Pain. Wanted to talk with Krishna -kirtana when I heard he was in the house. He’s my disciple. He likes to read my books, says he wants to be the genuine man I describe in my books. I said, “I do too.” Not that I am already.

Feelings—spring Haiku in Blythe’s collection. Read them with his explanations. The world of poetry. Dear Lord, see the evocative, religious, Buddhist poets. They don’t know soul or Thee, but . . . I do. I will add to what they have done. Their evocations are also wonderful—even when they don’t mention You, that too is wonderful. But more wonderful is to actually “mention” You, to be immersed in You as Rupa Gosvami is. Still, we keep a place in our hearts for the evocative seasonal haikuists, is that all right?

Spring begins

quietly,

from the stork’s one pace

(Shoha)

1:45 p.m.

I have one and a half hours scheduled with Dr. K. Tomorrow starting at 1:30 p.m. the whole day is geared for it, lunch at 11:30 a.m. and Madhurya-lila will take us there in her car. I’m pretty much prepared in what I want to say to him. He’ll take the lead no doubt. I’ll tell him I want quality of life and I don’t like pain. But I know I can’t purchase it with a daily fix of a rescue med. So what to do? At least give me a med that will work. And maybe a more powerful therapy med. So we’ll talk about the body and the self. He will see me in action, in the flesh. See my magnified eyes behind the spectacles, see the teeth which are not real (although they are real in their own way), the scrawny neck, the prominent, hooked nose. And as a doctor he should see more, the way I respond. Will he see my fragility? So fragile I can’t even take the doctor’s visit except at a risk.

Sitting in this house spaced out from the jet travel and having no schedule and being confined to this one room. I open a drawer and look at photos of their baby Radhika from when she was born to now, birthday party, in the bath, etc. My head, is it coming up again? Man, you sure are a winner. What happened to that verve you had earlier? What to do?

2:40 p.m.

Don’t be afraid to tell your truth. Krishna is on our side. We want to be on His side. Black ink flashes on white paper. Write this way, beware the . . .

Two heads I draw, two people, say they are not me. Tuesday four GNP workers coming. Speak to them on How I didn’t know what to say to ya’all so decided to tell you the possible topics that pass through my mind and tell you the art of improvisation—time I saw Lenny Bruce, book *Thinking In Jazz* and other improvo ad-lib themes ending in reading quotes on the kind of art I aspire for.

3:10 p.m.

The toddler Radhika was just in here talking a blue streak about herself, her world of this house and her parents and grandparents and then she got on to Krishna who plays His flute and Balarama with His plow who kills demons . . . She was hard to remove. I told M. to make it clear to her that she just can’t walk in here when she wants. I hear her talking anyway through the walls. She’s a chatterbox.

M. read to me from *Bhagavad-gita*, Chapter Ten, the purport to verse one which ends, “So even great sages agree: What is *atma*, what is the Supreme? It is He whom we have to worship.” I listened but couldn’t take more than that one lengthy purport. He will describe His personal energies in this chapter. A touch of His opulences. He’s Bhagavan, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I listened and accepted. You hear of Krishna from Krishna. This isn’t “Pleasantville” banality goody-good.

It is *parampara*. Doesn’t need proving from a source outside itself. The universe and my world is intact when I believe and practice this. Agnostics accuse me of accepting pat answers for things which are (they say) imponderable mysteries—or simply not worth considering. Just live for what is, sense grat, social responsible values and, so on. They dare live the unknown. I say I too live in the unknown—how I will attain to pure devotion, how I will improve myself. But I want to be a devotee.

3:39 p.m.

I’m here as I planned. America. The room with venetian blinds open. Frost melted on windowpane. We walk in the park, so cold. Trees in the back yard. My thatched roof house far away, the Lord has given to me. Even if could never go back there, I’m grateful for the time I already spent there in Rathgorragh, Rathdangan, Kiltegan. Where I am not painfree, comfry, innisfree. No place in this world is free of danger and boredom and mite. But it’s a darned good locale for me who wants to be alone and write. Now if I could only learn to speak freely to my Lord.

4:58 a.m.

M. proposes we take rest early, 5:30 p.m., as a way of keeping close to Irish time so the body clock doesn’t get stressed with time zone changes. I’m tired enough, although this little house is noisy. Quiet please earplugs. Drift off. Why don’t you capture a dream? You had one of Vrindavana last night but thought it wasn’t spiritual and deep and clear enough to save. You shouldn’t demand that of a dream. Although they may seem foolish and mundane it’s often carrying a meaning of my life. Dream “experts” say the dream source is always trying to teach us something we don’t already know; it wants to face truths about ourselves, tasks we need to take up for renewal in Krishna consciousness.

Good night. Your *japa*. Your *gayatris*. Your sports car (Jaguar). Your racing on hockey skates. Peer. Earlier today I mentioned to Krishna-kirtana my interest in Egyptian hieroglyphics as they appear on the walls of the tombs. He just brought me a book on it. With the discovery of the Rosetta stone, the hieroglyphics were deciphered.

February 22

4:35 a.m.

Mister, you are in someone’s house and their *managala-arati* has just begun but you stay in your room. You’ve finished sixteen rounds of mechanical *japa*. That’s one of the ten offenses. In the beginning, Shrila Prabhupada said, one will commit so many offenses. I am still at the beginning.

Phone rang 2 a.m. no one answered. You know the day’s routine. So I’ll report it here, what happened in the doctor’s office. He can’t correct a dent on left top side of my skull, he can’t adjust my mortality, he can’t change the basic facts. He’s not a wizard. Maybe some improvement. I have to live with this thing that closes in my day almost daily around 10 a.m.

People of the United States, in order to form a better union, created the Constitution, the ten amendments are written one after another in a single line down the long corridor you walk after getting off your international flight into NYC. Freedom to practice the religion of your choice. Seeking Love in that religion along with fellow members. It is not easy to get out of the material illusion which is also one of Krishna ‘s energies. “But those who surrender to Me can easily cross beyond it.”

I Am One Of The Fallen Ghosts

We are living in like a huge church, or a temple. So many devotee stalwarts are falling and I am not fallen. Then I fall too. I fall from sex desire and pride. I think what it means to fall. There are different ways of knowing Krishna, the essence. Just to be sincere whether you are fallen or not fallen. It doesn’t seem to make much difference. But I too become fallen. Someoone says call out, “Jesus, Jesus.” Get closer to him. Don’t just be fallen and speculating about what it means to be fallen. You don’t have to be fallen by a gross falldown. People don’t even have to know whether you are fallen or not, but you are and somebody says it’s not Jesus you call for, it’s Krishna. I call “Krishna.” But I didn’t know Him either. Do you have to go to India? Here we are hanging out in the upper air, fallen, like dead. All your friends are fallen too. We’re way up in the air, levitating at the top of this big Cathedral, like ghosts. The air is full of ghosts. You are one of them now. So many important people are falling, becoming like that and you weren’t, and now you are too.

5:12 a.m.

I am not disciplined. Not attempting to read scripture. Looked through the book of hieroglyphics. The word means holy carvings. But I don’t need it. How about . . . Hear the wind outside (not as audible as in Ireland). Bundle up head and mouth against frigid air. Or walk and pray to God. Be with me as we walk. I am so poor. I don’t do anything right. I expect to get by on a few past credits over the “many” years I’ve lived. Egyptian civilization almost four thousand years ago, they say. So why not Vedic civilization also?

The books are the main thing. The teachings of the *Vedas* preserved and passed down. And only five hundred years ago revived and brought to the highest pitch by Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. How to love God in five major *rasas*, taught by His Rupa Gosvami. I tell myself, it’s “all right” not to be disciplined for study at this older age. Too late to whip myself. I’ll get a headache. Try though, to hear *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* and *Bhagavad-gita* one way or another. Don’t indulge in some nondevotee pastime.

The language of SDG is ideograms of nuttiness. No careful drawings, please, just what comes. And Krishna signs and words a must. Draw always man on *sankirtana* even if you yourself don’t do it, arms upraised. Write and draw the dance praising Hari. The *sannyasi* with his staff and beads. The mother with her child and kneading *capatis*, the *shudra* serving a good master. It’s *varnashrama—*Hindu is a misnomer, Hindus for Indus, given by the foreigners. I am a token devotee—no, a real person too who wants to please but can’t do much.

8:50 a.m.

In *Bhagavad-gita* Lord Krishna states that He is unborn, beginingless and the Lord of all planets. Those who know Him as such are undeluded and free of sins. (Bg. 10.3) The purport explains these points, distinguishing Shri Krishna from all the *jivas*. We need to understand Him rightly and work under His direction. How do I know if I am doing that? If I follow His representative, Shrila Prabhupada. I do follow the vows I took at initiation. I preach. I try to be honest. Cooperate in his movement, ISKCON.

Some say ISKCON doesn’t represent him or the GBC doesn’t represent him. They are rebels to the established order. I don’t say that the movement is against Shrila Prabhupada’s desires. But I don’t live in it as I used to. I contribute from a distance. Aside from this, my very personal realization of Krishna consciousness concerns me. Is it real, deep, thorough? Or is it fading like my eyesight? But if I am originally and constitutionally Krishna conscious then I should be able to feel it. Yes, but not if the curtain of *maya* is between me and the Lord. I can’t take this to someone and explain myself. Certainly not to the doctor today. Nor to the Godbrother who wants to interview me regarding my feelings. I can’t open up to them. They would misunderstand; I can’t trust them. So I struggle with it alone. By writing it here I place it before Lord Krishna. Lord, I’ll stay stuck this way unless You clear me up.

But perhaps Krishna is saying to me, “Are you ready for me to change your life to bring about the fuller awakening of your Krishna consciousness? You seem to resist any change. You are clinging to a life of comfort as far as you can get it. You want a self-styled spiritual life and so far, I have allowed it. Are you sincere when you say you are not satisfied spiritually and want Me to transform you?”

I say, Lord, I don’t want anything too difficult, that’s true. I don’t like pain. I can’t mix with others if that’s what it takes. I don’t have the faith, enthusiasm, or physical and mental ability to get back into the ISKCON institutional mainstream, if that’s what You are suggesting. I’d like to get my realizations within the life I am leading, living in Ireland on my own, writing . . . If I could improve my reading and chanting and if You would reveal to me the taste of the simple *bhakti* activities. I’d like to preach by a quiet example, but with deep conviction. The bottom line however, is that You are the Lord and I am the servant. So You will do what You feel is best for me. And I will somehow accept it.

9:45 a.m.

The man lay on his back with two pillows under his head. Thought . . . Krishna, Krishna, Krishna. . . what he’d say tomorrow when four close GNP workers come. Tell them of writing, quoting from poets and saying it in a Krishna conscious context. Why not just directly talk of God, Krishna , as in a class? Because this would be more honest—to speak of writing, love of writing, what I am trying for. Service to Krishna by this artless art.

Then the man lying on his back thought of the visit to the doctor. He’d already prepared. So now he’s just trying to stay calm for it, so he’ll be up for it.

On the cold walk around the frozen baseball field this morning (even our mouths were covered from the chill) I mentioned to M. that lately I’ve been trying to talk to Krishna. I said it helps to be aware that no prior qualification is needed to do it. And also I talked with him admitting my failings. M. said we are not perfect—that’s why we are in this material world. I also thought just come before Krishna —as you believe He is present, as you do . . . Just be present before Him, imperfect and even unable and to a certain extent unwilling to surrender more than you already have. Lord, here I am.

Thought of calling this Volume *With Krishna In America*. You think your peaceful status quo will continue? No big upheaval. Return safely to Wicklow?

10:35 a.m.

Danger at every step. Will he see me as a scardy-cat? Or a lanky cowpoke. Can’t see me writerly. Don’t be haunted by Rilke. See in clear air of KC.

Alone most of the morning. A little of this and that. Told JG starting tomorrow I’ll attend the greeting of the Deities in his house. Their Radha-Govinda. After today’s doctor visit we’ll be able to plan out the rest of our week’s stay. Tell people I am here and if they want to they can come and hear and see me speak probably on Friday and Saturday.

Think of what to say. Krishna.

If you were home in white cloud freedom you’d know better what to do. I always float easy there. The afternoon one and a half hours saved for the art room if your head is clear enough. Working towards a Krishna conscious art. Evolve. Flow. Play. Krishna. Here I think of there. I don’t like being attached too much to any place or person because when I lose them it will hurt too much. So you stay aloof. But don’t be aloof from Krishna. He’s your eternal friend. Everyone’s.

The whole world. Krishna is like me, myself. That is, I can find Him by finding myself. Locate the heart and He is there. But that doesn’t mean I am the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I certainly feel I am *not*. So vulnerable, fragile, in this body, afraid, etc.—no, I’m not the Supreme. Yet I say—think of yourself purely and Krishna is right there beside you. Two birds on a tree. He’s great, I’m small. I’m poor. He will help me.

8:38 a.m.

Prabhupada, I’m coming back to you. In your *vani* (books), in your photos too. I am blanked out in so many ways, unable to feel. Can hardly remember the old days with you. But the spiritual system is such that I can reach you. With faith. “It depends on your purity.”

4:55 p.m.

Turned inside out by doctor’s visit. Cheerful, helpful man. And my supportive friends Madhu and Madhurya-lila. I’m taken care of, by Prabhupada’s grace. Medical bills paid by Baladeva and his wife. Doctor will try his best, he kept saying, “We’ll try to help.” He heard from me that I want pain relief. He saw that the Advils didn’t work. I won’t write more what he prescribed. I can hardly understand it all. Madhurya-lila is out now getting the meds and she’ll write down what the regimen is. He’s definitely giving me a battery of abortive and preventative meds. I showed him my calendar. Headaches every day. I took off all my clothes and put on a little smock. He says a lack of muscle mass. Weigh only a hundred and sixteen pounds. Various things concern him, others look good. He thinks we can fight back against the migraine attacks. I kept wanting to express something to him, an emotion, an attitude, but I couldn’t bring myself to say it. Something in the mood of the migraineurs who vent on the Internet Journal. We want to be understood. M. asked afterwards, “Was he sympathetic?” I said yes. At least he’s giving me meds. But some pain I’ll have to suffer, sometimes I’ll be sidelined.

Steroids, betablockers, Naratriptim, Zomig, Pepcid . . . and another whose name I forget. Come back Friday. Inside out. I forgot my spiritual nature? He saw me as a Hare Krishna person. Said he met devotees in 1969 in Arkansas when he was a park ranger. Said they were gentle people. When I spoke to him I felt my voice was weak. I *am* weak. I’m fragile. Depakote is out. He wants ff-caffeine out and Esgic too. I’m not sure why he’s so much against them.

Februrary 23

3:25 a.m.

Mind still buzzing with doctor’s visit and follow ups. Also meetings with devotees starting today. So don’t expect deep thoughts and musings. That’s for when we return to white cloud thatched cottage. But things may happen to me here that will change in our life. He said you may get giddy while taking one medicine and the other may make you irritable. I want to note as many things as possible while in this unusual state, the United States. There’s a plethora of impressions. Maybe I should write in lists or fragments just to give stuff and don't wait to construct careful sentences. Collage hodgepodge impressions of my visit.

Constrained By Etiquette

I’m in the Navy in an office. An Officer comes in. I am talking to Kaishori and other Gita-nagari Press workers. I stop talking to them and salute him and say “Good morning, sir.” Then I go back to what I am doing. And Dravida does also as an enlisted man salute the officer. Then we have a discussion with the officer on the proper etiquette. He says he is in favor of preserving proper etiquette, meaning that the enlisted men had to show respect to officers. Then I ask him have I done enough, had I done the right thing. He says you should say the officer’s name. If you are doing something else, you should stand and face the officer when he comes and say good morning Officer Johnson. If it’s a higher officer, then you should introduce him to things in your office and recite some Nordic (maybe I meant nautical) rules to him. Then Dravida tells the officer that Dravida has had this astrology chart read. It said that he is six feet tall but he acts like a wasp or fly. Dravida says this means that he is a perfectionist. I tell the officer that I have not had my astrology read. He says is your philosophy that things happen or that you cause them? I say I don’t have any particular philosophy on that, sir. That’s pretty much the end of the dream. I take the etiquette to mean like the etiquette of Krishna consciousness, of spiritual life. I am embarrassed in front of the devotees who are seeing me, that something happened, but I have to go through it. They can see what I am living with. Yeah, so it might be like that, that I would like to speak to them in a different way, that I was constrained by the etiquette.

The doctor’s office is part of a hospital annex of Johns Hopkins. It’s located on Falls Road, which Madhu liked because it’s the same name as the IRA infested street of troubles in Belfast. In the waiting room Madhu picked up a *Time* magazine and began reading. I looked over his shoulder and saw an article titled, *Why I’m Still Angry*. And the sub-heading was, “Forgive? Forget it. After seeing Clinton’s contempt I want to shake him.” And it showed a cartoon picture of a man grasping a little figure of President Clinton and shaking it angrily. Then there was another article on the facing page which said, *Legacy Of The Scandal—The Right To Talk Dirty*. I was glad to see that Madhu got disgusted with *Time* magazine after about five or ten minutes, and put it away.

The lab technician asked me whether I wanted my right or left arm punctured for blood. Madhurya-lila was watching and said that I had a prominent vein whereas the cancer patients she treats have veins that are very hard to find.

I could go on and on with these details, but what’s the point? Even Lord Krishna says there is no point in His telling the details of His splendorous manifestations. So then what’s the point of me telling all of my tiny, limited impressions and experiences while going to the doctor. My general impression was that I was overwhelmed by the data and that my attitude was one of a submissive patient willing to try whatever the doctor ordered. I was also pleased to see that he was ready to write prescriptions for strong medications to knock out headaches. But at present I don’t have anything yet.

9 a.m.

I met for an hour and half with the devotees of Gita-nagari Press. Just at the end of the meeting Madhu came in and said that we have an appointment today for a CAT scan. I have to leave at 10:45 to get it done. You have to lie for an hour inside a tube. They can give you a sedative if you like to calm you down so you don’t get claustrophobia. This is a surprise. If I knew that I was going to have to do this I wouldn’t have had this hour and a half meeting. But I’m sure by Krishna’s grace I’ll get through it. And maybe I can talk with Krishna and think of Krishna while I’m in the tube.

10:25 a.m.

Just ate lunch. Now we have to rush out. While eating I heard Prabhupada from 1967 lecturing on the topic of *buddhi*. It seemed appropriate for what I am going through in all these high-faluting medical tests, CAT scan and latest inventions, latest medicine and so on. Prabhupada says to study the anatomy of the body and how it works is not real intelligence. Real intelligence is to understand the working principle within the body, the soul.

11:40 a.m.

Waiting to go into the MRI tube. He says I can hear a radio if I like. Take out metal dentures. In waiting room I hear “On The Roof,” early 1960s rock song played. M. and ML here with me, my kind and staunch supporters; without them I wouldn’t be here.

Is there a worthwhile purpose in being here? M. thinks so. Dr. K. ordered it. He’s a cheerful, peppy man, like Baladeva in that respect.

In the tube my mind may roam. Doctor with French accent asked if I’m claustrophobic. I said no and so he was not inclined to give me the valium pill that ML and M. suggested I take. “Anything to help you get through it.” So the doctor decided to give me half strength. Someone’s in the machine now. I saw his or her feet sticking out. I’m next.

Hare Krishna. The secretary just asked if we gave her a prescription for this test. It was faxed to her this morning says ML. So she’s looking for it. Rock radio on. The tube might be better than being out here.

*Haribol*. A busy, exciting, hectic week. I had to draw symbols on a picture of a human body showing where I feel pain right now. Draw + + + + if it’s a dull pain. I drew that. And two on a scale of ten pain.

Krishna, I don’t want to be too body conscious. Steroids. Trucks and cars zoom by on highway just outside this building, Johns Hopkins Imaging. Hey man, you’re getting first-class medical treatment, so don’t complain. Magazines and newspapers here. M. looking at the *Baltimore Sun*. ML studying for her school work. Me penning, penning, waiting for the call. In the tube I can’t write. But I could think of titles for this EJW or pray and recite the Hare Krishna mantra.

I spoke to the devotees this morning. Told them my dream of etiquette. Said I like the deep etiquette of Krishna conscious culture regarding guru and disciple. But not a forced, oppressive, manipulative etiquette.

Read to them my quotes on Issa, Santoka, Rilke and one by Merton. Guru-seva couldn’t stay in the room because her little son, Srivasa, was pouting and demanding. Also, Lalitamrita couldn’t get here. Served them tea and cookies. This is turning into a long day. Keep cheerful about it. They say no more ff-caff or Esgic, my “friends” for a while now.

I’ll tell you briefly what the MRI was like when I come out. Bhima fought Jarasandha for twenty-eight days. I can take one hour lying on my back in a tight cigar. Think of it like a prayer retreat. Reduced stimuli. Imagine you are in your bed in Wicklow with the wind sound outside, the room darkened, nothing I have to do, nowhere I have to go, no one I have to see. This is your time to relax. Usually I lie on my back for only a half hour. Stick it out extra.

Johns Hopkins Imaging. Ten minutes late from when I’m supposed to go in. Hello people. Back at Dr. Patel’s house I’ll be a live guru, talking and listening. Unless I get pains and have to cancel.

Krishna teaches us *buddhi*. Not useless material knowledge. How to become free of death. Eternal bliss in person in the spiritual world with Krishna.

Krishna, Krishna please be with me. You are with me. Tiny faulty hurting me and the countless *jivas* like me. God is perfect. He is a person. Inconceivable, the smallest, cause of everything, undying, unborn. Think of Krishna’s pastimes if you can when you are in the tube.

1:25 p.m.

Back at JG’s house. I have a vise band headache so I’m not inclined to talk about the MRA experience. The technician impressed upon me that I couldn’t move my head in the slightest or I’d ruin the pictures they were taking. The lasers. He even put a piece of tape around my forehead to “remind” me not to move at all. It was cold in there, sixty-five degrees. I have a sore throat now. But I did my job well and didn’t move in the slightest and he congratulated me afterwards. I didn’t think much in a discursive way, just watched my breaths from the diaphragm and tried to stay peaceful and calm. I’ve done a lot of relaxation on my back and so it paid off and it wasn’t hard to do. Kept my eyes closed the whole time and didn’t see how close the metal roof was. And it didn’t take a whole hour either.

2:26 p.m.

TotRadhika speaks two languages, English and Gujurati. I have a head band headache. It was a trippy kind of day for me, more than I expected. Tomorrow may be quieter to answer letters. Being alone is good. You can paint from it when you are in the art room. Not only alone but lonely. It’s a force for creativity and I hope that’s just a few steps from Krishna conscious yearning. Make the pictures you want. The words . . . Our thoughts, conjunctions and cries, duh . . . he can’t talk so much through his blear.

Some devotees phoning Madhu trying to get me entangled in controversies. We’re staying out of it. Pass the days here and leave on Sunday with clear conscience and eager to get clear of increasing entanglements. The longer I stayed here the more impossible it would become. Sail out I hope, on Aer Lingus. Ah, but the real point is to be with Krishna wherever you are. Was I with Him when I was in the big MRI tube surrounded by magnets and penetrated by laser lights?

4:35 p.m.

I’m going to bed for the night. I’d like to meet different devotees individually, but I’m not able to. Make the books as personal as possible and be with them that way. Dear Lord Krishna, I didn’t really pray and practice the presence of Your Lordship when I was in the MRI tube the way I wanted to. And yet when I think of it now I know that You were with me. You are always with me. I think Prabhupada once said that Krishna is as close to us as our jugular vein. I’m a sample of You, Krishna. I’m trying to understand that dynamic of self-realization being intimately related with God realization. I seem to have some access and inclination towards self-realization whereas God realization somehow seems less “interesting” to me. Maybe that’s my false ego. And yet the self-realization I seek is also spiritual, my desire to be a better devotee, a better person. So I’m asking You Lord to help me make this connection from my little self to You, who are not far away but very close and my best friend.

February 24

4:50 a.m.

*Bits and pieces*.

Did all rounds and *gayatri* before coming here. Writing as afterthought. Wrote in medical waiting room yesterday. Write wherever you are, now in the easy chair in “my” room at JG’s. Went over notes and appointments with Madhu. The list of people to get first initiation tomorrow is up to four, Linc, Pat, Mehul, Pramella Mahajana, and maybe three second initiates. I’ll do it. Like a midwife or technician. Tell them that *shiksha* is the main function of a guru and although I am giving the *diksha* and I wish our relationship to go beyond this one act of linking (which in one sense is a ritual) to you receiving *siksha* from me. One might ask how I can do this since I am not available due to a migraine condition. The answer is in my writings. They are the teachings of Srila Prabhupada but in my own words conveying the experience of one attempting to follow Srila Prabhupada. Therefore, they contain information previously uncharted and which can be valuable to fellow practitioners following Prabhupada.

Having said that, then what? Something about importance of their role as disciples to do whatever is necessary to keep the vows and improve spiritual life. Spiritual life is more important than material. The two can be balanced but spiritual should not be neglected, even if material gets neglected. “What does it profit a man . . . ”

Can you improvise? Well no, I’m preparing it now. Speak on ten offenses. Our method of prayer and meditation which centers us. Always strive to overcome mechanical chanting. Call out to Krishna to help. I’ll have to think of more things to say. Build a lecture. Then Saturday two more talks.

Today I’ll take breakfast at 5:30, greet the Deities at 6, by 6:10 go out bundled from head to toe into the car into the senior citizen’s park where we walk in the first light of a winter dawn, several laps around the baseball field, and into the little woods area . . . then back here . . . Today so far I have no meetings scheduled.

We traveled here with only one piece of cabin luggage each but we are getting a suitcase to fill up with things acquired here, including a hub cap for the van. “Ma’an, I thought you wuz Chinese,” said Monk to Mingus.

10:35 a.m.

A lot is happening here and I don’t have time or presence of mind to write it down. I just read a letter from Guru-seva who said, “It’s nice that you have come here to visit us and I hope that you have some good results in your visits to the doctor and that you have a speedy return to Ireland.” I thought that was a nice remark wishing me a speedy return to Eire. Most disciples might say, “We wish you would stay with us here in America for longer.” But she understood my real desire is to get in and out of here quick. Madhu just said the same. He’s almost constantly on the phone about people getting initiated and people coming here, and so on and so forth.

11:06 a.m.

The beautiful-jewel like shining of the sun in the park this morning from the overhead lamps. My not being thrilled by walking in virgin snow and dawn the way I would perhaps when I was younger. I have to deliberately tell myself to notice and appreciate. One doesn’t get so excited. But I can definitely say it was nice. I want peace. And thoughtfulness. Loving friends. Some hope for spiritual advancement, spiritual maintenance.

Tomorrow I have an interview with Nrsimhananda in which he is going to ask me to remember how Prabhupada asked us to become gurus. I was the one who asked the question in 1977. We thought his answer was clear but now there is a schism in ISKCON and they say something else. I’ve been acting as guru since 1978. No turning back. The ISKCON GBC is committed to it also. Despite all the cheating and falldowns. We have to keep going and trying to improve. Some say that they want a Prabhupada-centered guru, a humble guru. Some say you can only have an *uttama-adhikari* guru. Some say no guru but Prabhupada. What do I say? I say I want a speedy return to Ireland and act in that way. But I’m no great shakes. Although sometimes I am shaking.

I’m dependent on friends, on their money, on their kind support. I’m dependent on the materialists also for all their arrangements, their airplanes, government, police protection and so on. I’m dependent on God, Krishna for the air I breathe. I’m dependent on my body to work at least for a few years longer. I cannot claim I’m independent. When I write freely I’m simply dependent on Krishna to send me the words through different mediums like “free-writing” or whatever you want to call it.

12:02 p.m.

I’ve picked out two Prabhupada tape excerpts to play during my lecture. A good way to be near him. That’s what I want. While eating lunch I heard Prabhupada speaking in New Vrindavan in 1968. He was saying how the materialists are so foolish trying to find happiness in the material world and in the material body. Then he quoted a Bengali line and said that there is a story, “The ghost has entered the mustard.” In India there are charmers or chanters of mantras who can exorcise ghosts. They chant some mantra and then generally they throw mustard seeds at the haunted person and the ghost goes out. But if the ghost has already entered the mustard, then it’s too late. Similarly, the materialists are trying to be happy with this body but the body is already condemned to unhappiness and mortality. I love the homey example and it hits home too. Just see me running around for blood tests, MRI tests, and warming up to my relationship with the doctor. And the doctor says he hopes he can help me to get better. “But the ghost has already entered the mustard.”

1:30 p.m.

Bhakti-tirtha Swami, through his Regional Secretary, invited me to go to Gita-nagari and have a double initiation tomorrow, he with his disciples and me with mine. The temple president of Potomac invited me to go there. The temple president of Baltimore wants me to go to the temple and discuss with him some problems involving my disciples. We’ll not be able to do any of those things. Pushing on to get through with what we have scheduled is enough.

4:20 p.m.

I just received a letter from Nagaraja Prabhu who is the new editor of BTG magazine. They’ve decided to drop the columns, mine included. He also said that many devotees said my columns were not appealing. BTG is going to try to shift their focus from the inside congregation to spiritual seekers who may not yet be devotees. He invited me to still contribute articles for their consideration but I’m not going to do it. In one sense my articles for BTG were somewhat contrived from my actual voice and heart. So be it. It has been honor to have been able to write for BTG for so many years.

4:35 p.m.

Hey boy, I hear your articles are not appealing to *many* devotees and that you got dropped from BTG.

Yes, it’s true but that doesn’t mean I’m not a good guy or a good devotee. I have a pair of Vans sneakers, “Hand made in California, one shoe at a time. Because that’s the best way.” I have a set of sweats, pants and sweatshirt with hood, Land’s End brand made in U.S.A. I have the honor and duty to initiate devotees into the Krishna consciousness movement. So I am not hurt by that rejection of BTG. Not at all. It doesn’t phase me. Well, it does, a little. But it’s also a relief not to have to turn in those articles that weren’t my honest, playful self. Boo-hoo. They don’t like me. The old guy is finally dropped and so is the mast head on the cover, the logo Shrila Prabhupada gave. All the columnists get dropped, so it’s not just you.

Who are those many devotees? Oh, don’t wrangle yourself about it. You’ve got a majenta colored sweater. You’ve got an old, narrow face and a dent on the left side of your skull (came out my mother’s womb that way). You weigh a hundred and sixteen pounds and the doctor is concerned at your lack of muscle mass. He also said you have unusually narrow nostrils, the moles on your back pose no problem and neither does the fungus on your toes. Your headaches of course, are your daily life. And you have an unexcelled or let us say a wonderful opportunity to write and print your books. So don’t lament your rejection as if you are May Sarton getting a bad review and writing a whole journal about it. No depressions for me. Shrila Prabhupada says if you have anxiety you can’t practice Krishna consciousness nicely. You need to be happy, a buoyant. Get it?

Yes, sir.

February 25

3:20 a.m.

Last night I had a dream that I was leading a Hare Krishna *kirtana* for a long time. It was an outdoor *kirtana*, so many devotees. Previous to my leading others were leading and it was going on in a marathon way. It was very high spirits in this *kirtana* and everyone felt it was the most important thing to be doing even though various other activities were going on around the periphery of our *harinama*. We were sitting down in one place. I chanted the original Hare Krishna tune that Prabhupada chanted. After some time I ended it by singing *Jaya Prabhupada, Jaya Prabhupada*. And then I woke up. I woke up at around 10 o’ clock and couldn’t get back to sleep. I wish I had been able to stay asleep and get the benefit of that rest while at the same time go on chanting Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare.

5:25 a.m.

Chant on four rounds of beads for initiates. Some last minute changes, one *bhakta* didn’t get his TP’s recommendation, has been crying for two days. Another also didn’t get his recommendation. A very busy schedule for me today. Got my Post-its in the *Caitanya-caritamrita* for the initiation lecture. Big deal, big shot, guru. Calls himself post-peon but receives the honors. In the afternoon he will be interviewed on Shrila Prabhupada’s desires for his disciples to initiate. Spokesperson, player in the actual events. Hare Krishna. Dreamt a little hand was holding mine assuringly. It was so vivid I woke up with a start. Was it an animal’s hand? I was singing . . . yes, go out singing.

Remember the things you have to do by putting little markers, notes, or put the things themselves right in your path so you can’t miss them. What to bring to the doctor’s tomorrow, what to bring to the interview, when to take which pills . . . when to eat and sleep. But when you chant *gayatri* all these surface things run along. Write a Post-it—tell CCd to turn up heat in Wicklow house twenty-four hours before we return. Post-it—damn it, remember to speak to Lord Krishna and say, “Here I am Lord, I am nothing, I know nothing, I am distracted by cares and self-pride. Please accept me and grace me with knowledge of Your nearness and dearness.”

12:30 p.m.

Initiations over, lunch over, interview canceled until tomorrow afternoon. Sit here with eyes still smarting from the *yajna* smoke. It went all right. I spoke of myself as *shiksha-guru*, spoke of spiritual life as priority over material. But why? You didn’t say we should save ourselves from repeated birth and death. Did you say we are eternal and meant for serving God in this life and the next? Yes, I mentioned it. Played Shrila Prabhupada excerpts, “The ghost is already in the mustard,” and “Honk Kong flu.” Spoke for an hour. Gave the names, Madan Gopal, Premananda, Padma-malini, Lalita-madhava.

I’m not able to do much. The ghost has already entered the mustard. I told them not to chant inattentively, mechanically. Preach to myself. To them. Keep vows. Told the newly named Madan Gopal I’m honored to have initiated him and hope I never disappoint him. Gave Vamanadeva the *gayatri* mantra in my room. He mastered the method of counting to ten on fingers after a few tries. Told me how much he likes Gita-nagari although he still feels troubled sometimes. In my lecture I said we all have checkered careers and follow a zig-zag course. I said spiritual master and disciple sometimes interchange roles. The guru sees his disciples as his spiritual masters. All are disciples and all disciples sooner or later get to act as spiritual masters. We all have to chant—and dance.

2:15 p.m.

Speaking beyond my realizations. Saying we should chant with poverty and simple. As tiny as a blade of grass, more tolerant than a tree. Ideals I don’t reach. Reach for them in a speech. It’s a kind of bluff. You can speak; words are cheap. Looking out at them and they looking back at me, in JG’s cellar. A rare visit by SDG. I could quickly wear out my welcome. Give them a chance to ask their questions. Each one a troublesome life. A group of individuals, lives.

So you are going to see a doctor. I hope he helps you. Did you know *tulasi* leaves will cure you? It must be God’s plan that you suffer. Caroline Myssis divinely inspired. What else? What will you say when they ask you, “What about Y2K?” Got your answer ready when they ask you, “When will you come back here, when will we see you?” But what difference do I actually make in their lives?

The room quickly filled up with smoke. Fortunately he ended the *kirtana* soon. Haryashva. Lila-avatara, Kaishori, Govinda-vallabha, Riddha dasa long gone and now back. Many Missing in Action or POW. Hong Kong flu. He’s trying to get a laugh as Swamiji did naturally because we loved him and when he said something human like that we delighted in it. As for me, I write these big books. Have you seen one of them lately? Have you seen the big EJW?

4:18 p.m.

More letters answered. You are a sincere, compassionate guy. You get your work done. So do millions of people, so do many, many Hare Krishna devotees. We are seen as ridiculous by “them.” We see them as crazy, missing the whole point of life. Who is crazy? When M. and I came back from our morning walk, a *mataji* disciple dressed in a long coat was pacing, chanting *japa*, outside of the house of JG’s neighbor. On seeing our car, she got down and made obeisances in the neighbor’s driveway. If they looked out their window, she must have looked like a crazy nuisance. We have to be careful how we act in public.

Light snowfall. Hope it doesn’t gather for our looked-forward-to getaway on Sunday. You came and surprised them and soon you’ll go. Hope I can give two talks on Saturday. The first one is about seeing Krishna even when He is within the cloud. The verse describes the cloud of dust made by the cows’ hooves and I want to mention the cloud caused by our ignorance. Oh, you bluffer. You began your talk this morning saying all we need to do is clean ourselves because originally we are pure souls. But what do you know of that? All you know is what you have read in the books. So, that’s okay. That’s where the knowledge comes from. I felt confident as I said it: We just need to clean ourselves *bahir* and *antar*.

5:12 p.m.

What if for some reason we could not re-enter Ireland? What if you had to live in U.S.A.? I would either become a fiercer recluse or give in to the socializing required to live here and still be considered an ISKCON citizen. I hope we’ll be able to go back to the white cloud cottage. I’m eager to embrace it gratefully and to write and paint and also accept whatever pains and inconveniences I must.

February 26

5:25 a.m.

Doing everything but writing here. Wrote up my notes for my today’s meeting with the doctor. Notes to secretary and typist. Answering some more mail. Thinking about immediate arrangements. Busy day today. Hope the steroids will carry me through. But the ghost has already entered.

Volume titles: America the beautiful and how I came in and out in about nine days. In America with Krishna. Krishna within the cloud. Me and Krishna on a walk in Catonsville senior citizens’ park. Mindfulness: Living in the moment in KC. How I spent my time in Baltimore. Going out and coming back to Ireland. Nine days in the life of a . . . So you can’t think of a title but the themes are clear even without one. The drama is the travel away from your quiet home in search of headache improvement with a specialist in America. And while tending to that you have been fulfilling duties of seeing disciples while staying at Jaya Gaurasundara’s house. And you are eager to head back “home” with a three month supply of meds and with plans to follow the doctor.

When I see him this morning I want to say that I feel a good rapport with him and then read this quote: “This was always the central motto and message of Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine: That one must not treat the disease, but the afflicted individuals; that though the doctor must be knowledgeable and expert about diseases, drugs, physiology and pharmacology, his ultimate concern must be for the individual himself . . . He must listen to the patient, listen beneath words; listen to his special, unspoken needs; address his dispositions, the patterns of his life; listen to what his illness, the migraine is “saying.” Only then will the path of healing become clear.” (*Migraine* by Oliver Sacks)

Man, you sure are a funny fella. Lead the *kirtana* in your dream. You split a finger nail. You are telling what it is like in soul in tangible self. Not just the perfect. Find time today to study and think of the wonderful verse of Krishna coming home covered with dust but they can see it is Him. Start by relishing the *lila* itself. Then your angle on it as a neophyte who can’t see Him but trusts that he is there. How long can I keep it up? Range onto related topics.

9:15 a.m.—Johns Hopkins Annex

Waiting room. Heavy traffic to get here. Heard of someone who was raped. Write for effect, for literature . . . for Krishna, my Lord in the cloud of dust made by cows’ hooves and covered by night in His pastimes with the *gopis*. *Naham prakashah* . . . His curtain of Yogamaya.

People waiting like us. Does my hand tremble? Self conscious in my *dhoti* and old face. In the elevator. Want to be treated with respect but Lord Caitanya says don’t desire that. Just give it to others. You go on chanting. In this age (Kali) *varnashrama* is gone, *yoga* is finished, *brahmacharya* finished, good government finished—all that is left is chanting Hare Krishna. Madhu in white sneakers. ML in black pants, woman enters with mink coat. Many secretaries each in their own cubby hole for the many doctors in this office. The secretaries occasionally speak to each other but mostly on the phone: “Your name? Your date of birth? And what kind of appointment do you need, sir?” The doctor has appointments through to April. The secretary says she can’t promise when a doctor will call back. The man gives his number but it doesn’t seem likely the doctor will call back.

I’m keeping cool. In that heavy traffic I stopped looking ahead at the jam and our progress, changing lanes, red stop lights on backs of cars . . . I closed eyes, looked down at my black gloved hands.

Careful, efficient, well dressed, but don’t press them or they can get nasty. As I said, I’m keeping cool. I’m writing this to Lord Krishna and Shrila Prabhupada and the devotees. I’m one of his followers and wish to cooperate.

Waiting to see Dr. Zomig, I mean Krohe. Dr. Monk. Mr. Sats Steve Guarino of little muscle mass and swollen prostrate and most of all—of chronic head pains. Treat the self. Don’t identify with your body. Easier said than done.

Fragile Steve. Doctor, please take care of me, heal me with the right-on med. Give me a socko drug. Look into my heart and say what’s wrong, how I can better serve my spiritual master.

This afternoon I have an interview. Very soon after we return to the house. One thing at a time. Now stay ready for the appointment. O Dr. K., your initial is the same as Krishna’s.

This time I’m overhearing the secretaries on the phones. Last time I didn’t notice it as much. I’m noticing their nervous energy and it makes me a bit nervous. They are efficient but not what I like to hear. They are helping the people who are calling but also holding them off.

Beyond Menopause; facts about Prozac—free pamphlets on the table. I’m not interested. I would like to get out of this body. But you can only do that by devotional service. *Param gati˙,* Krishna’s abode is reached by the pure devotees who have no material attachments.

Doctor ten minutes late. Last time it was fifteen. Should get called soon. “Thanks. Bye-bye . . . doctor.”

11:55 a.m.

Ekadashi lunch. My head is filled with the names of different brands of medicines. Some of them I haven’t even learned yet. He’s giving me medicines I haven’t taken before and so I’ll have to see if they work. He says the next three or four weeks are crucial for me to see if I’ll actually change from the daily headache syndrome. Madhu suggested that when I go back to Ireland I take it easy, and not become performance oriented even with writing and painting. He said maybe I should sleep more and just pay attention to the healing. I suppose he’s right. The doctor said, however, to be realistic. Even if I improve thirty per cent that would be a gain. He said he didn’t want to be Pollyanna. But if I am going to give this new regimen a full chance then I shouldn’t add too much stress to it of hard work, minimizing sleep and doing as much as I can in a passion.

3:05 p.m.

*Haribol*. Interview done. I looked into the camera and said I firmly believe that Shrila Prabhupada wanted his disciples to become spiritual masters. Then we talked some more. By the inscrutable will of God these schisms happen. He said he doesn’t hate the various schism members but tries to love them all. You can love your mother who is not even a devotee of Vaishnavisam, so why can’t you love the Vaishnavas in the various sects? Yes, but what about discrimination? What about the GBC?

He asked me where do we go from here? I didn’t have the answers to the problems. I go apart and recoup. He hoped he didn’t give me a headache. We parted. I’m now in my room sorting out belongings into the cabin luggage and the check-in luggage and also things that I’ll need in the airplane seat. Trying to remember what pills to take and when. Go back and take it easy and break the cycle of headache-pill. How? By different kinds of pills, such as preventatives. Try to take in more calories.

Hare Krishna nothing much to say. Just want to get through. I’m not a great talker or preacher. I had ambitions to be a big guru. I accepted it, the high seat with all non-guru Godbrothers at my feet. The Zonal *Acharya* for New York, New England, part of Pennsylvania, Ireland, the Caribbean, Vancouver . . . Grand, magnificent. I couldn’t remember much when he asked me. History. Stupid mistakes.

4:10 p.m.

The mouse has already entered the mustard. You have so many medications and plans to make your body well. You are trying to increase your calorie intake, especially protein and starch, as in bread and rice and pasta. But do you think you can live forever in this body?

No, of course not. But I want to live a little more to write better books with better illustrations.

Don’t dream like that woman who says Shrila Prabhupada’s books and SDG’s books will soon be on the best seller list of the *New York Times*, and Govinda’s restaurants will be more numerous and populated than McDonalds, Congress men will vote for Krishna consciousness—she’s just dreaming.

Then what is my reality? I just went out to get a *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* from the shelf and ran into two disciples whom I haven’t seen in a long time. Then Madhava dasa came in the front door and I ran away, back in here before he could see me or talk with me. I could have lingered and been with him, but I didn’t.

4:34 p.m.

If you say you “see” or fully believe that Krishna is present in the cloud (of dust from cow’s hooves, dust of my misconceptions) then you are bluffing. You can’t assert that blind confidence as your own. You could say we ought to, or wouldn’t it be nice. I want to talk on the theme of the *tama* covering Krishna. Many levels to it: when they see the cows’ dust they *know* here comes Krishna. The night hides the *lila* of Krishna and the *gopis*. That means scholars (mundane or impersonal) can’t see Them. It’s Their play and V®ndå’s arrangement. Sometimes Radha dresses all in white and sometimes all in dark so others will not see Her when She goes to meet Krishna. That’s another level.

And then the Yogamaya curtain and the bright impenetrable curtain of the *brahma*-*jyoti*.

When we can’t see Krishna we still trust He is present and that absense-apparent is a kind of presence. Faith. In guru. Trust He is present.

Don’t do word jugglery.

Believe in Him.

6:10 p.m.

Good night. Hope Radhika dasi will be quiet, I’ve got my Quiet Please earplugs and I’m tired. Will take Naratriptim**.** Oh boy, you’ve got latest state of art meds from top flight hospital. You are a classy beggar. Now let’s see if you can knock out headaches. Not if Krishna doesn’t want. In search of relief. Meeting with disciples. You’ve gotta be kidding. Chant Hare Krishna. I’m okay, how are you?

February 27

Midnight

Same pattern, slept two hours and then awake rest of the night and frequently urinating. So what? I was able to think clearly and made various notes with the dream tape recorder. But I’ll need to have strength for the lectures. Now chant some rounds and hope for more rest later. I do desire to deliver that lecture, *Seeing Krishna in the Cloud*. I think that can be the title of this volume. It’s either that or *The Ghost Has Already Entered the Mustard*—which I don’t want. One might read this volume of EJW and say, “Your theme is not seeing Krishna in the cloud. You were mostly caught up with going to see Dr. Krohe and desiring to return to Ireland with your meds and your peaceful life there.” Well, maybe. But I do like this Cc. Verse, (*Antya* 1.188) and one could say that despite all these Baltimore adventures and the distractions of travel, I do aspire to see Krishna in it. I don’t claim I actually feel His presence—yet I want to say that even my self-awareness, and even the feeling of absence of Lord Krishna —all states are Krishna a except that something is covering our vision of Him. Word jugglery? No, it’s shastric vision. Putting it as my title is a way to put it into my life more. No one can stop me.

Mathuresa Attacks My Writing, But I Defend It To Myself

I want to give a paint touch-up of a rake or broom I had. I am doing it to imitate someone else. I go to a place and I see a broom outside. I touch it. The owner came out—a devotee. He was independent. He says to me, “Don’t use nothing here.” I go away and scream back, “Well, was anything harmed or stretched by *my* using what you had?” I am thinking that I have actually done him good and that he shouldn’t complain. He says back something. Then Mathuresa he comes running out. He grabs me by the neck. He starts saying in writing in a kind of verse form or prose something he has written, all blaspheming my writing. I try not to listen. He says, “This is the one I’ve been waiting to get hold of. For so many years he wrote so much garbage.” I say I didn’t really listen, but it is like saying whatever I wrote was self-indulgent and stupid, had no form, and actually, I had no talent. I guess the implication is that I just use my position to print whatever I write. It is all garbage. But as he said that I am thinking to myself, “This isn’t true. I’ve always liked my writing and there’s good stuff in it. Don’t listen to him.” Finally after a while—he doesn’t get really too bad, it doesn’t go on too long—he finally stops and drops me and that was it.

5:25 a.m.

Keep the new regimen. Don’t break it. If you do, you have to confess to the Doctor when you phone him. May I get through the return journey with no mishap. M. says I must face the fact that I’m not the typical *sannyasi* any more, not a macho traveler-preacher who do or die gives the lecture. I live in Wicklow and write and read and paint. Occasionally I come out. May they be sympathetic and accept me this way. I will also accept myself as such.

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. In a second class today they will probably ask me what I think of Y2K (Yes2K®ß∫a). I’m in a mood to listen to M. guide me through. But I have to speak my own too, not always fearing and careful that it be the right public statement. Stock up on grains, get a water filter, heating independent of electricity. Chant Hare Krishna. I should tell them how I feel. I’m not a perfect judge of time and circumstances. I can’t read the future. Don’t disappoint them. Tell them the basics.

2:50 p.m.

Sorry I didn’t write much today, Prabhu. Gave it all in the disciples’ meetings.

3:25 p.m.

Too many letters and too tired of communicating in that way? Did I satisfy them? Looking out at the group, trying my best. We’re in it together. Can you speak from a heart, conviction? Are they trapping me into something illusory? I am their guru. They ask, “What are your favorite things?” Do you chastise your disciples? What attitude in your disciples do you consider offensive? Look out at them, they look back at you. Do you have some favorites among them? O boy. Don’t be unkind to any of them. The good-looking ones, the foolish ones, the heavy fellow in the back who takes the point further than I do with a stronger stand in favor of Krishna consciousness *uber alles*. The ladies. The baby boy who makes noise.

Be grateful. What privileges. People volunteer to proofread your books and edit and print and pay for them and sell them and read them. *Haribol*.

5:25 p.m.

I said things that weren’t perfect.

A gray-haired Godbrother was present. I spoke over my head (over my realizations). I got a pile. I ate. I . . . am writing here splayed out and hope to take rest and sleep soon. Did my duty. I’m afraid to die, to be killed or mistreated. I request safe passage home. “You have a right to be pain free.” Well, I’m putting in my application. Can’t remember or concentrate so well right now. I milked the theme of finding Krishna in the cloud, as if I am into it. He is here, He is here, He is here. Even when you feel His absence. You insist with confidence, He is here. He is within the cloud. I finally told them they have to practice it, it eludes verbiage. Trying to be the mystic.

Shri Krishna Caitanya. He will sort out the luggage. Bring it all back and go through the green channel with fingers crossed. To our waiting, aging van, to the narrow roads of Ireland, back towards Wicklow and the quiet life. With “tons” of mail to answer. In and out fast, we hope, so our enemies don’t know. Every Day, Just Write **[No Italics**], I told them is the book for the rest of my life. I admitted it, it might be hard for them to read—“Like freshman in the beginning of the semester”—the professor’s assignment—read the travel book and EJW volumes 1–3.

Happy. Affectionate. We all try.

February 28

2:46 a.m.

Here until noon, then drive four hours to NYC, wait and get the plane. Maybe answer some mail en route. Pill man. Dreamt of TKG in Dallas and me there. He says the temple is five million dollars in debt. Lots of violence. Someone speaks against in an absolute sense. I say, “But who killed thousands on the battlefield of Kurukshetra?” TKG pats me on the back. I have no privacy there, even in the bathroom.

Krishna poems, when did you last write your own? When I was home, on the bedroom floor. Scrutinize your soul. I want to leave yesterday’s talking behind and not chew on what I said and think it wasn’t good or was great. Live now, with Krishna. Quick-whispered rounds before anyone is awake. To gain weight, I drank eight ounces of high calorie “Ensure” at midnight. Sits in my stomach a little noticeably. Pill rack. Hat off.

Ensure your liquid diet will be *prasadam*. Someone wrote to me that he tried “free-writing” first thing in the morning for two weeks but it turned into mayic gibberish so now he just gets up and chants his rounds and feels much better. Wanted to know how to write that way for Krishna. I gave out tired mottoes and repeats yesterday and new things influenced by new age. I am changing, you don’t know me. You must write me letters I said and then said actually if you don’t like to you don’t have to. “Haryashva never writes to me, but I love him and he loves me.”

10:12 a.m.

You have a right to be painfree but not pen free. Go to Inisfree and free-write in the cottage. Be happy and tough for your Shrila Prabhupada. Blast the demons, the demons of doubt and fault-finding. Find love in yourself for others. Someone told me his mother is seventy-eight years old and is not afraid of death. She believes God will take care of her. Someone else said his mother is eighty-eight years old and lives alone. Someone else said, “How do you feel about being reborn into this world?” I said I’m afraid of it. Not *very* afraid, because I’m not so conscious of it. I *say*, and it’s true—I also dream of it—fearful, I don’t want to suffer again in the mother’s womb, in infancy and in the toxic atmosphere of increased Kali-yuga tempo. Who would want it? And yet we don’t work single-mindedly to free ourselves from birth and death. Krishna consciousness is the best process to do it in, but am I really trying? I take immediate comforts and cushions, maybe at the cost of my eternal welfare. SK wrote in *The Gospel Of Suffering*, how the pains of this world are nothing compared to the joys of eternal life. So we should sacrifice foolish sense gratification and suffer to please God (*tapo divyaµ)*.

That’s right, you are saying it. That’s the perfect teaching. Now tell us why you are not up to it. Tell us who you are. Tell us who Krishna is. Make it clever and interesting.

10:50 a.m.

People expect me to be good and discharge my duties in Krishna consciousness. I don’t have marital or family duties or financial duties. My duty is to keep *sannyasa* vows and function as a spiritual master for disciples. That means I must keep the duties as a disciple of Shrila Prabhupada.

So many different faces and lives of the devotees gathered here yesterday. They come back to me, visions of faces. I also kept having a vision, when I closed my eyes during *japa*, of a window through which I saw a tree with leafy, waving branches. It’s similar to what I see through the skylight in my Wicklow room although not necessarily the exact place. It’s a vision of freedom and beauty and peace.

Krishna, I’d like the vision of Lalita-madhava.

I’d like to write in the car en route, but it may be too bumpy. Three or four hours. Try to sleep through some of it. But never “kill” time. It’s precious. Even the strain and bothersome car ride or queue wait or delay. Each moment is some kind of test or opportunity to see Krishna or to fail. See Him within the cloud. Even in His non-presence, in a non-meeting. *(Adarshanam marma-hatam karotu va*).

11:50 a.m.

It’s a long way to go to reach pure love of God. It’s much easier to travel on land to NYC and fly in jet over the Atlantic to Ireland. The spirit can move very quickly but you need to surrender your will to Krishna. How to act. They praise you or some defame you and most people don’t know you at all. Non-special, unique. All tiny sparks playing in the fire of Krishna. Try to say it right and in a human and appealing way. The gamut of people, gentle, macho, Indian, American, gathered here yesterday. Someone called it my fan club.

Was there any attempt by the GBC to come to terms with or understand what happened with Harikesha Prabhu?

Am I afraid Mr. V. may show at the airport and kill me?

Krishna please protect me from falldown. ISKCON in pieces like Humpty Dumpty. Go forward into the year 2000 and beyond as we are. Movement all over the world, no one person can comprehend it—it exists so differently in different places. I know only a little of myself. Write from the patch of land you live in. Go into his books. See Krishna there.

12:25 p.m.

Fragile Jo got into the car. Never know . . . He hope it don’t snow. Fragile are the hopes and bones. Gee, I’m scared and M. protected. Where’s your compassion, where’s your rhyme? Give me a bottle of Krishna on time. Let me live to reach the goal, loving service unto the master.

1:25 p.m.

Highway, foggy, trees all bare in America, three lanes one way, three lanes the other. Cars have headlights on it’s so dark. I wonder how Dr. K. is doing? And Krishna, where is He with Balarama and the boys? And where is my Swami? Maryland State. Use up the ink. Don’t draw a monster. Hare Krishna. *Smartavya˙ satatam vishnur/ vismartavyo na jatucit*. Pretty girls are plenty, do you want one? Maybe too late in this life. But you could come again into the world, perhaps as a woman if you think they are so good.

Gray-haired Madhu, blonde-haired Trivikrama with braided sikha. And me. In Maryland moving along. New York a hundred and forty-seven miles ahead. Don’t kill time but neither can I spend it in some energetic conversation or concentrated, creative splurge.

He got to take care of himself. Best to remember the Lord. Stay fixed on the cloud of your own inability to know and be with Him—have faith He’s within it. Your adopted vision. If the fool would persist in this . . .

One hundred pages in overnight writing you cannot do. Each stop of the way. This journey is the equivalent of taxis from Vrindavan to Delhi and eight hours to London. But we wouldn’t have such a good driver. Bare, bare trees all deciduous on both sides of the road. Welcome to Delaware. No danger of snowfall today, it’s quite warm. Think of Krishna

2:10 p.m.

New Jersey turnpike. A big lot with plenty of trucks all marked G.O.D. I’d seen that before and thought it was some Christian message. But now I see under G.O.D., “Guaranteed Overnight Delivery.” They want you to think they are omnipotent, all-knowing and their will can’t be stopped. But an act of God, like snow storm, earthquake, could certainly nullify G.O.D’s guarantee. Puffed-up rascals. Fragile Joe in the back seat observes it. He’s been looking down at *Bhagavad-gita*, Seventh Chapter and then looking up at the road. Lord Krishna says, “I am the original fragrance of the earth, and I am the heat in fire. I am the life of all that lives, and I am the penance of all ascetics.” He’s the essential quality in each and every thing.

New York one hundred miles. It’s darker, heavy rain. A huge trailer trunk honks for us to get out of the fast lane. Only two lanes in each direction.

3 p.m.

Turnpike. M. doing *pranayama*, Trivikrama exercises his wrists, me sitting up, lying down, sitting up. All cars with headlights on, road a wet blur. You could play with words but everything should head directly to hearing and chanting and serving the Supreme. Taking shelter, centering yourself.

You could not change yourself. Nor could medicine purify your soul, except the medicine of *hari-nama*. *(Bhavo shcat cotramano varamat)*. Keep steady, through traffic. Next exit nine miles. Speed limit 65. Big steel towers holding cables, cross the road. Where’s Goloka in New Jersey? In your heart if you are pure. He is in all the physical elements and in every being. The life of all the lives. Real God. Hare Krishna.

3:25 p.m.

We’re not making great time. Approaching Goethel’s Bridge and Staten Island. Then the Verazano Bridge. Devotees in Ireland don’t know about this. Me and Tottenville. That’s a previous life. Oh, rainy day. Cut through S.I. Carry the traffic over the bridge. Toll booths. “We’ll be there in plenty of time,” says M. I say, “We’re doing all right?” But it’s not as fast as he predicted. S.I.C. C. *Staten Island Advance*. County Richmond. Krishna, Krishna don’t go back. Stay on track of KC. We just hit a traffic jam, all four lanes in one direction. Don’t get stressed now, Stevie. But you can say, “I told you so.”

I’m starting to worry we might be late, if this traffic jam goes all the way to JFK it could take hours. The worst—you miss your plane and spend twenty-four hours in NYC, either in an airport hotel or back to the nearest devotee’s house, probably a couple of hours from the airport.

3:50 p.m.

Welcome to Brooklyn Guillijano [research spelling] Mayor. The traffic can be heavy on the beltway. “But we’ve got plenty of time,” says Madhu. Seagulls. The water. Benches face the water. Not many people out in this weather. But plenty of cars.

5:56 p.m.

At Departure Gate for Aer Lingus flight. We arrived at 4:30 p.m., got our boarding cards and then went and sat in Trivikrama’s car. I managed to use the urine bottle so that’s a relief, for a while. The weather is warmish and raining. It was exciting, hectic, very crowded, walking from the Aer Lingus place to the parking lot and back. People of all races and nationalities mingling at a passionate pace. I lay down in the back seat, M. and T. sitting in front. The windows fogged over and they drew pictures and graffiti on the inside windshield. They kept mostly quiet on my account. I can’t say that I slept but I did relax my bones, head and neck. A strip of Flaxseed pillow over the eyes. Adventures of a mole. Hurry up and wait.

My hand luggage was given a special random check by the security man, in high tech style. He placed it on a steel table and turned on a machine. Watched the machine. It took several minutes. I asked M. how come he wasn’t checked like that. He said, “I look like an honest guy.” Maybe he knew I was a guru, suspicious looking type. I’m sitting facing the security machines and haven’t seen anyone special-checked on that machine since he did me.

The ring-buzz sound when you walk through the security arch. Boarding soon.

6:13 p.m.

On board. Distracted by conversations of people around us. We’re all packed in so closely. Music too. So bare up, lad, count your blessings. I’m connected with the pure devotee. I can think of Krishna at the time of death by turning the *maha-mantra* as I’ve done every day since I began in 1966 under the direct guidance of His Divine Grace. Pray that he please keep me in his care despite my nonsense wrangling.

Oh boy, back to the land where I paint in the art room, where Madhu plays the melodeon. Back to I hope a new chance to read my Swami’s books a few times daily, blessed life. And I try and try even though I fail—I try to chant.

Krishna kindly led us through a protected week. Ticket agent at Aer Lingus said, “You guys didn’t stay long, did you? I saw you come through, was it about a week ago?” His co-workers said, “You remembered?” He said, “How could you miss them?” Feeling self-conscious in my *dhoti*, I was relieved that the crowd at JFK is so international, mixed all styles of clothes, hats, shoes, coiffeurs and colors and skins are in evidence.

Yes, Krishna Krishna is the sweet name we chant. His holy names in Navadvipa or Italy or San Fran—blessed are they who chant them loud for others to hear and blessed are they who chant them simply and quietly with devotion in their *bhajan-kutir*.

Socializing, merry atmosphere among the passengers, chatting, a group of rather young men and women. Bell peals of laughter, light talk and laughter. I look from pretty face to pretty face and have to catch myself. Lest you think the world is a lovely place where no one grows old or dies or sorrows. Music now “Maggie”—when you and I were young, Maggie.

Frail Jo is doing all right for now, thanks to Dr. K.’s stuff (Prednisone)? Or is it just the way Krishna wants to treat him? Therese wanted to be a toy ball for the child Jesus to play with.

Pretty laughter soon turns witch-like. Remember being a little kid and fearing the grown-ups when they got like that, glassy-eyed from their drinks and even your mommy became a stranger or strange. Mam, let’s go home, I want to go home. Not yet Stevie, go play with your cousins. Went into the bedroom where all the guests’ clothes were piled on the bed.

Will you dance Hare Krishna soon?

I am now.

He’s a devotee and dancing in his heart, his words are suffused with sincere shastric remarks. Wants to follow the self routine with Krishna in his house. Use time for creative endeavors.

So the plane may take off a little late. I’m chanting always. No, you don’t. You chant only sometimes your sixteen whispered and mechanical and pretty slower than average recommended. God is present in sound form when the chanter is pure and submissive. Outer chanting is not the same. It’s offensive or shadow. That’s where I dwell. Man, I would like . . .

March 1

11:45 p.m.

11:45 p.m. NYC time means about 5 a.m. Irish time. So it’s Gaura-Purnima day. No big observance for us. Chant rounds silently in the darkened plane cabin. Pray to hear with inner eye, to search Shri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Gaura-candra, who along with Lord Nityananda and the other members of the Panca-tattva, distributed freely the holy names of God. You say it and mean it. We will observe the occasion with fasting but I’ll eat at lunchtime for health reasons. Body and health conscious, trying to overcome the chronic pain syndrome.

Observe Gaura-Purnima by arriving in Ireland in hopeful mood, to return to your regular activities and improve them. I hope my consciousness is improved. Madhu will return to his music and me to the at-home writing and reading and painting routine. We’re grateful and eager.

Black outside. They are serving a light snack so that means one hour before landing. Engines roar. Film is over. “Tea or coffee?” Last night they said, “Chicken or beef?” I say chant and hear.

Then the burning eyes from almost no sleep all night and barging across time zones, the body clock confused how to work. The soul knows its work but the modes don’t cooperate. A Goswami controls the senses. Tells them what to do.

We hear the sound of a dog barking from his cage in the cargo hold.

10:50 a.m.

Return to the house and the routine. Everything is as we left it. I begin the Shrila Prabhupada worship, and again the self-punishing *aparadha* of listening to his lecture with a critical ear. That’s suffering. What to do? You are sore in spirit. Pray to God and guru for forgiveness. There are reasons it occurs, the familiarity, the aches over time, the need for hearing something “new”. Something . . . wrong in me that I cannot love always his voice and presentation just as I’ve heard it all these decades. So I return to this too.

Now rediscover each habit and routine in the house. Back. Home. Do what you do. The body clock is confused, like those dogs whining and barking on their cages in the airplane. We don’t understand why we passed a sleepless night and went five hours ahead. Digestion and sleep are confused. Emotions are irritable.

12:55 p.m.

Back. Romantic ideas of it while away. The reality is different. But it’s sweet peace. You live alone. Caitanya-candro asked me if I’d paint this afternoon. My first day back. I say, “I don’t know. I haven’t been hit with jet lag yet.” But you were up all night sitting in the airplane seat. Too many books to read. Separate Deity necklaces, earrings and Radharani’s *candrikas* into compartments of new boxes I got in the U.S.A.

Just sit, heavy after lunch. You are not supposed to sleep. Let me go outside and look around at the flowers and treelets.

2:13 p.m.

Would you like to go down to the art-room? My spirit would like to, but the body is hesitant. I might not be able to carry through. Don’t tell on him. We work free. Caitanya turned the water heater on and walked away. I happened to overhear it boiling furiously. Welcome back. Slow, click-clock of the tourister clock. Sheaffer Prelude box. Sounds and zounds and wounds. You make sense, man, make sense and then I’ll let you out. My head isn’t all clear but I could go down and try.

From thirty thousand feet high in the sky at mid Atlantic I saw below white and red lights flashing. Hare Krishna mantras from my lips.

3:50 p.m.

Baker’s dozen. Krishna, I wrote the word in black with black and white painted streams coming down diagonally right to left side. Is that clear? The man was brown, burly, short-legged, whites of eyes and black pupils. Some “Gaura-Nitai” paintings of people dancing. All in all a flurry of action. Then up here to read the European Communications Bulletin of worrying developments by the anti-cult movements in Europe. Then put it aside.

I may have to be born next life thrust into unavoidable strife from all sides. Keep fighting, keep working, keep communicating. Send your donations. They have to convince the governments we are not dangerous. We are academic and we are open to dialogue. Please don’t brand us unfairly. Hare K®ß∫a action committee.

Hare Krishna dasi cooked for me and sent a note with it that she needed the pots back immediately—“I have no other pots and need to cook for Gaura-Nitai.”

Krishna conics, conocs, and comics. The man said he publishes his notebooks and that they are not diaries, a genre he dislikes, says it is boringly written down at the end of the day. He writes when and what, throughout the day? I ordered his book to see.

Throughout the day. Mail call! Twenty some packs have just arrived. Go through them at your risk. Put on your mask whereby you answer them from behind the confessor’s screen with leer or grin or drooping brow. I thought I was free and now this.

Kris kringle. Coke and Pepsi vying. The winner is me and God. I go with Him. Avoid the meds or you’ll just get more headaches he said. Easier said . . .

4:12 p.m.

Krishna Krishna. Peek at a letter. Sit it out waiting for a 4:30 snack. Brothers old as me retire from GBC also with illnesses like migraine—“All I can do is sit in a dark room.” Another commented how different Shrila Prabhupada was, on a different level of existence, fighting and leading into advanced old age. We should be humble, said the commentator, about our limits in comparison to Shrila Prabhupåda.

A brother said of me I am loyal to Shrila Prabhupada. But . . . well I am. I don’t want another guru. But I suffer from mosquitoes. Oh, one guru of my life, through whom all other gurus come, please shelter me. Please enlighten me how to regularly hear from you and chant Hare Krishna for your pleasure.

One day back. I was quick to paint. I have not chanted on beads since I’ve returned or opened one of my spiritual master’s books. I did resume the Shrila Prabhupada *puja* and heard him lecturing. Tomorrow hope to ease into quality reading. And writing. What is this? He draws a feinted blow. Notebooks, not diaries. Oh, what’s wrong with diaries too? Anything can come along.

6:10 p.m.

Another meaning to seeing Krishna in the cloud is that I may have to face some pain. Dr. K. has diagnosed me as Chronic Rebound Headache Syndrome. He has given me preventative meds to take at night every day. But when pain comes I am allowed to take Zomig only twice a week and Ultram twice a week. He said if I take more than that I’ll be back to square one. Rebound. For the time being I am carried high by the Predisone and this I didn’t have a headache during the whole travel ordeal from Baltimore to Wicklow. I even painted on my return day and I’m writing this on a type-writer. Not limping to bed with pain I hope will go down over night.

In three days no more Predisone. Then the crunch begins. It’s something to look forward to in one sense, an experiment. When pain comes and you’ve used up your quota, you can see Krishna in the clouds.

Hunky-dory, looking at my contribution in *Discovering Our Voices*. We are all imperfect. The Mix, I call it, material and spiritual. Sometimes my sentence doesn’t make sense, it’s just a bridge, “Keep the hand moving,” until I reach the next logical or musical connection. Duh . . . Broods on the stand. Waits for the next inspiration. But then why put them in your books? They should all be washed out and only the best remain. The holy truth, the holy Alan, holy Jack, holy type-writer. The holiest holy names. The fur and leather ranch at Staten Island Mall (saw that on a billboard yesterday as we came over the Goethal’s Bridge). And the Staten Island Hotel. Enough, enough. I want to go down chanting Hare Krishna and not piping hot square toes foolish sentences just because they came out that way. Don’t stick a cigar in my mouth after I’m dead as a fitting joke. Treat me with respect.

You say, “Why treat you with respect? You are always joking around. We will treat you in kind.” Woman with big behind, wearing tight Levis. Walking ahead of us through the green channel, the red Levis tag signifies what? Through the blue channel you can’t go. Wait and wait and wait for the luggage to come off carousel number four. A white man with dreadlocks calmly bouncing his baby boy in his arms. The dogs in their cages howling. Everyone waiting as the luggage circulates and I was chanting silent Hare Krishna mantras, they were burbling off my lips, my lips slightly moving. I couldn’t do it all the time but nice to do it at all. The sixteen rounds over night were not so good . . .

At 5 p.m. we gathered and read aloud for the advent of Shri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the verses only of the chapter. He caused the holy names to appear and then He appeared on the evening of the full moon during a lunar eclipse when everyone was chanting. Advaita Acharya and Haridasa Thakura were laughing and dancing but no one knew the cause. They knew. The Lord was appearing in Navadvipa. Gaura Hari. Hare Krishna, they called him Gaura Hari because He chanted or when He was a baby he caused others to chant. Read of the auspicious appearance of He who would deliver us in Kali-yuga by giving out the simple and sublime means to understand God and surrender to Him. Kali is an ocean of vices but there is one good saving quality that makes it an auspicious time. Chant the Hare Krishna mantra and be free. But people think Hare Krishna folks are a bad cult. They misunderstand. We have to keep on with it anyway. The Mayor canceled the festival in Poland, the Krishna people protested. But nothing was done. Hare Krishna.

Now hope to take rest and get into your schedule tomorrow.

March 2

4:05 a.m.

Prove that guy wrong who said diaries are repetitive bores written at the end of the day. Or agree with him that everything goes into the work and call them notebooks or novels or poems. It seems just by moving to America and back it bonked my head and revived my good feelings towards hearing Shrila Prabhupada lecture on tape. This morning he was saying (London, 1973) that we simply have to utilize our energy in Krishna’s service and then we will become His devotee. He said Arjuna was not chanting on beads but he satisfied Krishna by fighting. The Lord is Hrshikesha, He gives us the energy, and so we should use our intelligence and produce something for Krishna’s service. This sounded very dynamic to me. No one preaches like Shrila Prabhupada on that point, encouraging us—encouraging me—to write and paint and dedicate it to him. He breaks the stereotypes of what a Vaishnava can do to please the Lord.

It’s pleasing to return to the Deity worship of Radha-Govinda. How sweet and attractive They are, and to bathe and dress Them while hearing the sublime poem, *Shri Hamsadutta*, is nectar for my heart. Rupa Gosvami, the best among poets. Hear the wonderful images and feelings . . .

Didn’t get up at midnight. M. is encouraging me not to push myself, get enough sleep. I heard the comforting sound of the rain on the skylight and roof. So I stayed where I was under the covers and kept dreaming and resting until about 1:15 a.m.

Caught With Illegal Drugs—

And Music At The Time Of My Death

[Dream missing—tape blank for that section.]

On waking it seems to me that the “illegal drugs” might be my way of dreaming about rebound drug syndrome.

Afraid Of Bears And Befriending Them

I have a dream with a lot of considerations about human beings who have a relationship with big bears. There are a few human beings in the woods who are able to be friendly with the bears and the bears come around and sit at the fire and so forth and then go away. At least occasionally they come and they are devotees who are human beings who are afraid of the bears and move around when they come. And then some people become friendly with the bears and on some occasions some are mauled and killed. So all these varieties come in my dreams. Basically they are almost afraid of the bears and yet some people think that we should try to overcome that fear and befriend the bears.

On waking I ask myself whether the fear of the bears should be overcome or is it natural to want to run away from them?

4:20 a.m.

Writing exercise—he’s a man of music. They say Eric the musician was at war between his mind and body and a person like that seemed likely to die young. Other people live more peacefully in their bodies and you figure they will live into their eighties or nineties**.**

I don’t know. Were you there?

Long duration doesn’t count. Or it does if you use whatever you’ve got to serve Lord Krishna.

Eric was always searching for new sounds beyond the barrier, what he or no one else every expressed. Even during breaks in the concert, he’d go into the kitchen and keep practicing, searching. That’s called utilization of time. But for it to be *bhakti* you have to do it for the Lord. Harrying. People say why doesn’t he relax and have some easy fun?

Everybody’s got their trademark, a kind of limit. It’s an individual expression Krishna gives them. So they should use it in his service. What is His service? To praise Him and His pastimes. Tell people what Krishna says in *Bhagavad-gita*. He is sometimes harsh to the ears of worldly people. He says those who are not devotees are as bad as animals. Oh? Hog and pig and horse and shit.

I too am aching in mind against body. But I’m almost sixty and want to please God with paints and inks. I do loves ya.

Ya ya.

I am a yoo yoo boy who wants Krishna, but did many petty crimes.

My friend Bala is coming tomorrow on the way back from India. He’ll tell me of book sales there and I can tell him of my adventures with our Dr. K. Doctor told B. he had to lose twenty pounds right away and I’ll remind B. of the same.

Krishna, Krishna. “You are my favorite tenant,” said Louise Campeesi on the brick steps at the front of the house owned by her mother, Rose. Louise, we teased and mocked and satirized your family in our own Guarino clan. We didn’t like being your tenant and wanted to get out and go to Staten Island. That’s the truth. *Haribol*. I am not arguing with you but simply want to be seen as a devotee.

Hold on, no smokes, no illegal meds—for me that means no more than two Zomigs and two shots at Ultram—Then say, “Okay pain, this one is on me.” And go to bed and keep thinking Hari, Hari, when I get free I’ll make more poems and paint faces for you. Produce something and offer it to Krishna. Whatever devotion and power. And reach out to those who you love. “Because you did it onto the least of them, therefore I consider that you did it for me.” And doubting Thomas—“My Lord, my God—blessed are they.” It was sure good to be able to speak to them disciples. The dug it. Me, they like to hear from me and I’ll keep coming to be with them or they can come to Janmashtami at Inis Rath.

Now end the exercise before you bust a gut. It’s over.

4:50 a.m.

Welcome home words written on Bristol board drawing.

He said don’t push yourself, this is a crucial period for attempt to get off rebound. Yeah, but I have to live, you know.

I always draw people dancing or walking somewhere, not fornicating; sleep and eat is okay in moderation. No space left to write in on this one. Dive in to pray and they will like it say

cluster

who came first? It is Krishna. Clear idea is only in *bhagavata* of what is soul and God in heart. Admit KC is best but don’t be arrogant about it. Self-styled but a follower of Shrila Prabhupada be. Offer whatever you can to him.

5:15 a.m.

Back to the morning walk routine. It’s almost too warm today for my usual layers of clothes with the Parka on top. Dark, foggy like night still. It looks like the crocuses are not going to bloom. They’ve come up and they haven’t bloomed yet but their yellow buds are knocked over by rain. Maybe just one blossom. And the same with the snowdrops. I was thinking that if I had it to do over again it would be better that this whole topsoil area be used to garden vegetables. But vegetables aren’t as easy to grow as flowers, are they? Besides, Hare Krishna dasi wanted to plant a flower garden and she’s gone ahead and done it. So I should honor it. It produces esthetic pleasure and that’s a constant challenge so that you can “enjoy” it without being a sense gratifier. Let it rarefy your mind so you can face Krishna and His beautiful creation. And there are so many metaphors about life and death, nature is like the open book of the spiritual world. As for food, we’ll depend on the Lord to provide it one way or another from other sources.

So walk around, tingle, be. Chant Hare Krishna while you can.

7:20 a.m.

Stay awake after you eat write

in a hand that’s yours to say

KC things our DOV stinks I stink

Don’t publish the worst

Here comes the hearse where is

the pretty song and sonnet

I like Eric I can’t keep

words from forming into shapes and

then into faces and bodies and I

put *tilaka* on their foreheads.

I can’t stop loving and breathing and hating as

long as I live. I could hate the bad—

God I love. I’m angry, tired

contaminated. Please help me,

O previous *acharya*.

I waste in the region of doubt

I write “Home again poem again.”

When I was far away I daydreamed

of returning to sit on the floor and write

poems, now here I am and the wrist

hurts, the meaty little child-woman-man

hand grips the “Dr. Grip” pen and

I have nothing to say but

what I’ve heard

Krishna say

and no reason to say it

except my master says *speak*.

9:15 a.m.

The soul in the womb of his mother praised the Supreme Lord just before the time of his birth. Conditions for the embryo are painful. We tend to forget it or dismiss it. But a grown up human should hear from Vedic scriptures about the sufferings of birth, death, disease and old age—and try to overcome them. This is done by surrender to the Supreme Lord.

I think I’ll stick with the reading program I had before we left for America. *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* selected verses and purports for each chapter. Decide what you want to do and what you can do. Lethargy, sleepy-eyed. The rain in tones its melody softly on the roof. I kept the window open, it was so mild and too much heat pouring from the radiator.

Krishna, Krishna dozing off. You can be a reader of the scriptures still.

9:55 a.m.

He’s praying to be liberated. He is the same in quality as the Supreme Lord, but the *jiva* is tiny. Thus he is covered by the Lord’s material nature. We may say the Lord puts the *jiva* into the suffering condition, but actually the *jiva* is the architect of his own misfortune. He insists on coming into matter when he desires to be the central enjoyer and to give up his position of servitorship to the Lord. The Supreme Person is always free of the material nature. He can release the soul from it also.

You are the boy who writes the book. You have to die, each one of you. In the meantime you want to live. But we should not live in such a way as to implicate ourselves in further birth and death. For example, we have to eat to survive and that’s not against religious codes. But we should not eat food taken by killing animals or food that is not first offered to God. Following *sadhana* practices we can live in this dangerous material world without incurring karma.

Read and discuss. She wrote me: “How can I not be affected by others opinions?” She wants a more self-sufficient attitude. I told her it will come with time as you experience that following others doesn’t improve your situation. Follow guru and Krishna but not anybody and everybody, especially those who can’t take time and care to know your disposition. Some say it’s best to make your severest critics your best friends and to follow their put-down version of you. This may be good behavior for a saint. I get crushed if I try to follow that and my enemies take away my joy.

It is March. I hear a tuneful bird out there. I can’t taste the exact progress of spring in Ireland, but at least I know it gets gradually less cold and the daylight begins earlier. You are home where you wanted to be and trying to live with incapacity. Hare Krishna Hare Krishna can be chanted silently in the mind as an additional method beyond your sixteen out loud rounds. One brother says he does it a half hour before his altar and it brings and wonderful state of soul.

2:25 p.m.

The child in the womb of his mother is grateful that he’s awakened to praying to the Supreme Lord. He wants to take advantage of the human form of life. Krishna wants to help each one of us. As soon as He sees we are serious to get out of material life, He sends us instructions through the guru, *shastra,* saints and to us directly in the heart. All this can happen by the inconceivable energy of God. Don’t disbelieve it like the atheists.

4:10 p.m.

Oh, it’s fun to paint, happy to classical uplifting music and Shrila Prabhupada singing *Jaya Vrindavana* and *Caranaravinda* and paint and mess and mix white with red and blue and yellow and whatever you do. And forget the horrors for a while. And touch base with transcendental reality by scratching in the key word or stamping a brow with *tilaka* of Vaishnava.

The animals are like people and the people some of them like elks or even a *ruru* transformed. Some are left deformed and anyway I can’t draw expert to make them beautiful. But striking poses do sometimes appear as if by chance. Krishna letting me have some fun if that’s what I want. But return to your serious desk.

4:20 p.m.

So I was painting. Madhu went to tell

Caitanya to only come in the morning to clean

up. Trying to keep him restricted but

he needs love and access too. I’ll

give when I can.

Be a giver. My liver is not hurt

My groin is not impotent, we

just hold it in for a higher purpose.

You mean *urdhva-reta*?

O God they were good to do

not wind up in any museum but

that’s not the point.

Mock on, Voltaire and Rousseau.

I’m in my master’s wake—he said

go ahead and produce for Krishna.

My army of men and sensual

mouthed man or woman with

a yellow joy elf on the shoulder.

Some words and you and I

some pills and when done no

pills, some life duration and then

none, giggles then sorrows. Pride

that something great happened through me

and reduction to nothingness.

I ask God to carry me

and me to carry Him.

April fool’s the rule. Serious or study. Rain tinkles my private business not to share with you. You can’t come in here and listen to it. But I can tell you I’m doing it and that may help. You can also tell me your equivalent.

He writes to so many people.

Scarred for life. Life itself doomed. In a pitcher. In the lake drowned. Please, don’t throw out those scary words and impressions to disturb people. I don’t mean to. I want to write an essay on *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*. That’s what this is—an appreciation of Shrila Prabhupada. Sounds like a boast.

We the undersigned hereby agree that we will toast the mortals and wish they may come to Krishna consciousness. Reach a wider audience if that’s the direction you are going in, said the writing teacher to Vdd. She’d like to.

Hitch up your hikers. We are going through. I’m glad to hear you all are well “and may be with us for a little longer.”

Devotee’s mom died crying, “O God, God,” in her last days. Relatives thought it only meant pain. Her son said it was good and they tried to understand that. He asked her to say Krishna but she didn’t know. Mom was half conscious then. When she died he came in ten minutes later, gave her *tulasi* and Ganges.

March 3

2:08 a.m.

Don’t see a pure devotee from a material point of view. “If you love me, then I’ll love you.” That was my original problem with approaching Shrila Prabhupada and it may have returned again. He personally pulled me through it. Don’t see him as an old man with defects, as a foreigner not aware of hip art and philosophy and music, don’t scorn his use of English or *anything* he does. I credit myself as loving him seriously from the beginning.

Well . . . *Nectar of Instruction* advises, “According to ordinary vision, such imperfections may seem prominent in the body of a pure devotee, but despite such seeming defects, the body of a pure devotee cannot be polluted.” (NOI 6) It’s like the Ganges which is filled with mud and bubbles during the rainy season. “Those who are advanced in spiritual understanding will bathe in the Ganges without considering the condition of the water.”

I have to be on guard against the *aparadhas*. In my “natural” (unguarded, non-alert) state of mind I can easily fall into *aparadha*. Some active agent within me is working against pure devotional service. It’s like the anti-cult movement making propaganda against ISKCON.

Besides that, Shrila Prabhupada is free from material motives. He had his own style. Had is own particular and very demanding mission. You see it from afar and cannot truely comprehend. You see mostly that *you* would like to be treated kindly and respected. And certain things about the pure devotee you like better than others. But you don’t know his heart, the pressures on him,and his way to fulfill the desires of his eternal spiritual master.

The pure devotee is liberated. That’s a dogmatic statement. But then, “Krishna is God,” is also dogma. These statements must be accepted from shastra. *Yasya deve para bhaktir yatha deve tatha gurau*—to one who has unflinching faith in guru and Krishna, the truths of the *Vedas* are revealed. Which comes first, faith in guru- Krishna or knowledge of *shastra*? They go together. I heard and saw Swamiji and read his *Shrimad-Bhagavatam*. Both worked.

“No one should criticize the bodily defects of a pure devotee.” Or his so-called defects in speech delivery, use of logic, harshness, mistakes his disciples make, his choice of leaders, his emphasis on pushing for preaching results. “If there are such defects, they should be overlooked. What should be taken into account is the spiritual master’s main business, which is devotional service, pure service to the Supreme Lord.” Don’t consider him an ordinary human being. The fact that his life is totally dedicated to spreading and maintaining Krishna consciousness all over the world makes him faultless. In his purport to Nectar of Instruction number 6, Shrila Prabhupada defends his American Goswamis against similar charges of defects according to birth or manner. But he also warns us not to be proud or envious now that we have been given a Goswami title.

An offense at the lotus feet of a Vaishnava is very serious. Lord Caitanya called it *hati-mati*, the mad elephant offense. “One should therefore avoid observing a pure devotee externally, but should try to see the internal features and understand how he is engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord.”

Shrila Prabhupada also frankly mentions how his Godbrothers criticize him in every respect. One may read this and think Shrila Prabhupada was being proud or self-serving in his purport. But don’t do that. See it as necessary, as a protection for his followers and as a warning to them of where future attacks would come from.

Trying To Defend The Ethnic Lawyer

There is a kind of story of a legal case. Something trivial has to be picked up and thrown away. I am hired to do it. In the country—they arrest the lawyers. This one lawyer is arrested for a serious charge and is looking for someone to help him. Telepathically this other man in another part of the city knows that it is him who has to defend him. This lawyer has been a champion of underdogs for many years, along with ethnics, a pioneer lawyer who helps the people against the big, bad capitalists and gangsters. The lawyer and his friend, they try to work to help slow the case but it has already gone to the federal government. They have support and the lawyer explains that he had overthrow the federals. It would take twenty years to overthrow them, but they had to do it soon. We see him drafting copies and talking about a strategy. I am in the dream myself trying to make it successful in that he is cleared.

4:35 a.m.

I never know if and when I shall be able to write again but I just attempt it. Enhance it. With topics of worthiness. As we wish to see Sri Krishna within the cloud, so I want to see my spiritual master, Shrila Prabhupada, and be confident of his presence within the cloud of my present misunderstandings. You don’t qualify to know the inner meaning of your Guru Maharaja, yet you are confident of it. We pray in the *gayatri* mantra, *aim gurudevaya vidmahe*, let me meditate upon my spiritual master. To know more how he is dear to you, your eternal protector, the guide for the whole world. I must go forth blindly for the time being, and led by the light of the *shastras*.

I have to write in any case. Wake up during night dream, look at the clock red digits, can’t even read them . . . go back to sleep but can not. And did you try to increase your calorie intake by taking an eight ounce can of Ensure and were you able to digest it? Is all this beating around the bush to one cry you make? Are you completely unattached to trying to enjoy with women? Is there something about you, which you’ve known, would disappoint your followers and bring glee to the anti-parties?

O aunty, please relieve me of distress. Tell me the Lord of the Yadus, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, will not abandon little me. Surely He has some service in mind for each of us. I have to go through more trial and ordeal. I heard the rain on the skylight and they know already I like it. I’ve lost my privacy.

You man, I mean you, are you afraid to get a headache? Are you going to be brave enough to go out and preach again into the international scene in this last year before the predicted crash of civilization? You’ve got your stock your rice and *dal* in the white cloud mansion. You are the pavilion saint of your own nothingness. Don’t look again at your paintings of yesterday or they may fade away like Cinderella’s horse and carriage and gold-slipper heaven.

You are an undigested corpuscle.Nitrate no more. Give nourishment to the cells of your body and take it the easy way, will you? Give us straight Krishna consciousness, please. We didn’t come to you for anything except to hear you tell some incidents and faithfully related instructions of His Divine Grace.

He’s holding you up all these years. Without his grace you’d be lost again, wild beast. Hare Krishna.

I know that. He’s the one.

O boy, Ornette in 1960. I was there too in a thin tie and four buttoned suit. You fool, you April mule. Give us Krishna.

Here—Hare Krishna Hare Krishna I write on your page and my wall mural. I’ll chant. We can’t expect the whole world to love us devotees. It’s very unlikely. She asked how can we trick them into accepting that the slaughterhouses are closed. I said it can’t be done by a trick, the people have to want it just as they have come to want No Smoking zones in the airplanes, stores and houses. It has to come from the people.

Oh, moan. Pretty one. We want to be there, where? Where Krishna will come to rescue us. Where we will lovingly serve Him according to His desire. Krishna consciousness is the way. Don’t delay. I have a mouse amp. I have a pinafore. Some words and flowers to offer at His lotus feet.

And care-taking role for some of His dear ones. Let me serve in this life and the next.

I repeat,

ain’t she neat. I absolve desire for all women and boys and dogs and fur hats and honors and scholars

I got the blues connotation and want to rest with Him—never rest.

6:05 a.m.

Deena Metzger says dealing with the physical illness may be the last path open to us in these times where society regulates and confines everything we do. Healing your physical illness becomes a political and social act and can heal a planet. Interesting thoughts. Me and my headaches, writing it down as a spiritual path. She says illnesses are not only biological but are metaphors for what is happening in the whole nation or the planet. People sometimes take the karma of the planet on themselves. She asks her audience to meditate on this: What would you do if you knew you had only a few days to live? I thought, “I’d go to Vrindavana.” She asked what would you do if in your last days you could live in such a way that it could change your faith and that you could continue to live. I thought “Vrindavana” again, but then asked myself is it really possible for me to make any big change, even if I was notified of my very soon end? What? Chant sixty-four rounds? But they would be mechanical. Maybe I am already living in the most freedom possible for me. Stay right here and follow this routine.

Would you take meds? Eat? Fast? Be kinder?

7:20 a.m.

You heard Rad Swami is coming to Ireland in two weeks and wants to see me. I’ll go out from Wicklow and meet him somewhere else. A lady is taking an English college course and studying *Gulliver’s Travels*. Finds it profound. I said I also studied it in college—his negative view of illusory material happiness. This is like a ticker-tape of news from my head in lieu of feeling from deep in the heart.

God, I love You, Krishna, I love You, Jesus, I love You. No heart beating like that? Who am I anyway? I writes, smidgen, trying to keep awake. A punch drunk fighter trying to stay on his feet against the onslaught of fists from his opponent. Come on, kid, hit ‘em back! How were they to know it was the Kid’s last fight?

Come on kid—don’t kid me. Kit, Kitty, Catherine is her name, my mam. He calls her Kit and Sully. She was not sulky. Dumpy little hen. Oh, I paid the rent on self-inflicted wounds. He said Indian boys and readers don’t know the word masturbation and so it should not appear in any book. They are innocent of the phenomena or just know it under another name? Self-flagellation. Obscure-itis. The fellow who is free of sin can know God. Only in Krishna consciousness do we know so much—God’s name, address, His father’s and mother’s names, how He directs and sports. Other religions have a vague idea.

If you are so sleepy why not go back to bed? You have an orthopedic shaped pillow. Under the roof, you hear the wind outside. Snug as a bug, awaiting for death and disease. Expose yourself to the elements. He wants to see you when he comes to Ireland. “Hi. Here I am. I can read to you a favorite verse, Cc. *Antya* 1.188, where Lord Krishna is described as covered by dust of cow’s hooves and covered by the night when He goes to see the *gopis* and thus the transcendental darkness covers Krishna from the purview of ordinary scholars.” Then smile passive, mild and let him do the talking. Asking some questions, say some stuff about spiritual life. The importance of being earnest. Krishna! Hi, hi, I’m glad to see you after a long time. You can tell any committee that sent you that Satsvarupa is fine and dandy. Just needs another helicopter. Give one to Jimmy Carter. I mean it, I’m really feeling fine, considering.

Then, when you are left alone, what do you do?

I study the *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* late into the night. I deliberately pray a vigil for the protection and purification of all ISKCON preachers and official projects. I don’t associate with women or men who enjoy women or bogus *sadhus* who are not devotees of Krishna.

I heard you had at all times a kind of sour puss debate within yourself.

I did have a green or yellow sour ball given by Jimmy Duncan. He gave a whole jar of them. We kids liked.

Yeah, but I mean I heard you are always saying indirectly marks against your spiritual master’s authority over your life and the authority of GBC and TPs of the regions and their Regional secretaries and appropriate committee members and the material departments that ruled your life with laws.

It’s true I have to bend my head. I abide. Nothing wrong in that? Do you play Charles Mingus in your notebook? No, sir. I plays only Rupa Gosvami and the Six Gosvamis. I play at the Kusuma-sarovara, dive into the lake and at Narada-kunda I prayed once. I ain’t misbehavin’, I’m saving my love for You.

But I heard you ate hamburgers.

That was long ago. Now I am an American *sannyasi*.

They why don’t you preach more?

I do. Why don’t you shut up and mind your own business?

What he does is his own business. Krishna chant startles Laundry. We have been in existence only a few years but have hundreds of centers all over the world and if you include the numbers of congregational and if you include all the Hindus in India, then there are hundreds of millions . . .

Krishna, Sankarshana wanting to destroy. Hold back for now. I took my last steroid pill. Now I will see how I do without them. It will get more real. I’ll use my rescue meds and rest more and say hey, this rugby isn’t half bad. But an old guy can’t dance in the streets.

Krihs, Krish. I am about to tell you my secret. I want to be a devotee but may not have what it takes. I’ll stay as an inferior devotee in *dhoti* rough. If they ask me, “Are you waiting around hoping to win the Nobel Prize?” I’ll say heavens, no. I don’t expect to become completely pure in this lifetime but . . . Have faith enough to be with him. Understand why and how we preach in last days.

List.

Toxic plumes and fumes.

Satan strawberries

perhaps

rosary

*japa* *mala*

Your right finger for *japa*

don’t invite your man

Krishna consciousness

very orthodox. Be alert, be on guard, the sleep demon could come at any moment like a gun man.

9:15 a.m.

“The gardener must defend the creeper by fencing it all around so that the powerful elephant of offenses may not enter.” (Cc. *Madhya* 19.157) you should associate with devotees and not act whimsically. “Even if one thinks there are many pseudo devotees who are nondevotees in the Krishna conscious society, one should stick to the society.” If you think there are no pure devotees you can’t associate with Franko-American Goswamis, then ask the spiritual master.

11 a.m.

You couldn’t read much. The purport block of print blinked back at you. Row by row one reads lines of print. Receive Krishna consciousness this way but it’s not the only way. Formerly they didn’t have books but heard everything from the spiritual master and the Vaishnavas. You can also pray on your own beads. Don’t commit *vaishnava-aparadha*.

M. calling me to come down and get my hair cut. He’s in a rush of events, trying to go to England with the van to help move Caitanya’s belongings here.

11:40 a.m.

Shaved head watches out for signs

he might understand himself better

without his hair. Wait and watch—

to see clearer your relationship with Prabhupada

so that a change occurs—

you read much better, think better

return to Vaishnavism.

Or maybe no change perceivable.

Get your head shaved every two weeks.

Sit on edge of bathtub while M. carefully

rinses his double blade razor and

cuts carefully at the hair patches,

no blood usually. I sit in silence.

Hare Krishna, your precious time.

Every two weeks, every two years, every

two lifetimes, millennia. There’s a new

creation every moment or only at the

end of Brahma’s day, depending on

how you look at it.

I have the same non-vague philosophy

of God to speak and the form of God

is not concocted by a poet or artist.

He is Krishna. I accept and believe

but I need huge help and

great advancement before I’m anywhere.

Stood at the window after haircut

and thought how I can’t get along with

anyone and *hari-nama* is

also not yet a constant friend.

But I believe in Krishna within the cloud

and my spiritual master let’s me bathe

and massage him

every day.

4:12 p.m.

Riding high, push myself, carried along, Dvorakand Shrila Prabhupada singing. Three big men take up the whole canvas, striding leftward on Vraja *parikrama*, arms joined, angle, blissy,walk. A mother with three cub children. A dog and rabbit, “Hare Krishna,” a ravaged face calling out from the canvas, and more. Radha and Krishna in classic pose.

So you flew and rose and rode and blood too, forgot who you were. And now how are you, now that you have landed? Check your pulse rates? What have you got to say to Dr. K? Oh, say I’m fine so far, tomorrow will be the first test whether I come down . . .

Don’t tell the world, paint it in their face for their eyes to see. I give you something a treat and the Lord’s holy names.

The book says don’t offend Vaishnava but love and serve them. I can’t solve the problems but I can at least blast through. Yellow-blue-white-black when you need it. Today Caitanya gave me one color mixed with sand and another with some paste for rough textures. It worked.

So the book says water the *bhakti-lata* and it will grow in the spiritual world and there you can taste it as *prema*, loving service to please the all-beautiful Supreme Lord. Then no coming back to this material world.

5:05 p.m.

He didn’t give me enough to eat,

just one piece of pie and two slivers on the

Deity plates. I pressed the intercom and

asked for more. Caitanya said, “I gave

you everything.” I could have asked him to

scare up something else from the kitchen, even

an apple, an old piece of bread.

He doesn’t know I weigh only 116 pounds and

the doctor wants me to put on muscle mass.

I won’t tell him.

I’ll hold in

my discontent. Say I ate enough.

He goes out to buy staples. He said nothing

about my latest sensational paintings.

Just cleaned the floor, ignored

the paintings . . . what did you want,

a fan club always? People telling

you lies that you are good?

Alone now to write this—what

does the book say? It says *sayujya*

is the lowest form of liberation and the

pure devotees don’t want the other four—

all they want is service to Govinda

and that is the highest bliss.

Apply it to yourself. Apply lotion

to push the hemorrhoid back in.

Wish you could chant another

round. A sixty-year-old man

can’t expect to eat a lot. He

should be winding down, prepare

to meet thy God. Krishna the cowherd

boy of darkish blue hue—only the

most advanced can know Him.

Absolute . . . the book says . . .

I’m all right, a spirit soul,

no one dies. It’s 5 o’ clock.

5:50 p.m.

Good night page. Two desk lights on. I’m alone in the house. Baladeva didn’t come today, probably tomorrow. Madhu out getting four tires put on the van. Tick-tock. I move around. Read of *bhakti* and how it must be done without compromise, exclusively. All the senses engage in the service of Lord. You get two side effects: Freedom from material designations and purification of your senses. The science of *bhakti* taught by Lord Caitanya to Rupa Gosvami and later expanded in *Bhakti-rasamritam-sindu.*

Night approaching. Warm up your bed. Let them laugh. I’m far away . . .What are you doing? How many hours a day do you work? What do you expect to get as a reward? On whose behalf are you working? We want to know if you are a sense gratifier, ease-lover, malingerer or what. It’s time to make a critical assessment. You can’t get away from this. Don’t try to write it down.

Why not? Writing is my way of serving Krishna. I could increase it and improve it. I’m just beginning to return to a routine and could improve it, become more dedicated . . . But it’s already . . . moving.

6:19 p.m.

Words written on calligraphy Bristol drawing board. Get ready, chant Hare Krishna. Men are doing and women too what they can to push the Hare Krishna movement. And I am in this house. Heard Jayapataka Swami lecturing on Deity worship, interesting stories of his participation in Prabhupada’s personal preaching in Bengal villages, *tirthas*, stories . . . that one piece of pie while I listened. The sky bluing darker, the branches up there.

This is a Bristol board on which you write and draw. Krishna, I am a tiny self. Spirit soul, books say. Are you trying to be funny or hint at doubts when you write, “The books say”? No, I’m sticking to the superior source without which my page is foolish, empty, failure. At the same time I admit that I don’t realize what the Book says. I merely repeat it. If I don’t have full faith, that’s my fault. It doesn’t make the Book less true.

In my third paragraph I better close out the entire day. Little outpost. Sending heart beams up. I never saw a Gaura-Purnima moon this year. Under the clouds. Or I didn’t notice. Now it’s another year in Lord Caitanya’s. Here comes . . . There goes . . . Hare Krishna. You will read us a bedtime story. Of what actually happens. Christmas, Krishna, words, put words to bed where they reappear in worlds of dreams in between sleeps. I’m connected (we all are) to God as one—parts and parcels of Him. Please . . . pure devotees ask for service. What do I ask for? He knows our actual desires and rewards accordingly—but in our favor.

March 4

12:08 a.m.

See Krishna, see guru, see me. If he came back again, wouldn’t it be wonderful, said a Godbrother. I’m not sure. He could answer some questions, the brother said. But still people would doubt. Blessed are they who believe without seeing. I want to see the “deeper” Prabhupada, one we pray to in the *gayatri* mantra. You mean in his spiritual form in Goloka-lila? But I would also be satisfied to see the original Swami. I’m just afraid that I have reached some point of not being able to surrender to him. Or afraid at all I would have to give up to surrender to him again. I would have to be different. I’m not twenty-six years old now. I have new conditions. It couldn’t be that he would speak exactly the same, since the time, persons and places are changed. Krishna is dynamic and so is His representative. It is useless perhaps to speculate about his coming back, because . . . I don’t think it will happen. Whatever happens is Krishna‘s arrangement. You now finish you days in as decent a way as possible, hearing and chanting, reading his books, only by faithfully following the spiritual master is Krishna pleased. That’s the straight philosophy.

In *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* Canto Six, Chapter Seven, we read how Indra offended his spiritual master, Brihaspati. Indra was puffed up with his material opulences and one day ignored his spiritual master who appeared in the assembly hall. Seeing Brihaspati leave the hall in silence, Indra realized his mistake and “condemned himself in the presence of all the members of the assembly.”

I sometimes think I “know it all.” Don’t need to hear the same teachings again in Shrila Prabhupada’s purport. The fact is I don’t know “it,” *bhakti*, at all. I don’t know humility, daringness to preach, don’t know how to tolerate troubles, don’t know surrender, don’t know attraction to the holy names and pastimes of the Lord. I need a spiritual master. I cannot pretend to be a guru or writer on my own strength. They want me to give them Shrila Prabhupada.

“Coming to his senses, Indra realized he was not a very sincere disciple of his spiritual master . . . ” *(Bhag*. 6.7.15, purport) He decided to go to Brihaspati and bow at his feet. Shrila Prabhupada quotes, *yasya prasadad* *bhagavat-prasado*—“Without the grace of the spiritual master, one cannot make any advancement.” *Acharyam mam vijaniyan*—one should respect the spiritual master as the Lord Himself. Never disrespect him or think that he is an ordinary man. “Familiarity sometimes breeds contempt, but one should be very careful in one’s dealing with the *acharya*.” *(Bhag*. 6.7.15, purport)

So I should approach Shrila Prabhupada for further enlightenment and ask forgiveness for my offenses to him and to his followers and his movement. Certainly others have made mistakes but that doesn’t justify my own unfaithfulness. “ . . . the *acharya* is a perfect *brahmana* and has unlimited intelligence in guiding the activities of his disciple.” *(Bhag*. 6.7.15, purport) Krishna advises us to go to the spiritual master. I shall do so and he will not reject me.

When Indra went to seek forgiveness from his guru, he couldn’t find him. He had become invisible. And thus Indra could find no peace of mind. I don’t think Shrila Prabhupada would deliberately make himself invisible to me. But something like that might happen. If you don’t honor him, then you won’t be able to find him. He only appears to the faithful. I will pray to see him in the cloud. I may have lost my right to be intimate with him. But even that I won’t concede. Go to him directly in your mind as much as you can, call on him, do the simple tasks he has ordered. Become the devotee of Krishna as he desires you to do. “How can we please you the most?” a disciple asked Shrila Prabhupada. And he replied, “By loving Krishna.”

4:50 a.m.

Hemorrhoid is no joke for me. Anyway, Bala will be here soon. My life, this body. God. Whispering and saying in your mind the Hare Krishna mantras, thirteen rounds done now. You could crawl back into bed thinking that position might relieve your hemorrhoid, coax it within the hole. But I don’t think so.

Keep up. Keep up. Your Krishna consciousness is a thing that can answer for itself. Thump, thump, thump—they are playing music. Hey, I don’t realize half of what I say. “He is lazy, irresponsible and”—what else?

B. will take rolls of my paintings to give to GS in America who keeps them in storage and uses in books. We hope words and pics will relieve people of the burning sensation that is maya. We hope to reach the Lord in Goloka. Hare Krishna

Once in a while a man remembered God in pure form. But a pure devotee remembers Him all the time and lives in such a way that nothing distracts him. Doesn’t associate with nondevotees or go or do anything that’s not in Krishna consciousness. Stress and wars and fires. He is not a man to play around. But our Swami says we can use whatever we want to do—driven by our karma, even call it a kind of lust—but then you get purified. And one day or lifetime you start just going to Krishna representatives, the pure devotees, and asking them, “What shall I do to please Lord Hari? You tell me.”

Then you are in the pure state.

Hare Krishna is the lesson we want to learn.

*Haribol* antics. Ask Bal what did you do and what happened to you in India and England? Then I’ll tell him what happened with me in America.

You are a restless sort and the body can’t bring you real happiness. Metzger says often we are ill due to unnatural causes—an illness of our society inflicted on us or taking some wrong mentality—and so by imagination and creativity you can find a single metaphor that expresses what happened to you in your story of life—and get liberated from the disease. My hemorrhoid is a pop-out. The guts ain’t happy. Can’t stay together. Did I force the body to do something it shouldn’t have?

You better believe the Lord has His own plans. And He has advised you to tolerate the pain and go on serving, your *dharma*. That’s the best thing we can do. Keep moving along the line in the brief time.

Dark as night. Scratch man the pen on page. Surface colors. Time given. Where are you? I said I don’t want to be absent. I want to be true to God. I was in a nightclub sometimes hearing the bass player in the middle of the set take his solo with little raps of the snare keeping him going along. Don’t lose the time. Splash, splash.

What’s this got to do with Krishna? He’s the rhythm, the time, the anticipation . . . If people are in *maya* that’s also His shadow, but not the enjoyable way. People are so stubborn even when you tell them Krsihna is God they don’t accept. It’s “understandable” that they don’t, but I also understand (do I?) that Shrila Prabhupada is angry with them, especially with the leaders, who take Krishna away from folks—it’s the greatest violence. We *could* accept Krishna as God but now it has become so hard. The bad climate foul forgetful. Whereas I can remember, see, touch, hear, walk for, think of Lord Hari.

11:24 a.m.

Headache at 7 a.m. while talking with Bala. It’s the first I’ve had since stopping the Prednisone. Took a Zomig and went to bed. Only after about two hours did it go down. You can’t deny that these things (headache, piles, indigestion) grip your mind and it’s hard to think of *shastras* and prayers, and so on. Lost time I could have been reading or writing. Stupid dreams instead. But I’m still here alive. Baladeva is cooking the lunch, expect it to be heavy. He spoke of all wonderful things happening especially in India in translating my books and selling them. They sold over four thousand books during the Mayapur festival time. Many titles being reprinted. I reciprocated as best I could. It does make me think I should go on writing even though I am not producing a very sellable book in EJW. He said he had a long talk with the BBL leader, Amita Prabhu, in England, trying to think of “sales mantras” to sell EJW. They said something about a Vaishnavas internal diary being in a tradition. Yes, I am not a famous person so why would someone want to read my diary? He must be puffed up to write so much about himself.

Why don’t you write some more small books of instructions like you did in *Obstacles On The Path*? Because I don’t feel like it. Baladeva also gave me the program for this year’s Mayapur festival. There was a week-long series of classes on Y2K crisis. One was titled “Prabhupada’s prophecies,” there will be very, very hard times ahead. And a week-long seminar on *ritviks* and other *guru-tattva* subjects. I would like to feel more alone here without having to have meetings. But that’s not possible. Whatever alone time you do get use it well, please. Try to go to the simple place of chanting and hearing. You who want to get better and tell the world, “It was nice to be a devotee and I hope to go back to Godhead.” Shrila Prabhupada says the whole process of Krishna consciousness is to go back to Godhead.

11:40 a.m.

Tell a poem a Krishna conscious theme the world

needs to hear. In my pocket the

Dictaphone. “Many poems are lists,” he said

and proceeded to read his, “Zimmer

goes to heaven.”

Heaven was musicians of all centuries,

baseball players and authors meeting in a garden

a beer drinking.

Sats go to heaven and liberates the beings there.

Sats goes to Goloka and finds out his next

assignment. I won’t imagine it. I know it is a

fact not a pleasant fantasy for a list-

poem pleasure. But when I will go, I

don’t know.

Should care for others. My own body hurts—

does it make me more compassionate? How much

trouble we take on ourselves and cause for others

when we leave the Lord’s abode.

We should be smart and get back to Godhead.

O God, Hare Krishna, take each moment and

try to transcend. Be aware of Swami’s

teachings, reach in yourself for wisdom

to be respectful at his feet. And ask

yourself please can I take an assignment

in his cause?

The *sankirtana* movement keeps

flowing like a Ganges

of many tributaries and tribulations too. It keeps

cutting its way, don’t doubt that. Make

a list of all souls who come here, all passed

away and all return. Only one sustains

them: *Eko yo bahunam yo vidadhati kaman*

All glories to Sri Krishna and His *parisadas*

all glories to the pure devotee who teach it

I write this day in poverty.

12:15 p.m.

Lunch be here in a few minutes. Hare Krishna alters the purpose of life; for a person coming to Krishna consciousness, the chanting of the holy names at least sixteen rounds . . .

Wait a minute, did *you* chant your sixteen rounds today?

I know I did fifteen, I’m not sure if I did one more than that.

You better be sure before you tell others.

Actually I can tell others even if I fail. I can preach to myself. Hare Krishna is good for the soul. God is present in His names. He’s pleased when we chant. There is no other way in this age. Hare Krishna comes straight from Krishnaloka. Writing is also a form of chanting either by writing out the mantra, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, etc., or writing about the glories of the holy name. Chanting means any praises or faithful utterances. *Haribol*.

4:07 p.m.

Any sitting down is pole penance now because of ye olde pile only two days old. Ravaged, out of the art room, faces down there jumping to Bartokand Prabhupada. I can’t describe it . . . Visceral. The last guy a woman god curvy green, blue, gray, murky, he’s a lively jokester. He’s just a devotee always branding them with *tilaka* of Vaishnavas. Yes, the same thing, the same thing, the surrender to their Lord which is required of each and every living entity and is required of you. The same love we have to give. The same over-eating and burping and digesting. With Bala here you are in more danger of that due to his fatty meals served. And you want to please him. He was supposed to shed weight in India but he said it was impossible. He was traveling all the time and meeting people to sell books and they always required him to eat and since he is a heavy fellow they certainly demanded him to eat more and more and piled it on. He said it would have been an insult to refuse their food and I believe it.

The new paint jars Caitanya prepared have sand in them and it’s a gritty sediment. I put it on the canvas and scratch into it and it won’t fall off either. Are they devotees? Yes, of course and on one I wrote a few graffiti words, “Krishna was here and is here and is everywhere.” Like that, like on a Philadelphia underpass you might see it. Krishna, Krishna is the goal, two men stretching towards it bent over and racing forward. The goal is back to Godhead but a red Stop sign has been put up there . . . O Krishna, I just want to be in the front line smiling and recognized for my great achievements. But that’s not the way to attain Your shelter like the humble devotees who only want to please You and they do it by pleasing Your dearmost.

The Lord has also said the one who preaches the message of Krishna to the devotees or who makes nondevotees into devotees, he is the dearest servant of the Lord and there will never be more dear. That’s what the book says. I couldn’t read today. The morning was stolen by headache and the meetings with the devotee, and then sleep and then even though I was short on writing, I had to go down into the art room and fulfill myself there. Hare Krishna pennants waving from the stadium when Krishna killed Kamsaa, a great roar of approval except from the widows and Kamsa’s men fleeing for their lives. That’s what the book says. At least I can remember how Prithu Maharaja spoke humbly in the assembly and said don’t praise me before I have actually done anything and he asked his citizens, “Please behave or else I get the bad karma.” And I remember the churning of the legs of Vena which produced him. I remember the books and when I read them. The tortures they put Prahlada through, that’s what the book says. That he was never harmed because he remembered Krishna. Do you believe it? Yes, I believe it happened to Prahlada but that doesn’t mean it can happen to me because I have little faith.

Oh, ye of little faith, you cannot know the Lord. But if you have faith then you can tell a mountain to move and it will. God can do anything if you have great faith that He is within the cloud, even when your poor eyes can’t see it. I don’t believe that everything I do is good and pure and great. No, I have to follow the spiritual master’s words of advice and he said that devotional service is dynamic, just do your thing full heartedly and truly offer the results to Krishna. I would like everyone to know that the author of these books is a submissive servant of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami and the Krishna consciousness movement. Yes, you can give the millions of dollars to this movement in my favorite category and the Nobel prize can be turned over to Krishna and I will make a *Bhagavad-gita* speech when I accept it and tell the people of the world you are very nice but just cats and dogs for abandoning Krishna. Your scientific progress has done nothing to stop birth, death, disease and old age. I’ll tell them if I get a chance, I won’t forget.

5:40 p.m.

Wow that hurts. Not *so* much. But

enough to notice every time you move. There’s

a muscle in the anus that pinches itself when

you move. You never notice it unless you

have something like a hemorrhoid sticking out,

then each move hurts.

The poet in me sings. The head wants relief.

Try to sleep it off. Tired of small-talk.

Where is my sweet alone house?

The book says Krishna was born but

is unborn. A pure devotee wouldn’t

worry—hell is heaven, heaven is hell,

all he wants is loving service to

the Lord,

and he’s never afraid.

The book says you are not the body.

Theoretical and practical knowledge.

Deity worship, painting, writing, preaching,

growing old, honoring *prasadam*,

then your turn to die.

Did you pass the *bhakti-shastra* test?

*Parikrama*. They are going on *parikrama*.

How many times have you been to India?

Can we go next year or is the

world over then? What about the

world series? Did the Yankees win?

It doesn’t matter at the end, huh?

All that matters is you and God and

whatever you did—if you are sincere

He’ll know it. He is infinitely kind

but you can’t cheat Him

He sees your Swami in your heart and

your faults and He decides and

I decide, am deciding even now

I call for help.

6:12 p.m., Night Notes

They are coming up the hill. Have new ointment for my pile and maybe a rubber “doughnut” I can sit on. Bala go to any trouble to serve his spiritual master. His spiritual master better serve back. Wants to crawl into bed and call it a day, March 4. Look forward to the next.

Whittle them down. “We’ll die doing this,” he says. Don’t quit, keep writing and producing and selling the books. Great faith in them. Prabhupada books, books of his disciple remembering. My Gurudeva was kind to me. Writes each day, goodnight. Got ’um plenty pen refills. Me good. Ug. Me man, weak. Kemosabie.

Oh, shit. Here he’s up the stairs with the ointment for little me.

March 5

12:12 a.m.

Painful pile kept me up all night. One pain is steady and the other comes whenever you tense the muscle of the anus. I couldn’t control that contraction, especially every time I turned in bed. But at least I don’t have the headache. So greet this day. You can write and chant while you are up. O holy name . . . pay attention for a while, recite, walk or sit on one side of the buttocks.

6 a.m.

Writing on my knees, the prayer posture. The hemorrhoid is overwhelming me. Bala said he’ll go to Dublin to get a sitz bath and then I can soak my rear end in water and Epsom salts. Maybe this is a side effect of the steroids. It’s a karmic reaction, part of the mistake I made in coming to the material world. I willed it and Krishna allowed me. Don’t blame Him. It was my idea to be an independent enjoyer in material form and false ego. I can’t remember when this desire began, nor can I remember the sufferings I’ve been through. But the taint is still with me. If I could only throw it off once and for all.

9:50 a.m.

Can’t write because of some swollen flesh

bulbs at the entrance to your hole? Overcome

that reticence. Here comes the Krishna conscious

poet. We have to tell the people . . .

straight *siddhanta*. And I want to, but

in my way. It will convince them better,

or at least it is my way.

I want to please my master and can’t do it

by sitting around, looking for a position that

won’t hurt the piles. I’ve got to write

at least, while kneeling or standing,

say what comes and what you have learned

from past sittings and readings and hearings.

We *sannyasis* and devotees do a lot of sitting,

as do truck drivers and bus drivers,

so we may get piles. We get them also

because of nervous disruptions in our bodies,

pride, *anarthas*, offenses. “God is

punishing us by piles,” don’t say it

that way.

Say I will write despite pain

I will find the motivation

I will smile and help others

I know I’m not this body,

it comes and goes, so don’t

give up your duty.

*Haribol*.

10:15 a.m.

Krishna conscious. Scripture. Letters from devotees. Reply to them and quote scriptures. See through the eyes of the scriptures. When someone dies you tell yourself he does not actually die. The real self goes on to another life in another body. Therefore, we never knew the self while the person was alive.

The sage is sober in the face of birth and death, the changing bodies. He doesn’t grieve. I sometimes grieve. I am not a solid sage. Get upset over the hot and cold changes. Life threatening seems to threaten *me*. But I am not this body.

We will see at the time of death whether the chanter was just a parrot—in which case he will finally cry out, “Squawk! Squawk!”—or whether he can chant from the heart to his God, “Hare Krishna.” We will see. We will not see. We are seen and do not see Krishna within the clouds.

You have your choice. Let us choose to be active and upbeat in the service of the Lord. The very phrase suggests and living transcendentalist. In the beginning he is attached to his service and later he loves the Lord.

11:40 a.m.

Behind on writing and reading. You’ll lose the taste and discipline if you don’t keep it up. Go and find the nectar. Dig for it. Wait for it. Pray for it. You want to hear the *shastras* spoken by His pure devotee. Can you sit with a book like *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* and read a few verses and purports without falling asleep? Can you perform writing while reading, telling us candidly what happens when you try to apply yourself to the holy words? I request it.

2:27 p.m.

Waiting for Baladeva to return from Dublin with the sitz bath. Snow flurries. Look out the window and see that I don’t read *shastras*, don’t hear with faith. Don’t really know what or who I am spiritually. I could be diagnosed as seriously without faith and yet I might be very close to faith. I can’t know. Help comes from Krishna but He wants to see how sincere you are.

I am not this body. The flesh barnacles at my rectum have nothing to do with me or this face, this serious, thin frightened face. What about the playful pictures and words, is that you, spirit soul? And what’s this about you representing the *parampara* for newcomers who want to join and link? You can do that?

Eat snacks. Gain weight. Calm down. Uterus time. Be born. Down the esophagus. The doctor is expert but can’t heal until he listens to what the migraine is “saying.” It’s saying, “This man would like to be well but needs a spiritual body. I’m making him hurt to teach him a lesson.” We used to think the headaches were my way to get off the GBC and were no longer necessary. But you kept inflicting them on yourself to keep the guarantee that you wouldn’t be roped back into a social life.

What’s the migraine saying? Give this man more to eat throughout the twenty-four hours in small installments. Let him rise happy and write his treatise. You can let go. The way is snowy but not in Ireland.

2:50 p.m.

The book says I’m an eternal soul

It doesn’t go into details about me born

in 1939 and still here in 1999. It

doesn’t predict Y2K disaster unless

you want to read into it.

The book says *ekala ishvara krishna*

and the *jiva’s* *svarupa* is Nitya dasa.

That’s enough to go on. It says Find

a spiritual master and inquire from him

and serve him. I started doing that before

I read the verse. Guru verse.

The book says, “Read me.” The teacher

says, “Read the book again and again and

you’ll get new lights.” The book says

*Shrimad-Bhagavatam* is the best and the

*acharyas* explain why Krishna is mostly

mentioned only in the Tenth Canto.

But I am not mentioned because I

am not important. I am only

important to myself and a few friends.

God is great, in envy and hatred I

want to be Him. For that I come into

the material world and suffer piles and

headaches and undergo chemotherapy with

terrible side effects and finally die.

Because of the duality of hate and envy.

The book says all we need to know.

Drop the wry pose and sarcastic

resentment. Stop complaining why God

doesn’t reveal Himself sooner.

Just prostrate yourself at their feet.

Yes, you can write your own poems

too. To uphold the book,

to tell the truth,

to ease the sting

to pass the time—

you rascal,

you dear spirit soul.

Head pressure front and top forehead. Room cold. Sunny then dark outside. Happy I can write of my own life. Let them laugh that he writes such a small drama, penny opera. He’s got a life at least and it’s connected to Krishna consciousness. And I know how to connect it, to philosophize. Devotees using talents in the service of Krishna. I missed a chance in the art room this afternoon. If I’d gone there I’d be near finished now, maybe daring to quickly execute the sixth canvas with the residue of all the brushes’ colors. Lie in bed and imagine it, but you missed it. More chances later. And you get to sit and nimble at the apple crumb pie at 4:30 p.m.

Choose what outfit the Lord will wear tomorrow. How about white and pink? Hare Krishna.

5:40 p.m.

Baladeva and Praghosha are invited to appear on a TV talk show tonight in Dublin. The subject is karma. The coach of the English soccer team was recently fired from his position for saying that crippled people were suffering from karma. Apparently he heard this from his New Age lady guru. It will be a good opportunity for the devotees the actual nature of karmic reaction. To believe in karma doesn’t mean to be indifferent to suffering but rather we are more compassionate, even to the animals, when we see that all creatures have the same souls. People are so ignorant that they thought the explanation of karma applied to cripple people was a slur against them. Rather, the firing of the coach for giving that right explanation is a slur against the teachings of *Bhagavad-gita*.

March 5

2 p.m.

I’ve suddenly fallen into an acute state of disease. Around 12:30 a.m. I drank four ounces of Ensure. A few hours later I vomited. Ever since then I’ve been vomiting all day. I tried to eat breakfast and that came up. After that I don’t even try to eat. And the pain has come sharp behind the right eye. Our local nurse, Charanaravinda, says that this could be a very dangerous situation for me because of my age and skinniness. I have to be very careful not to allow dehydration to take place. So she got me a batch of glucose drinks. I drink one and about an hour or less later I vomit it up but they want me to keep drinking them anyway so at least to keep some liquid temporarily in the body. Where will this end?

4:47 p.m.

The devotees here are concerned that I may suffer from dehydration. They are suggesting I go to the hospital or maybe they can get a doctor to come here. I can’t retain anything, even liquids. And because of the constant nausea and vomiting I can’t tend to my other illness, the piles, can’t sit on the sitz bath and don’t even have the energy to apply the cream. And throughout all this my old friend the headache behind the right eye is sharply in place.

I was just thinking about Deena Metzger’s statement that in this unnatural age, a person’s quest for healing of physical disease, is a spiritual path. And then she also says that one can heal oneself by a creative imagination. And one way to do this is to seek a metaphor that seems to explain your illness or depict it on several levels such as society, your psyche, your body. I thought of how I feel so unable to make spiritual progress in chanting and hearing. So I’m kind of spiritually ill, dehydrated, headache, offensive. It’s not flowing in spontaneous, healthy *bhakti*. I identify with the body. And remember when Lord Caitanya went to Haridasa Thakura who was lying gravely ill and the Lord asked, “What is your Haridasa?” And Haridasa replied, “I cannot chant my rounds.”

How about a little mind over matter?

7:18 p.m.

Charanaravinda and Caitanya insisted that I should see a doctor because they thought I was dehydrated. I realize that they were over worrying for me but it also sounded serious. There was no way however I was going to out to the hospital with migraine headache. Charanaravinda finally convinced a local doctor in Hacketstown to come out and make a house visit. He came, a lot of curly hair but also partly bald and he was very brusque. “You’ve got a migraine,” he said to me. I said, “Yes but the main thing is the vomiting. Since this morning I can’t take any of my medicine.” He asked what medicine are you taking and I showed in my prescriptions. Then without further ado he turned his back on me and began preparing an injection. He told me he would give it in the backside so I should roll on my stomach. It didn’t hurt much and while he was putting it in I was saying to myself Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare. He asked me my name and I spelt it out proudly, Stephen Guarino, not at all Irish sounding. And he said, “And the address. I guess this is Kiltegan.” Yes, I said. And then he said I’m not to take any oral medicine for the next twelve hours and that this shot will take care of the vomiting.

But it sure didn’t take care of the migraine. Now everyone is left and the house is empty and I’m glad to be in Krishna consciousness or at least aspiring for it.

March 7

2:30 a.m.

On March 9 I’m supposed to talk to Dr. K. and tell him what’s been happening with my new regimen for dealing with headaches. What about reporting to the spiritual master about your chanting and reading? About your very self and your attempts to think of Krishna? What are you doing to prepare for the end of your life? Yes, I should report to him always and ask him—I am confused and weak about my duty. Now I am a soul surrender onto You. Please direct me.

The books say approach a spiritual master *adau* *shraddha, guru-ashraya*, take shelter of him. These are the first points in *bhakti*. And you don’t just do it one time when you first join and get a few initiations *(hari-nama*, *brahmana*, *sannyasa*), you keep going to him as when in need of instruction and guidance. Don’t become over intelligent. The teachings say Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and we should regularly hear of Him, *nityam bhagavata-sevaya*. I am going to do that. I just need to get my schedule working again. So many ill health interruptions. I’ll start though, some small but regular disciplined readings. Chanting I’m already doing . . .

Report to the spiritual master and not about vomiting all day yesterday and today the hemorrhoids are still prominent and sting, or the obscure dreams or the fast and the visit of the doctor . . . but report to him on the life of the soul.

4 a.m.

I can’t deny this body. The soul is in the body. The boils or piles are swollen at the entrance to the rectum and so I cry. Arjuna was a *kshatriya* and he shouldn’t have denied the fight. But I . . . am not denying my own fight either . . . but you see I have to cry, cry a little my song is a cry of body and soul, soul in body.

Hare Krishna is the way to overcome all boils and toils. But you can’t always understand, can you? Krishna Krishna, I am a sole factor in this blues, “Beauty is a Rare Thing.” Madhu came in at 9 o’clock late night, up the dark stairs to my dark room. He heard I was not feeling well. I told him the day’s saga . . . and so I rested and he went to deliver Jambavati to Caitanya at his mobile home . . .

*Haribol,* I gets restless. Feel weak in body. Maybe I just need to eat now. The books say Krishna and Radha are one soul. They separate to have pastimes. They are like a flame divided into two wicks or lotus flower. One. Vishnavatha Chakravarti Thakura knows this and told us the rarest *rasa* in *The Love Locket.* Lalita, the *sakhis*, and the demi-goddess who was actually Krishna in disguise churned all this . . . I heard it once again.

The books say go forth and don’t be afraid, do your duty according to your own *ashrama* and *varna*. You know your particular vocation don’t you? Tukarama received his in a dream—“Be a poet, stop fooling around.” And a commission to write a billion *abhangas*, “Tuka says.”

They heard him and I hear them. I take it in my life to the scurrilous writing coming clean, leave me alone, don’t you send me on some mission impossible as aggressive peace-maker among the Titans. I can’t do it, I won’t. I want to stay here peacefully and overcome health problems so I can churn out the billion *abhangas* of EJW in top quality. Spring is coming and I will be able to walk outside . . . you will see me walking somewhere, sometime, slowly up the high hill from where you can see all the Hare Krishna dwellings and the tiny llamas from up on the gorse place and no farmer to see me either.

Toy trumpet. Plastic sacks. Drummer and base cooking . . . I said I love Haryashva and he loves me (so he doesn’t have to write me letter)—as long as I know he’s there on South Street charming the people and distributing smokin’ *prasadam*. He looked up with a real Haryashva bliss look at that, in his own world for Prabhupada and Krishna and nectar devotee for sure. We all want to do something nice for Krishna.

The old times are gone and come back sometimes in their vintage ways. They are running fast, remember how we used to do it in the 1960s? But I won’t remember anything but Krishna days, ISKCON beginning in 1966.

I made it again to America and back here and greeted by a rash of diseases but I’ll get over it or go through it despite it.

Krishna says think of Me, become My devotee and all heartaches removed or concentrated on Krishna.

They will have no other fears.

8:50 a.m.

Falling asleep in the chair. A bird sings mightily (for him) outside in the yard. Is spring almost here? But far away from the seasons as I knew them. And far away from Goloka which I don’t know at all. Oh man, what will you do?

Ring around the rosy. Don’t let them drag you in. The times. The bird, the sleeper recovering from his hard day yesterday. Can you find a new routine of *bhajana* and fulfill your purpose here? Those who are married have to work for a living.

Tell him I don’t think in terms of “I” and “them.” I don’t teach disciples that. Will the congregational preaching be seen? Now take your place. Go into the unconscious, into the bath-house locker where park Officer Frank Bobbin in white Officer’s hat is speaking obscenities. They joke at my expense sometimes but some of it I understand. If I tell my father he will beat the man up. My father is very strong. Did he leave you with the impression that you too are very manly-strong at least in some way, perhaps in the way you loop your hand writing?

Krishna, get back on the track. The person who lives alone as I do ought to read more, as well as write with a purpose.

But now he has forgotten his purpose. He stayed firm. He could have remained in jail but got the money from his brother Rupa and bribed the inn-keeper. You be private in the foxhole, she said, I’ll be . . . but then she couldn’t remember the name of a higher military position.

9:10 a.m.

You got here again to be comprehensible

you old man, he shot you in the rump

with a needle to stop vomiting.

“Did he tell what was in it?”

No he was too angry to ask. I impressed

him with my list of meds more than

he knew, the country bumpkin.

He was here so briefly, I didn’t ask

him what he was doing Saturday night

that we interrupted. And why did he say his

visit cost £40 and when Caitanya gave him

£40, why did he give back £10?

Did he like us? We hid all my paintings

so he’d think we were normal. I felt

like an impostor in my bed, like

the Wolf in “Little Red Riding Hood,” who

put on bed clothes and said, “All the better

to see you with, my dear.” Pretending to be

sick maybe, he thought. Just angry to be called

out—“You should have told me this before

you asked me to come out”—that the last half mile

had to be walked up the rocky road.

So rude he was, we thought. How stupid and

demanding they are, he thought. Forget him

now.

Wake up and find your path. This house is

still a safe place for improved *bhajana* but

you’ve got to be alert and try. Yes, not too

hard or you’ll get headaches. But something,

some effort at the creative life

seeking for the way to please

Vitthal and your Guru Maharaja,

so says Sats.

9:35 a.m.

Human bodies are the fructification of evolution through the species. A human being can control his senses and can understand his destination. So prays the soul in the womb of its mother before he is born—“I offer my respectful obeisances to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, by whom I have been blessed with this body and by whose grace I can see Him within and without.” *(Bhag*. 3.31.20) We are caused by Krishna, we are His eternal part and parcel.

The soul prays that he’d rather not be born. In the womb, although full of suffering, at least his consciousness of God has revived and he’s praying sincerely. But once he is born, he fears he’ll be caught by Deva-maya and begin a false identification with the body, relatives and society. “Therefore, without being agitated any more, I shall deliver myself from the darkness of nescience with the help of my friend, clear consciousness. Simply by keeping the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu in my mind, I shall be saved from entering into the womb of many mothers for repeated birth and death.” *(Bhag*. 3.31.21) We continue to suffer as we grow up and even after death when we half to take another body. But if we keep ourselves in Krishna consciousness we will be saved from the repetition of *samsara*. “The *maha-mantra*, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare, can be chanted even within the abdomen of one’s mother. One can chant while sleeping, while working, while imprisoned in the womb or while outside. Krishna consciousness cannot be checked in any circumstance.” *(Bhag*. 3.31.21, purport)

11:55 a.m.

Waiting for lunch. Out of synch due to the illnesses. Just remember that I have a solid block of time now where I don’t have to leave this house except for a daily walk and a few lectures in Dublin. I will keep some secrets. I will dig softly . . . Can’t talk straight. Wait for the right words. But I mean . . . rest of March (interrupted by a Godbrother’s visit next week) then April, May, June and maybe July before I have to go to Italy. What shall I do with this time, what is the benefit of being here?

It has something to do with quiet and with inner life. Yeah. With regular reading and desire for improved chanting. And writing in mode of goodness way confident this is valuable reaping. This is how I dance. And paint each day if you can in that delightful art room.

2:11 p.m.

Dreams after lunch where people were picking on me, torturing me, everyone out to get me specifically with cruel tearing apart and dunking and giving me the worst . . . they have it in for *me*.

“For the sake of the body, which is a source of constant trouble to him and which follows him because he is bound by ties of ignorance and fruitive activities, he performs various actions which cause him to be subjected to repeated birth and death.” *(Bhag*. 3.31.31)

Become attracted to Radha- Krishna and you’ll lose attraction to mundane feminine beauty.

Without being upset unnecessarily one should find out if there is a remedy to birth and death. That chance comes by rendering pure devotional service.

4:15 p.m.

About one hour forty minutes in the art room. A “huge” and simple Radha and Krishna, simple, naive from waist up. A grainy-wood brown man with plaintive eyes. I say “plaintive” only because that word came down the pike but you have to see His look not name it. It is not plaintive either, more positive than that. And a *bhakta* walking in blues and greens and deep textures of many colors mixed, the *bhakta* of whom Lord Vishnu says I would lop off my arm if the devotee was offended. And—I am made attractive and famous because of my devotion to the *bhaktas*. And—I’m not as much pleased with food offerings made onto the fire which is my mouth as I am when the delectable foods made in ghee are offered to the *brahmana* Vaishnavas.

And here for words as well as forms. You think your words are more sophisticated, you are better at them, not naive? No, I don’t claim that. None of us are fully independent, just a little bit. Everything comes from Krishna.

At 4:30 p.m. I will take a snack. The hemorrhoid is pinching but I didn’t stop, kneeling, standing, scratching, painting, six canvases and a messy floor. One said “Govardhana,” and it had a smiling *shila* in the middle. One said “*Haribol*,” and almost not visible in the down corner, “Krishna was here.” The name saves them and the face is branded. *Haribol*. Forget your problems and chant Hare Krishna simple and straightforward worshiper.

5:50 p.m.

Up here, we read Rupa Gosvami’s

*Utkalika-valari*, “Vine of Hopes” in contorted

English translation. Too intimate for us but

we read on, aloud, three of us.

I put my head down on my knees, listened

we passed the book around, recorded it.

He is praying to always serve Radha and Krishna in

Vraja. He remembers intimate service.

He wrote it in December–January in the

year 1490 or so. He is Shrila Rupa Gosvami.

Our master.

Now we’ve moved on, last things of the

evening. Caitanya is cleaning the art room.

I thanked him for the sandy grit paints and

he didn’t say anything about what I

just painted. Madhu is about to go out

somewhere. I read some poets. It’s

getting later.

I read William Stafford’s feeling good old days.

Read C.K. Williams feeling grief . . . And

I’ll be distracted from my own purpose.

I have nothing to say but what I hear.

Deena Metzger said your illness

diagnosed by a metaphor

if you can study it you’ll be healed.

I heard our master say rascals

and pretenders and he said Krishna is

the Supreme Truth and Bhurijana said his

purport was sweet, four Kumaras—

I have nothing of my own

but this hand writing down

like on the A train to Vrindavana

in a poem I wrote for

Discovering Our Voices. **[No Italics]**

March 8

4:36 a.m.

Not spending as much time as I’d like on EJW. Art room, sitz bath, *japa* . . . not spending much time in reading *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* either. So gradually attempt these. You are alert. What are the GBC resolutions? I heard you gave an interview in Baltimore recalling the history of those times in 1977 but you were anxious you didn’t speak strongly and clearly as they wanted you to. You are not a good advocate to create the desired propaganda. You say all sorts of things that occur to your mind rather than what they want you to say according to script.

She said if you want to heal an illness you have to 1. Love your body and 2. Love life. I guess I do love those. But it doesn’t sound like Krishna conscious philosophy unless we adjust it and say I love to serve Krishna and this body is an important instrument. Thus I love the instrument that serves the Lord. Actually I love this service and the Lord and I also love the true me, the spirit soul. I love the self—that’s a way of loving Krishna, because He is the Self of the selves. Prahlada Maharaja explains this and it’s also explained by Shukadeva Gosvimî while discussing the *rasa* dance. We love our body but why? Because the self is present there, otherwise you can’t love your corpse. And why do we love ourself? Because Lord K®ß∫a is the Self of the self. Otherwise the soul has no standing.

Then, maybe you can heal. But maybe not. You are meant to have some pain at regular intervals. Let it come and when it does you may also attempt to counter it. Don’t think your tendency towards headaches is going away.

*Haribol*. There is Lord Nrsimhadeva’s hand of benediction—facing me in His picture on the wall. Here is the green drinking mug. And the various jars of pens, pills, eye-glassed cleaner, ink, etc. Here is a time in which to write. Shri Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Each day I start out first with the japa rounds and gradually try to fill up the hours in a worthwhile way. Next week is St. Patrick’s Day. Today is March 8th. Tomorrow I phone the doctor. Today I’ll receive a week’s mail. Today I’m telling you what is happening, what the day is for. It’s an opportunity to serve Radha-Krishna with human consciousness. That’s very rare and also brief. It should be well used, always in some form of *bhakti* with your *prana* (life air), your goods, your thoughts and your words. Serving Krishna night and day. When you sleep—and they are encouraging me to sleep more, but not after eating—that’s an attempt to restore powers and be more able to off-set migraines. I don’t have the worst kind of migraines with vomiting, aura and the tenth degree of pain. So never complain or even describe yourself as wretched, handicapped. I’m handicapped but not as bad as many are.

Shri Krishna Chaitanya. When someone rings the brass bell at our front gateway, we have to strain our ears to hear it. Did you bathe? Did you make a bowel movement this morning? That’s all right, you are still recovering. You’ll gradually get it together. But Shrila Prabhupada said emphatically there is no happiness in any of the fourteen worlds, not even in Brahmaloka. We are doomed to death and misery in these bodies but people don’t know it. They keep trying for bliss.

Don’t blame me, he plays on his flute, groping for a melody of his own. Then who shall we blame. The judge may blame you. You can’t control the events. They may not like your ballad. They may decide you’re a rascal. I don’t say so. Krishna is the one who decides these things in the end. He comps, He plays, He is the solo artist and the support. Learn to see Him in all things. Krsihna is the beloved, He’s the lover. No *jiva* can claim he or she is equal to the Supreme Lord.

He’s the source of all worlds and even big demigods like Brahma and Shiva. Don’t forget Lord Krsihna is the summon bonum of *Shrimad-Bhagavatam*. I am trying to glorify Him and preach out of my own moment. He’s the best dancer. He’s Keshava, with fine hair. He’s the Supersoul, the object of meditation—Vasudeva is all.

He’s the heat and light in fire, the penance of ascetics. What about bad things, is Krishna those things we so much decry like cruelty, hate, and unnecessary violence? No, don’t blame Him. You do it misusing His material energy.

It’s a spring-summer morning and you are hungry in New York City with no lover lady and only a part-time office job and only one suit of clothes and they may break into your apartment and steal it along with your phonograph and your bottle (hid on top pantry shelf) of weight-reducing pills. Weight-reducing is the last thing you need, but the pills make you speed along and forget your miseries. Ah, it’s summer in New York City busy early a.m. that’s enough for a little, skinny scooter to get by on. And if he can write down a haiku of experience.

I was saying Krishna is the goal we are seeking. I didn’t know it then. But now I do. Met the swami as did Howard and Keith and Wooly, I mean I can’t remember all the guys, Umapati. We came to him like flotsam and jetsam**.** Now still tied to him. Eternal master, grant me relief. You say one should not worship God the father to elicit service from Him. Rather we should serve the Supreme Lord. I agree. Do I seek to get you, O spiritual master, to serve me? I know that’s not right if I do it. I want to be your preacher and good devotee, that you’ll be proud of me. It’s a complex issue what ISKCON has become and how you view it, Shrila Prabhupada, but this I can say: I hope I’m fulfilling a role, contributing to the movement something it needs. No one of us can do it all. I should respect the contributions of each devotee.

*Haribol*. It itis. Me too ism. You be arya. I see too much too little. All glories to Shri Krishna and Radharani and thanks for Radha-Govinda appearing in my room.

Do I Have Survivor Status?

There is a wedding of some celebrity. There is an air trip. There is a decision of who would be in survivor’s status. The close friends of the family are in survivor status, but many people are not. I am being a servant and I don’t have any survivor status. Actually, somebody near the top said they would give me status, but they don’t give me anything really guaranteed. But I watch the elite play and joke and they had that status guaranteed that they would live even if their plane crashed or landed or whatever you want to call it.

9:40 a.m.

Stopped by rising headache, took a Zomig and it has gone down. So you can write but you canceled the pleasant walk around the outside of the house when I could have seen how the flowers are doing. M. just in hereon his way to Dublin, asked if I’d like a neck massage first. I said I’ve already spent so much time in therapy I wanted to write a little. Imagine myself on the phone tomorrow telling Dr. K. about my pills. Imagine him able to see them. I imagine seeing Krishna within the clouds.

Imagine-dream you are a street person and other people hunt you down. An American Indian tribe that you take on their costume as a disguise and you escape for the time being, walking down the city street and many other dangers and desperate adventures. But at least you meet people there, even religious leaders, who are very permissive about giving you shelter and bending their own rules. That’s how it is among the street people, so different than the superficially, morally upright Public Leaders.

You are imagining . . . while you are at it why not give me a cure for H.A. and . . . stop the jokes. We imagine as a natural function. I’ve got a little up time, purchased at twenty dollars per pill. Let us use some of it in reading *Shrimad Bhagavatam*.

9:55 a.m.

“Those who are intelligent and are of purified consciousness are completely satisfied in Krishna consciousness. Freed from the modes of material nature, they do not act for sense gratification; rather, since they are situated in their own occupational duties, they act as one is expected to act.” *(Bhag*. 3.3.25) Arjuna fought not for his own sense gratification but because Krishna ordered him to fight.

At the end of the universe, Lord Brahma goes back to Godhead. *Yogis* on Satyaloka also enter the kingdom of God when Lord Brahma is liberated. “Therefore my dear mother, by devotional service, take direct shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is seated in everyone’s heart.” *(Bhag*. 3.32.14) Devotional service is the only path for ultimate liberation. Desiring to enter impersonal oneness with God is not the perfect stage of life.

Passionate *karmis* are always busy for material improvements. They are not interested in hearing of the Supreme Lord’s pastimes. “They give up hearing the transcendental activities of the Lord and indulge in hearing the abominable activities of materialistic persons.” *(Bhag*. 3.32.19)

10:10 a.m.

They speak true so why not me my

truths? You mean, “My piles hurt

and how come they

haven’t gone away by now?” Or—no, not

just the trivia *(not* your headaches, too

repetitive) you’ve got to go below and deeper.

Deeper? To what layer? Five? Six? I can

repeat what I heard in the book and

can imitate Tukarama and say, “Reading

the scripture about you, Govinda, is not enough—

I want realization. Please give it to me or your

reputation will be hurt.”

My own? Body feels, mind’s passings.

I have no deeper except—feeling on Staten

Island crossing in our car last week and me

worrying because we hit a traffic jam and I

envisaged it continuing all the way to JFK and—

(yeah, use your imagination)—

we had to stay overnight in NYC because we

missed our plane so we go back in time and I’m

a kid again on S.I. but it’s 1999 . . .

write a novel. No, your feelings.

I’m feeling all right to get little extensions

of time units Coming up now the Shrila Prabhupada

*puja*. I’ve got a bottle of Radha-kunda

water to mix in with his bath water.

I’ll wash my hands and be ready for

that and try to hear his recorded lecture

while I massage and bathe him.

It is not easy. Tuka says it’s the

most difficult thing in the world to

please Lord Hari by writing poems.

11:50 a.m.

He’s stapling up new canvases downstairs. He’s wearing a suit, shirt and tie. The collar looks a bit loose around the neck and one sees he’s wearing a blue T-shirt underneath. Going to a job. Householder taking responsibility to earn some money. And me with time off to use as I like. But pinched by the body. You can do something each day. Earned your pension or it was given to you as a superficial by-product of *bhakti*. You are paid off. Did you miss the real essence of *bhakti* which is selfless surrender? “He should have died on the battlefield of preaching.” I won’t let those words hurt me. They serve to rally my self-defense.

Shri Krishna, waiting for lunch. Today Hare Krishna devi dasi cooks. I know the cooking particularities of each cook. Each has one day a week except Madhu who has two days. Days and days, as if they are endlessly strong in an infinite roll of seasons and years and decades . . . I even lived from one millennium to another, so it seems you will never die but just grow old with history. Not so! He is born in 1939 can’t expect to live another forty years to 2039. That’s brief. Write more poems in the meantime, leave behind something to help people, wriggley, curly lines that may look old fashioned later. Or perhaps even the English language could die out as did Egyptian hieroglyphics so that no one knew how to read it—until the genius Champollian came along and worked with the Rosetta Stone. You never can tell. Just prepare your consciousness to think of Krsihna—the way the swan likes to play in the lotus roots.

3:44 p.m.

We wuz painting. Chaitanya gave me more than half a dozen grainy and sand-filled paints for special effects. Come and see them. A man with a big broadderbyand a he-mouth agape and the word Krishna above him, Krishna tag on, Krishna from Prabhupada’s *bhajana*, Krishna from the Beethoven quartet,*krishnas tu bhagavan svayam*, he who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, is never lost to Me and I’m never lost to him. *Tilaka* for everyone. A white ghostly astonishing man down on his knees, *krishna-kirtana*. A man with naive closed eyes and long eye-lashes and only the word “Pray.” And a big one with lots of circus grainy stripes in the background and three guys in dancing, contorted, emphatic, aggressive, retreating, short-legged, bow-legged, bent kneed, harried, hands up-raised, fighting, ready to make peace—postures. You paint, you spray and then you scratch on the oil sticks. Getting tired, almost feverish, the hemorrhoids stinging like anything, don’t sit down . . . the floor is a mess, no one’s in the house, keep going. This is your time. Krishna in all.

4 p.m.

Oliver Sacks neurologist said migraine is

not merely physiological and can’t be treated only

with pharmacology. It has a psycho-

somatic aspect too. Some people use it, want

it. Am I like that? I like reading in previous

books that headache is merely bio-chemical

and that’s that. Just give me some pills and

let me write and paint—and read my

master’s *Shrimad-Bhagavatam*.

But no, Sacks says the doctor and patient

have to work together and find something maybe

in the lifestyle. A nun got migraine because

she couldn’t express her frank emotions

in the convent. A wife got migraines

because her husband was reckless in

treating his own diabetes. Fix the life

and the headaches go away.

I don’t believe it. My life is okay. Or I can’t

find the clue. Do you get piles because you are

thinking, “Life is a pain in the ass”? Headaches

because you are all-head and can’t find the

heart? Because God Krishna won’t reveal

Himself so much to you—in your head

are doubts and memories and mortality.

Oliver Sacks and Deena Metzger ought to meet

and talk it over in Meet Van Jorg, Guyana

in a wooden slat house on stilts.

As for me, I’ll stay here in Eire in

my Wicklow stone house, can’t walk outdoors for

hemorrhoid pain and Zomig costs 20 bucks

a throw. I paint and quote some Sanskrit

in my head, my aching ass, my

dear life as a devotee of the Lord.

4:58 p.m.

Sitting here in the empty house. Hear some children outside probably Pragosha’s boys. This body. This soul. This writing. The K®ß∫a consciousness movement in the world of *maya*. ISKCON itself not always transcendental to *maya*. Fumbling, quarrel, age of Kali. Poems for sale, veg for sale, strawberries for give away. Man self-sufficient in his hut says, “I told you so,” even before January 1, 2000. What will he say if nothing happens? What will I say if everything happens worse as they predict?

I’ll say I told you so, the thing we have to do is prepare ourselves spiritually. Shrila Prabhupada defined Philosophy as living with death in front of you. Prepare for next life crossing over at death. You may be an advanced devotee, that’s all right, but everything will actually be tested at the time of your death. Do you love Krishna? Do you fear giving up your body? Are you desperately attached and afraid in the bodily concept of life? It will be tested. The gurus and Vaishnavas can help you.

Listening for sounds. Dripping of two faucets in the bathroom. Refrigerator. Tick-tock. The shouts of those boys in twilight, maybe they are kicking a soccer ball. The objects in the room that make no noise but sit in space, with weight and shape—Panasonic Powerblaster, books on wooden shelf. The two hands of my body, one gripping the pen and scratching out the handwriting line by line and the other holding the legal pad in place on the binder and on my knee. The firm thumbs of the left hand and the right. They do their job.

Listen . . . do you hear? Is it the van coming up the hill? I always hear a vehicle in advance, then it fades out, then you hear it again. No, not the van, not yet. The picture Rama-raya dasa sent me of Lord Caitanya fingering a small set of *japa-mala*, feeling separation from Krishna. Photo of Shrila Prabhupada playing the *mridanga* outdoors, Golden Gate Park, S.F. 1967.

Just move along. Your life could change more. I like where it is now and yet I also don’t like the low level of attention and devotion to my *shravanam kirtanam vishnoh smaranam*. I like that I live so much alone with no tedious duties; don’t like headaches.

Associate with devotees. Oh, I do. I read about them. I write them letters. I hear about them and think of them, dream of them, hear their lectures and sometimes I have to see them, meet and talk. I live with a few of them. We go about our ways. The funny, simple pictures of people, faces, you paint and draw.

Just moving this along towards twilight, gray on this hill, at the foot of this high hill. Rathgorragh, Rathdangan, Kiltegan, nice sounds. Hare Krishna. Why don’t you read the *Bhagavatam* you skipped?

“My dear mother, I therefore advise that you take shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for His lotus feet are worth worshiping. Accept this with all devotion and love, for thus you can be situated in transcendental devotional service.” *(Bhag*. 3.32.22) *Sarva-bhavena*, in all-loving ecstasy. Reach *bhava* just prior to pure love of Godhead (*prema*). Krishna’s activities with His devotees are so sublime that we don’t have to divert our attention to anything else. Just worship Him and fix up all your activities in His service.

*Darshanam* means face to face. There must be Krishna and the devotee for them to meet. Even before they meet *(adarshanam marma-hatam karotu va*) the devotee is rapt in feelings of separation from Krishna. That is another kind of intimate personal relation.

I still don’t hear a car or van. It’s almost 5:30 p.m. There are wind chimes outside M.’s window and a brass bell out front on the road side. When M. returns he’ll have a week’s mail for me. It will probably include the summary of February’s world news. I still don’t hear, but almost.

5:44 p.m.

Now pick out Radha-Govinda’s clothes for tomorrow and tonight. The clothes shall be from the latest batch you got from Vrindavan. I keep forgetting to mix Radha-kunda water in with Shrila Prabhupada’s bath. Do something so you won’t forget. Maybe stick the bottle in his bathing tub. Soft, purple dresses, look up at Them. A devotee should live in a sacred place, worship and serve the spiritual master. I claim I do these things. The house has become sacred by the activities we do here, striving for Krishna consciousness. Reading, but tonight the two men were away so we didn’t have our out loud reading. Madhu can have two pieces of apple pie when he comes back. If Chaitanya comes by I’ll give him two pieces for he and his wife. The trees are all bare and will remain so for quite a while. But if you look closely you will probably see some tight, tight buds. It has been cold lately. Get ready for night.

March 9

12:06 a.m.

It is the early hour and I’m up. Usually I read *Shrimad*

*Bhagavatam* and write notes during this time. Why not submit to that again? It’s been a while. Do you have something urgent to say? Someone is haunted and wants to know how I may advise. Someone is doing well, lots of engagement as he reports it, and so I’ll reply upbeat but be careful not to reveal my heart. The world news is here, a thick bunch of pages, but I’ll refrain from spending this early hour on reading it and getting my mind splayed out. I . . . am inclined to go straight to *japa* as soon as possible. Lately I’ve been running out of steam early and going back to bed. Better I get as many rounds done before that happens.

Rounds done means saying them, at least. He chants his rounds. The world community of ISKCON. Someone sends me pages from the e-mail news; the sub-headings agitate, like *Time* magazine, meant to drive you to read the whole article.

“This instruction should be imparted by the spiritual master to persons who have taken the Supreme Personality of Godhead to be more dear than anything, who are not envious of anyone, who are perfectly cleansed and who have developed detachment for that which is outside the purview Krishna consciousness.” *(Bhag*. 3.32.42)

Discovering My Roots—Is My Grandfather

Actually The Father Of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura?

Dreams of traveling in subway places trying to discover my roots, like where my grandfather lived, and finding some connection between him and not just my family but Prabhupada and Lord Chaitanya, Bhaktivinoda Thakura. There is even a theory that my grandfather was perhaps the father of Lord Chaitanya, or something like that. Speculation, but I keep following it and I don’t know if it is right to do. It is dangerous, too, because there are mobs and gangsters down there, but people help us and people are interested in what we are trying to research. They help us excavate lost subway stations and places like that. We realize that by such empirical investigation, we really can’t find out anything, and if it contradicts what the scriptures and Prabhupada and the *parampara* say, I wouldn’t want to follow that anyway. I wouldn’t want to try to establish it. But in my dream I am getting a little long-headed, pig-headed. Even it came to a point where there is some question whether Bhaktivinoda Thakura was my father or grandfather.

4:08 a.m.

I hope I last okay for the 11 a.m. phone-call to Dr. Krohe (6 a.m. his time). I’ll take whatever pills I need to. So far so good.

Potsa lotsa. This is the . . . you’ll be haunted at death by jazz spirits unless you can convert them into dancing devotees. The man in India in saffron rode over the border and embraced the chief of Pakistan and then he returned the favor and came down to India. The man in saffron didn’t leave Vrindavana.

I am in the broadcast booth. Sixty-five minutes in an hour. Whatever comes. Here is the man, Stan Musial and Pele. Here is the book, *Alive*! Of the survivors in the Andes. There I go back in history writing Nimai in Canada lost. There is Jaya Gaura with his family observing their own morning program. I approve. A guru should speak the perfect truth; he is one to whom you can surrender. That’s why I don’t give advice on hives, ghostbusters, and Y2K. The news item says the biggest danger in Y2K is the people who think the worst will happen—it’s not the computers but the doomsdayers we fear.

He he. I is the purposeful fool. I wanted to tell you . . . Ekatvam got some compensation money from the government of Puerto Rico to rebuild his house after the hurricane. I’m glad for him, encourage him.

Be yourself, not an imitation of greats. I think that’s good news. Hare Krishna is the way we celebrate our Mass. I will not forget.

The bass is walking. The drum is snaring and splashing the symbols are bright in the dark room light—I am hearing it all from far away in my poor head. Up and down the line.

Krishna will spare us. But if you want to become a winner you’ve got to work hard at your craft. I don’t say rewrite, polish, reshape, redo—but then what is your craft? It’s the art of letting go and being Krishna conscious at the same time if you can find the trick. It’s done by the regular practice, returning to beginner’s mind. You are the tight-rope runner, you and Dumbo fly downward from the high top of the big circus tent. You cry out, “Hare Krishna!” hoping it will hold you up. But what if it doesn’t?

She said we tried chanting Hare Krishna and that wasn’t good enough. I mean of course, it was good enough but it did not provide a material miracle fix to my immediate situation. Therefore, I’m asking you what should we do?

I replied go on chanting as much as possible. I have no expertise in black arts so can’t tell you. I empathize for the need in your case. But surely non stop chanting is the bedrock, desperate means we all have when nothing else works. Hare Krishna and tears and asking Krishna’s mercy. You may therefore suspend all your other engagements.

Lotsa potsa means he has a lot of verve in his life duration. He is executing Krishna consciousness in the way that comes to him. But don’t be the center—Krishna is. Krishna speaks to us in *Gita* and *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* and in our lives. Provided we love Him and speak to Him. In Sakshi**-**gopala’s case He spoke to the devotee and also walked for the devotee. There are many instances. I don’t know how you view this but my opinion is . . .

Arjuna gave up friendly talk with Krishna because it wasn’t decisive. He surrendered, “I am your disciple.” Then Krishna taught the *Bhagavad-gita.* So the first thing is to find a spiritual master to whom you can surrender. Then you are allowed to inquire from him. But if you don’t surrender it’s a waste of time. Hare Krishna. He’ll tell you to chant, you can be sure of that. Rap-a-tap, rap-a-tap. He’ll tell you to play your snare. You better get in it then.

When the leaders enter the assembly don’t become envious of them. Don’t blaspheme preachers. Do your best to be on top of the situation by having happy hands in the beads game. When the mind wanders off *nama*, you just bring it back. You know what I mean?

He said I think so. I think you are about to depart for the serene waters. You want to sleep before breakfast and not after. You have to memorize the torrents. The God is Krishna, God in you means the Supreme Lord Krishna is in your heart. Not that you are yourself God. That’s nonsense Mayavadi talk. Hare Krishna straightens out the kinks of misunderstanding. It’s feeling, God-love for you.

7:26 a.m.

The bird chirping, I’m in the shed. Narcissus (like dandelion) blooming, but heads bent over on long necks, as if beaten by the storms and coming up too early. One batch has blossomed, the others are waiting. Biding my time. Taking time. The bird sings heartily in almost spring.

Cool weather still, but tight buds here and there on branches. Madhu goes to the fuel shed and brings back a bucket of turf pieces—because I’ll be using his house to make a phone-call. He will also have to shovel aside his debris and chaos on floor and desk in his room so I can use it.

Krishna in military, Krishna is prison . . . Shrila Prabhupada says a person doesn’t like to be alone. You can’t enjoy alone and therefore a conditioned soul gets a wife and children (family life without children is void). Wherefrom comes this idea of not being alone. It comes from Krishna who is also not alone. And yet I sometimes want to be alone. And in another sense, even when we are together in a family or commune, each of us remains alone. One soul per body. The lone self. After writing this I may go upstairs and lie down in bed. No harm. Madhu would like me to take more rest at a time in the night. I’m reluctant to break my longstanding habit of rising at midnight for reading and writing. Maybe.

Maple leaf Toronto. Oak leaf here, ashen, aspen. No aspirin or protocol. No amphetamine or opiods. He wants “Quiet please.” Leave him alone to have his headache. The migraineur falls into his bed, doesn’t want company. Endures the attack and then feels refreshed.

So I was saying, although I told the group that they should not write to me more than once a month, that was not for you. You may write me more often. Here is a photo of the mural I did five storeys high. It took me only three hours and I could have done it quicker except the hydraulic jack was slow in lifting me into position.

Here is the canvas of a white ghost (a good one) chanting and praying on his knees. Colorado Basin, Grand Canyon gorge, Yosemite Park, Buffalo, Ireland cheep-cheepy bird on the gravel path. Breathe in fresh air, mate. All set for the barbecue? It’s going to be vegetarian.

Yes, I sure hope nothing goes wrong. Let the economy sail on. Clinton got another second chance. He said he was profoundly sorry that he committed adultery right in the white house with a young woman. Escaped impeachment, furious with his enemies for impeaching him. “I’ll get them.”

Kosovo Serbs. I’m telling you, It’s enough just to pay attention to one’s Krishna consciousness. There is no other duty. We don’t say, come on, convert from Christianity to Hinduism. We say “Krishna consciousness” and it is a science. It is truth. It must be followed *ahaituky apratihata*, without motive or interruption, if you want to get the result.

Krishna Krishna, he chanted when it became difficult. His mind went to other things. Then back unfocused to the holy names. Teach people how to do it, but first do it yourself. *Apani acari prabhu jivere shikhaya*. Become perfect and teach others *yare dekha, tare kaha* . . .

Oh yeah, I’ll tell them—Do as I say, not as I do. Do love God and ask Him to show you His love. Don’t challenge God but pray sincerely, Lord, I am Your part and parcel eternally. You are the Supreme Person and I am a tiny *jiva* person. You have given me free will and I want to surrender to You. Please accept me. Please help me to chant otherwise there appears no hope that I can make a reform on my own or by the advise of brothers. Oh boy, oh pee-pee, you have a prostate gland that pinches the flow of urine. You have an eye that can’t see without glasses, a foot that needs a brace and no teeth. Are you making your way down the highway?

A book coming out with the review of the history of the twentieth century—dictators, Mussolini, Hitler, Japan. Stalin. FDR (?). McCarthy. Westminister, cigarettes—award a person fifty million dollars for getting cancer from smoking Marlboros.

The poor tobacco companies are fighting for life and so are the gun lobbies. I say it is all right to be a devotee of Krishna when I go to work. You don’t have to ask me that.

Krishna said in Vrindavana when people chant God’s names, the atmosphere is purified, people feel much better. Arrive in Vrindavana dazed. Go on *parikrama*? He can’t think straight, goes to room in guesthouse. Looks out grilled window. Hear sounds from the temple, *kirtana* and bells. Thinks “Yes, this Gaudiya Matha is something.” No wise cracks, gremlin. Horn of greed. Cocktails free, give it out. You’re almost broke. Give out hot chocolate drink but don’t offer to the Deities. Splash a tear from your eyes down the front of your jacket.

9:32 a.m.

Devahüti offered prayers to Lord Kapiladeva. Even the unborn Lord Brahma has to meditate for many years before Garbhodakashayi Vishnu speaks to him. Devahuti says at the time of devastation the Lord sometimes takes the form of a baby, floats on a banyan leaf and tastes the nectar of His own toe. In the form of Kapila, He gives knowledge and devotion to the fallen souls.

Madhu came into the room to give me a neck massage but I opted to stay with *Shrimad-Bhagavatam*. It’s becoming rare that I find time to stick it out in reading. By chanting the holy names of God one becomes purified on sin and eligible to perform brahminical sacrifice. “Oh, how glorious are they whose tongues are chanting Your holy names.” *(Bhag*. 3.33.7) They must have performed bathing at *tirthas*, Vedic study, etc., in order to now be chanting. It’s not an ordinary thing that someone takes up the chanting of *hari-nama*.

“The holy name has to be chanted to please the Supreme Lord, and not for any sense gratification or professional purpose.” It is good to hear the glories of the holy name and of hearing and remembering Lord Vishnu. It acts powerfully to purify one, even if he chants only once. But it must be God’s names. I’m fortunate to have these names, as Lord Chaitanya gave and as Bhaktivinoda Thakura affirmed. But can I chant with gratefulness and love, to please the Lord? That is my prayer.

11:40 a.m.

Happy Milque toast guy hanging up the phone,

“Good-bye doctor. *Haribol*.” What will he think

of that *haribol*? It just came out unplanned.

I told him I was grateful to work with him.

I asked him do I have to suffer (in his

opinion) after I’ve taken 2 Zomigs and 2 Ultrams

in a given week. He said yes, yes especially

don’t reach for the bottle of pills when you

have only a general type headache. And when you

get your right eye pain . . . well . . . no more than

2 Zomigs is what he said. And, “Let’s hope

you won’t *have* more than four of those a week.”

Got my orders for another week. Disciple of

a doctor. They call it *patient*. Keep in the

program and see what happens. What about

my piles?

What about the vomiting? See a local doctor,

says M.

Write with my own purpose, only ten or

fifteen minutes talk

was all he had and now I’m on my own again.

Rise up to Lord Krishna. You should be so fortunate as to phone

*Him* in the spiritual world. Lord? This is me,

(I wouldn’t have to say, “Stephen Guarino

in Ireland,”)—but

it’s me Satsvarupa dasa (forget Goswami)—

Do You love me,

remember me? I know You do. God is infinite and

He wouldn’t give you the impression

that this phone-call

better be brief because He’s busy with

other erring and pure

souls. He can give you all His time.

And yet I can call Dr. Krohe but not

the Supreme Lord.

Prabhupada says (can I call him?) that chanting the

Lord’s names is as good as being with Him.

Why don’t I feel it? Why not chant

with the expectation

and willing submission with which I call my doctor?

2:05 p.m.

Lord Kapila replied to His mother’s prayers. “The Personality of Godhead said: My dear mother, the path of self-realization which I have already instructed to you is very easy. You can execute the system without difficulty, and by following it you shall very soon be liberated, even within your present body.” *(Bhag.* 3.33.10) Ah, that’s what we want to hear, that it’s easy and we can become liberated in this life. Yes, Lord, make it easier still and more liberated still, so it can reach even me. If one is a hundred percent engaged in the service of the Lord, then he’s liberated, even if he’s in the material body.

Lord Kapila then took permission from His mother and left home, His mission fulfilled. Devahuti remained at home and practiced *bhakti-yoga* in *samadhi*.

4 p.m.

Wittgenstein: “What *can* be shown, *cannot* be said.” Oh, the savage last strokes on the canvas. After I had a neat circus tent canvas face drawn of thy own self out of pigments shown in mirror with jaw and all, the words, “Don’t tread on me, please”—then I went back and maddened it as if I’d gone back after a few drinks. It was needed however, to make the impression more exciting.

Oh, but what is the use of it? Is this the face upon the barroom floor or the picture of Dorian Grayin which the artist simply dies for no good cause? We prefer you enlist yourself neatly in the *sankirtana* movement in a way that God and His pure devotee will be pleased.

I reply that is exactly what I want to do but it is better to do it by messing up sometimes the neat exterior and showing the agitation in the hand and blood. I don’t mean ill. But those forces are still running through this sixty-year-old man. He’s not entirely tamed by doctors and assistants and institutional heads and committees. There is some wild men and aborigine shaman and poet in him, let him come out and also celebrate for Shri Krishna Chaitanya, just as we have heard there are some *avadhutas* in the group. And we all have them within us. It’s a shame when they come out in destructive ways and disturb the individual as well as those around him or her.

What else did you paint? I did a stocky Tulasi devi as best I could with grainy, sandy, brown wood (you could make beads from her after she leaves her body) and green leaves stocky carpenter’s Tulasi-devi in a pot. And some strange figures facing each other, men and women, I don’t know what they are doing but each painting has a few KC words in it. One is a very simple cartoon face in profile with words addressed to the Supreme Lord saying, “I want to be Your devotee and the devotee of your devotee but I am a fool and fallen, please save me.” It is visual and visceral. I thanked Chaitanya for mixing the sand into the paint and down on my knees painting what came, sure it would come to a Krishna conscious conclusion because what else do we live for?

4:15 p.m.

Calm down by the lake, no lake.

Calm down in the house in the

body sixty years. Calm down,

go gentle, you have nothing to rip up.

Preserve, steer, make it Krishna’s.

Your job is to preach. Sorry about

that word. Canvas. Enlighten.

Share, take your pick.

Infiltrate. My job is to be, even if

my fingernail splits and the piles bleed.

Preach, canvas, terrorize, obliterate,

obviously some of those words don’t belong

in a gentle, truthful, *brahmana’s* life.

People think the Hare Krishna movement is scan,

scam, confrontation, hide up,

cult madness up front dogmatics—

God in huge form created the universes

out of His pores and one of them from His

navel on a stem.

Tell. Educate. Trick. Food for life.

Life for life. God is Krishna. Krishna is Krishna.

The devotee lives in his own world and goes

out to make propaganda, sell books, polish

slippers, collect *laksmi* bear witness and

then he comes back to the temple *mandira*

house (takes shoes off outside, wears *dhoti*,

shaves head, puts on *tilaka*)— smiles to the

arriving guests and gets ready to honor

*prasadam* perhaps the most favorite

part of the day—brief (10 minutes) as it

is take rest, fry out, Don’t believe

you’ll ever die *aham brahmasmi*

I am Krishna’s slave.

5:36 p.m.

Orange sweatshirt came to town. They asked him to find the metaphor that best expressed his disease or his way of life. And see if he could find a relationship between political reality and the condition of his own body. Eh . . . duh . . . I can’t seem to come up with one.

That’s all right. It may take time. Tony Bennett in the 1950s. The jerk. The Danny Thomas Show. Another actor clown—Danny Kaye, remember him, a Hans Christian Anderson sort of red-haired fellow. The metaphor is something else. We’d want it to serve in Krishna consciousness. Otherwise *shrama eva hi kevalam*. My disease is a bankrupt note. It’s a bluff—all the better to see you with my dear, the Wolf in Granny’s nightgown and bonnet. But where was Granny? Had he killed and eaten her? That would be a tragedy and defect to the story which is supposed to end happily ever after when the wood chopper hears Red Riding Hood’s calls for help and bursts into the little house to kill the wolf. Emergency solution. But what about Granny?

Read with Madhu, ten names glorifying Radha, then a hundred and eight names of Radha, then eight verses praising Radha, all by Shrila Rupa Gosvami. Very nice and I can hear them again because we recorded it. Something about the day. It goes by and I don’t cease it for EJW. I’m not bearing down on it to shape it into a mold. Thus maybe I am not making literature. Afraid it may turn into a diary. No, that won’t happen as long as you can dance and reflect and free-write.

But diary is also not a sin. It’s a form. The day and the hours. Main thing is life in KC. Don’t live as if dead. *Svargapavarga-narakeshu api tulyartha-darshina˙*.

I am happy. He is sad. She is somewhere else. Three on a porch. Poets each with a gift. He writes in a three line variable foot stanza, each one floats in a three tier structure like an oriental roof, lines uneven. Can you do it?

Peter Dale Scott. WCW. Walt Witman. The metaphor of my illness is a starved face. Eat more, Swamiji said. But M. says it must be according to what a nutritionist said is good for your health, some bread, pasta, rice and beans. Eat that. Oh yeah, you son of a gun. Write from heart and hip. Write from midnight to sun-up to sun-over to sun-down. Hare Krishna chanting comes from Krishnaloka. Let’s see if any proofreaders come forward. Let’s see your life on O’Connell Street. Let’s see how long you stay in Dublin, what happens in 2000. Let’s see if your headaches improve. Let’s see if you pass for a boy or girl and if at the end of your life you think of Krishna in love.

6:45 p.m., Night Notes

Bhurijana Prabhu got his visa and is going to India. Parthasarathi Prabhu was recently in India and got many realizations while staying at Govardhana Hill. One realization was to increase his worship of his Govardhana *shilas*. Bhurijana Prabhu’s wife, Jagatarini Prabhu, just came back from two and a half months in Vrindavana. What does that make me think? That I should go there. Just as I was agitating my mind with these thoughts, I was also putting Shrimati Radharani into Her bed. She was looking at me and I was looking at Her and so it occurred to me—“Why are you thinking of going to Vrindavana? Radha-Govinda are right here. You don’t have to go anywhere.” Vrindavana is a state of mind. I have my reticule with a picture of Lord Chaitanya on the top of it and Vrindavana sand within. Prabhupada is here. An in fact I could not take Radha-Govinda with me if I went to India. Alien India. At home in Wicklow with Radha and Govinda.

Of course, there is something special when you go there. But maybe it eludes me. Meet it here.

March 10

12:25 a.m.

Hello Folks, this is Thomas Hardy. I’m in a hurry and can’t write in this space. I lingers in bed nowadays and when I get up I rush to the japa beads before my energy runs out. I’ll be back before too long to tell you what’s new according to the Enneagram and when my enervated nerve endings are less self-conscious and more God-conscious. Please don’t betray me. I need a lot of love to go through this passage.

Yours in funnies,

Beatrice Botrad

5:20 a.m.

I took an Ultram at 12:30 midnight and then at 4 a.m. but to no avail. I’m not feeling patient about it either and I’m trying to get it toe-hold again in *Shrimad-Bhagavatam*, those lovely early edition volumes that are lined up on the top level of my bookshelf. I think there is a *shloka* somewhere that says even if you can’t prosecute devotional service but you desire to, you get the credit. I’ll speak with Madhu about this. He’s good at calming me down so that I accept less than what I want to do. Accept that I live with a chronic condition that limits me in quantitative action. There is no need to resent this. See it as coming from Krishna.

9:21 a.m.

Vomiting. So I can’t work at literature or painting. Some kind of thinking of Krishna is possible, a state of KC.

2:46 p.m.

Another vomiting day. Can’t eat or drink. At noon M. rushed me to the doctor in Baltinglass. I’m becoming a familiar figure there. There was a ninety-eight-year-old gentleman in the waiting room, well dressed and alert, a diabetic. The nurse gave me a shot for the vomiting. The doctor says it’s a “bug” going around. But there may be a connection with my med, Ultram. Spend the afternoon this way hanging out in doctor’s waiting room. Writing this in the van while M. is at the chemist shop. I have no paper and I’m writing this on a half blank glossary page of *Passing Places, Eternal Truths.* Sick, old, defective. The doctor closed the door and asked if I was anxious about anything in my life. I said, “No, I’m well situated. I’m not anxious.”

I fasted all day so far. The injection has calmed me temporarily and so I’ll eat. I have right eye headache.

3:50 p.m.

Spoke with M. about the saying that if you want to heal you have to love your body and love life. I said these phrases would be buzz words for many devotees who would guffaw, “That’s *maya*!” But M. and I take it on face value that as long as you love your body in connection with Krishna—who gave us these bodies and whom we can serve with these bodies—then it’s not *maya*. And those who might peremptorily condemn the phrase, “Love your body,” are also seen loving their bodies, loving to eat (yes, *prasadam* but lots of it and sumptuous to their particular *ruci*). Seeking comfort and strength and enjoyment for their bodies in various ways. Love life? Look at the Wicklow mountains and the sky. Don’t you love this life you have been given by God?

Of course, we have to leave these bodies and this life. And we’ll get new bodies, new life. Seek Krishna the center of it all. I’m trying to do that, feebly.

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, murmuring, mouthing the mantras to myself when I’m in public. Our best friend, *hari-nama*.

March 11

12 Midnight

Don’t lie so much. I don’t want to go to a doctor’s office again today. I want to stay here and read *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* and write and be myself that way. The ordinary monk in a *sattva-guna* and above that. O Prabhupada, I called your name as we rode from Baltinglass back to Wicklow. It could have been back to the Krishna-Balarama *mandira* in Vrindavana. Anywhere you call home and a short drive to return there after running an errand such as a visit to the doctor.

I’m writing this with the pad propped on my knees and sitting in the sitz bath, which is placed over the toilet seat. I’m hoping that pile will go down. Hoping we live a “decent” duration. And while we live, I’m hoping we can continue our work and make a contribution to the Krishna conscious culture all over the world. “Could you write a letter encouraging them?”

The bug goes around and makes people vomit. After a day of it, we get an injection and go back gratefully to our usual business. When the fifteen minute bath is up, I’ll go upstairs and begin my *japa*. Give it the best time. Pray to pray, that is, to pay attention to the names as you chant them and to feel the message, “O energy of the Lord, O Lord, please engage me in Your service.”

Once upon a time Curly McCrew and his friends all became Vaishnavas. They encouraged their sons and daughters to join the ISKCON youth club. They transformed their lives and their homes. At least they made an altar in their house or flat and enshrined pictures or a statue of Gaura-Nitai, Radha- Krishna, Shrila Prabhupada. This is good. It is happening, but on a very small scale. We work realistically and try to build a congregation. Sometimes it’s thankless work. You introduce someone to Krishna consciousness and they go away to an ISKCON schism or lapse back into their old materialistic ways. Then you continue finding new ones.

Yes, I say once upon a time I rode a blue bicycle, it was a rough trail model. Two of us, Bala and I, pedaled for health off Gita-nagari farm and back again. Those days are gone and the bikes too, I guess. But I continue, like a wood knot. The Egyptian tombs, did they give you an idea? The hieroglyphics. Discover the unknown in Sanskrit. Write a praise of Krishna from whom comes all worlds. Everything originates in the *Vedas*, in the Absolute Truth, *janmadya asya yata˙*. He’s not sectarian but is for all and the Lord of all, *sarva-loka-maheshvaram*.

Coming near the end of this bath. May it improve your life. May God bless you so that you may extend His blessings to others. Be humble about your achievement. It’s all borrowed plumes. He is the ability in man. Art comes from Him and all the materials of art. Use it in His service—paint His *lilas*, His devotees, His words.

10:05 a.m.

Finished reading the Kapiladeva chapters. When Kapiladeva left home, His mother, Devahuti, was afflicted with transcendental grief. If one aspires for it, he or she could become a parent of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Devahuti forget her bodily identity or care, but the celestial maidservants took care of her. She was in *samadhi* on Lord Kapiladeva and eventually entered the planet known as Kapila Vaikuntha. Kapila continued traveling on earth and went to the ocean side at the Bay of Bengal where He still remains in trance.

Reading *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* is different than any other reading. You have to accept many phenomena which are impossible by material standards of behavior. You read it as scripture and simply accept it. Or perhaps deep within yourself you can’t accept it, don’t have the faith and realization. If that’s the case, then your acceptance is dogmatic religion: “This is what the sacred book of our religion says and therefore I accept it.” Deep, simple faith is as good as realization—or at least it’s a good preliminary.

The perfect answers on the queries are not always satisfying. We need to discuss it humanly, break down the perfect answers or get them in a human way. Especially if the person speaking perfect answers is rude, harsh, or condemning, then we may turn away from him. Seek solace—but do seek the perfect standard, not speculative humanism or eclecticism.

I’m not going to the doctor’s today. Frittered my morning in weakness, sleep, poor rounds, no real schedule. So at least I sat and read about fifteen minutes and that was good. What shall I read next?

Porthaven, Brookhaven, all points west. The mind of a Shaeffer pen is fictive indeed. You want to personify an object and tell its tale? How he shipped out to India and met a sage? So many children’s books with a theme like that. And here I am actually in orange sweatshirt and clipped fingernails—I am not this body, I am a reader of the teachings of Kapiladeva, so how da ya do.

11:22 a.m.

Asking you to give a little attention to your writing. Return to it this afternoon instead of the art room. Find what you want to say by attempting it.

Muzzlemast went to sea

where he found a princess in a pea.

“I’m too distracted,” she did say

and aweigh the anchors roared.

Muzzlemast went down the deep

he found an algae there, a creep.

“Do not bodder me and I’ll give

you your wish,” said the slimy fish,

and Muzzlemast agreed but

was peeved.

He brooded and wrote and wondered

Am I meant for something else?

There was no one to ask and

he prayed at the mast

while writing his way

o’er the sea.

11:40 a.m.

My song is a quarter to twelve and I’m

waiting eagerly for Madhu’s simple meal,

he’s cooking *kicchari* with bread from the

restaurant and maybe korela and ginger pieces.

Some olive oil for the bread.

I’m eager to fill my belly. Sit in front of

Prabhupada and Radha- Krishna as I eat

half forgetting Their presence and yet aware

all the same that they watch and

protect me. I worship them my own

way and I hope they accept it.

Can’t do better. Once again you wonder

what if some peer authorities were to size

me up or ask me to do more. But

can’t they see I puked my guts up two

days this week and headaches most

days? Yeah I’m clear I’m cool

with my old age (pension) and illness.

Cool to live into the Twenty-first century

before I die. Go easy, he’ll go where next

life? Why didn’t he use up more

energy and sacrifice for God and guru?

Or if he’s going the self-honesty route

why not bare all and bare knuckles

to the bone?

Old man’s home wants it easy in

slippers. Be careful don’t make a

major mistake. You’re on your own

on the ISKCON social security pension and

we’ll check you out and test you

when it’s time—say the

voices of fate

or I imagine.

2:07 p.m.

Shrila Prabhupada opens the Forth Canto by offering respectful obeisances to Shri Shrimad Bhaktisiddhanta Gosvami Prabhupada, “by whose order I am engaged in this Herculean task of writing commentary on the *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* as the Bhaktivedanta purports.” *(Bhag*. 4.1.1) And I think of what I’m writing. How to bow down, what to call it, how to pray? May these EJW scribblings be passable. May my life rise up to worthiness in your eyes. Please see some good and make some good appear in me.

Little grains appear on the page as I read, little floating obstructions in sight. Should I mention it or attempt to overlook it? You don’t want to go to an eye doctor again. But if . . . your sight is dwindling.

Rest, it’s okay. Rest is good for your, Hercules. Don’t put down the weight of the world, but rest it a moment or two.

2:35 p.m.

Oh, oh, we are one. I and me writing in this shed. Hear the sheep protesting in the cold and rain on distant hill. Animals killed on the way to slaughter. Are we better because we speak against it in our lectures and essays? It is something, the speaking against.

No erstwhile and ersatz, the truth thing no one minds, that is, that we are eternal servants of the servant of God. Take that position, as does Tulasi devi. You are tired? Why is that? Some medication or something weighing down on your mind and spirits? It could be the piles or the tummy or the head. Speedboat ahead, we will reach Berbice by evening and even may fly on to East Sycamore or Shantytown, Essiquibo, land o’ Plenty.

B. O. Plenty and Gravel Gerty had a child with wings named Sparkle Plenty. That’s fair enough. They are all friends of Dick Tracy so they are friends to me. In those days each panel of the comic was looked at with aspiration—shall she be called a baby with wings? You were so young and nothing else much was happening in your life.

Now of course, it’s different. Now I’m a big devotee and rolling down the window. Now I’m a small devotee living in the country. If we get the call to come out because some religious big-shot wants to see me, I’ll come out but I’ll resent it. I’ll have access to my meds and side gripes to my dearmost. But acquiesce we will if we get the call.

In the mail it could come, a cucumber or herbal potion made by Divine Forest Products, here, take this and you’ll never suffer again. May we perform remote therapy on you by calling on our good angels while you are asleep? I say I’d rather not, although I have nothing against your personal practice. I’m under care of Dr. K. and certain apharmalogical means to the end.

Is it all right if I just sit on one cheek of my buttocks so I don’t disturb the bloody piles? Can I speak of stupid and ordinary things along with the sublime heights? Am I a crash out case who lives in his head?

The mimicking men laughed when I could find no space in my gums to melt down their office pill. Laugh doctor, your own locks are awry and your walrus mustache is amusing to me with your stethoscope dangling and your Irish brogues and fine weather to ya too. You are certainly pleasant enough to me so I don’t mind your getting a moment of relief and laughter at my case. I returns it to you.

I am willing to be the catalyst in a grand plan, the devotees sought to unite their nation in *sankirtana*. I said I think the preaching is going well as it is. He said it sure could be made better if we invited another Titan in, but they say you are afraid it may disturb your false ego, your eggs in basket and you’ll flee the country ’twould be a pity if we could not correct that, what do you think? He dared to bring it up.

This is rhetoric shit, beat around the bush. I’m in the shed and I may write what I like, literature as in Samson and Delilah. Go to the movies and shut your mouth, “Uh-oh Plutonium!” is playing in a theater starring Ann Waldman and Alex . . .

Aorta stop vein. Be holy. He said if you try to be holy and fear that you’re not perfect, these are both dwelling on yourself. True mantra meditation occurs when you drop yourself and turn to the mantra—and the mantra is God Himself as His holy name form. I believe in God the creator of all things. In *Bhagavad-gita* He speaks best. We choose this way. I can’t sit up straight, excuse me, this is therefore crooked writing. I have a curvy spine and sore ass and it’s warm in here with my coat on and I’m writing against the clock.

The rain drops are methodic, monotone music melody drops.

The sound off is okay. The religion teacher for Krishna consciousness may be allowed to enter the campus as a cleric and give a *yoga* class. He may also distribute books on the street as long as we get no complaints. There are active forces against him and the President was preoccupied with his impeachment case and his enemies therein.

So he couldn’t help us either. I don’t like this democracy, said our master. But there are no more good kings also, he admits. So let us try to influence wherever we can as to the efficacy of chanting Hare Krishna mantra and in hearing about Krishna and His *parishadas*. Shrila Prabhupada dedicates the *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* Fourth Canto and prays to them all, his spiritual master, Lord Chaitanya and Radha and Krishna and Their entourage and all pure devotees of Krishna.

Tulasi is the most exalted because she never leaves the lotus feet of the Lord. Lakshmi sometimes leaves but not Tulasi. I don’t exactly understand but I could repeat it. I could say what the books say and what my back of hand looks like with veins standing and criss-cross little lines. I won’t paint today but what? Just sit and be tired? You must do something nice. Be a top skater, a top-knot, look out—on your left! Here comes Time to blur your vision. You could eat a steak. No—never—superfluous.

3:20 p.m.

Lean over and write you have a right.

The house is empty and your fans would

love it if you hit a home run

whereas your detractors . . . detract.

Lean over and write with a thumb that

grips, “I will get through the afternoon

restfully and that’s enough my servant assured

me.” I like it when nothing happens

Stafford said, quiet days at Clichey.

Quiet days at the foot of the hill

known as Wicklow mountain—and raining,

raining, cold and raining so that the

crocuses are dropped over yellow and chill.

We will live to the evening. We will eat

a snack and stay up to digest it and then go

to sleep. This is pitiful, small events but

I prefer it to the grand sweep of a political

epic reading into the actions of Prime

ministers and kings and big money

and big professors.

Angel in the night go and heal that fellow.

No, never mind, he said he doesn’t allow it.

He prays on his own to Hare Krishna and

we must respect his decision. But let

him not put down our own Reiki.

He doesn’t. He just wants to be left alone.

Roar on mountain stream, down hill

this last day before March 12,

you’ll dry up and rev up with

next rain, long moments,

short lives. Will the Krishna consciousness

movement help win over?

4:02 p.m.

Every section of his *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* is well known to me. But that’s not a reason to refuse a re-reading. Now coming up, the story of Lord Shiva insulted at the Daksha *yajna*. A bitter debate and hurled insults reminiscent of some ISKCON debates and schisms and meetings.

When I was in Baltimore in the basement, I looked out to them and the impression of some of their faces is still with me. We assure each other that we are still alive, even though the faces are fading and changing. Some people age well. Some not so well. But at least you recognize them and say hello. I was saying that *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* is well known to me. So don’t be upset. Don’t get nervous or bored. Read it as if you are reading it for the first time. Or let’s say read it assuming you are not perfect and you still have plenty to learn. Honor Lord Shiva and what Shrila Prabhupada is teaching. Learn about *brahmanas* and Shiva followers and think over what you should do now and hear.

When you pause and think you have nothing to say . . . Vegavati is attending a writing course in a community college. She likes it very much. It’s an evening class and when she returns home she’s too excited to go to sleep. The teacher advised her to write narrative and autobiography. He said, “Fiction is fiction and is easy to dismiss as such.” Whereas when you tell what actually happened to you it’s harder for someone to say, “Oh, that’s not true or I don’t accept your feelings on this. You are an authority on your life to some degree.”

Another man told me he doesn’t write me letters all these years because he doesn’t want to disturb me. Maybe, I said, you could write in a way that wouldn’t disturb me. But he thinks if he tells what’s really on his mind it will just agitate me, so he keeps still. But then he wrote me one. I forget just now what he said, something about how hard it was to grow up and get married and now to have to work like a donkey. And now we are at the bottom of another page so we chant you good-bye, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna vHare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare. That’s the best thing to say on any occasion such as Y2K or the end of the world as predicted three times by Jehovah witnesses.

March 12

8:15 a.m.

Late start, here in shed. Black pen. Goloka brought me a vase of daffodils. At this time of year they grow in profusion along the main highway into Dublin. I feel so lethargic in the late morning, as if I’m down in the pit and can’t climb out. Oh, tell the doctor. What’s the use? He doesn’t have a remedy to all my ills. It could be I’m lacking a vitamin, getting a side effect of something I took at night—or it’s just the sluggish nature of a conditioned slug.

Am I at the top of the ladder of eight million four hundred thousand species? Where the stand-up comedians go. Cold, cold at least the *karmis* are capable of rushing to work (like moths into the flame). Don’t listen to or follow any philosophy which contradicts the work ethic. Poets are dangerous too. And Hare Krishna cult, what does it say, “Drop out and tune into the mantra”? No thanks, I just pray no son or daughter of mine ever falls into their clutches.

They have an island up north I heard, where they keep their captives. Don’t feed them, keep them skinny and they run around with a herd of deer. They sing in the earliest hours of the morning Hare Krishna Hare Krishna and play a drum and dance before the statues of Radha and Krishna.

Late, but now you are rolling along. A new manuscript to proofread. A day to celebrate. Don’t let it slip past you. Take the opportunity to say hello to Shyamananda who has come to photograph your paintings. Be kind and smiley to the people in your life. And set an example for them by your own chanting and reading. Live as a *sannyasi* even though you are an odd one.

M. erased a side of a tape with my letters on it. I’m sorry. Think of who I might have written to. Letters are such an important part of my life—my link with the world. And my writings which get published years after I write them.

Twinkle twinkle little star, the bird is chirping in the dank, wet outdoors. The misty cloud sits on our hill all day and our world is dark. If you live down in a valley you wouldn’t get this. But we live in it, wet and cold and that’s all right with me but I think the flowers must be “freezing” or almost.

I can tell from your writing that you have not been reading scripture this morning. That’s not true. Let me remember . . . he said maybe something about the *kshatriyas* and Draupadi, Krishna gave her unlimited lengths of *sari* and her honor was saved. So these men were not gentlemen. But Arjuna was very carefully considering whether an act he was about commit was pious or impious. He’s a typical good Vaishnava. *Ahimsa*, that’s the third quality in the *Bhagavad-gita* list which Shrila Prabhupada said gives the qualities of a godly person. He doesn’t want to kill. A devotee has all the good qualities automatically; he doesn’t have to try to achieve them separately. When I heard that I wondered whether the ISKCON devotees will still claim that they have all the good qualities or even that they are gradually developing them faster than everyone else or that they have no need to develop any qualities separately. All they need to do is chant Hare Krishna and do service in the temple.

Maybe. Who won this year’s Academy Awards, Pulitzer and noble prizes? It’s too early for the world series. Everyone will say this is the last year of the century and the millennium. It doesn’t really mean anything but they say it. Twenty-first century. It should not mean much to me. I’m left over from the Twentieth century. I’m trying to live out until the end, the life of a devotee, a follower of Shrila Prabhupada. That’s the honor I want and dishonor would be worse than death.

So folks and folken, we have to admit I could recall some *shastra*. It wasn’t very hard. We also know that Rama, Krishna and Lord Narayana do not need a woman of the material modes. They expand into Their pleasure potency as Radha, Sita and Lakshmi. Shrila Prabhupada brought this up when stating that Rama killed the whole dynasty of Ravana because Rama’s wife Sita had been kidnapped by the demon.

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna. There is no fault in me, just a little indigestion and piles and tendency for headaches. Those are bodily defects and not serious or changing enough to put onto the Internet news about various devotees. One brother had major surgery and that was reported, but certainly not my headaches; I wouldn’t want that. The best thing for me is this relative obscurity. You have to be diligent and write quickly as you did in the old days. You are slower now but we still expect you to come across with goods. It is spring, you’re not out there to see it in the vegetable market or on a hill in Sicily with wild flowers. But you got it in that vase of daffodils which now stands behind Radha-Govinda, and in the many ways the haiku poets perceive it—mud in clogs, a yellow sky, a banjo-like instrument hanging in a tea stall, a small tree, the height of Mount Fuji, the poet in lassitude.

9 a.m.

Seeing Krishna within the cloud of my illnesses; within the scattered dust of my mind; within the complex and moving web of trains of thought; seeing Krishna where He is fully present in His name and form and pastimes and instructions—although I can’t see Him fully there. Because I have chosen to live under a cloud. Because I can’t come out from under it. Better something than nothing. I’m sure that somehow He is present even though I only see the cloud around him.

9:10 a.m.

I was in the shed waking up;

I came in and crouched low to the floor

where Shyamananda was and we talked.

He’s photographing in the dark with a new

Tungsten flash bulb and he says it works better.

We never mention what he’s photoing.

It’s my paintings, for use in EJW.

I painted there early this morning instead

of writing or reading or attending *mangala-arati*.

I painted two of Prabhupada and I liked them.

I did one of two animals wild and

“*Samsara-dava* ,” it said over their heads.

And one of something else—a man with

lots of rough sand mixture in his eyes

looking to the left, a little like Prabhupada

but not done in reverence.

Anyway you don’t have to talk of

paintings, right? They speak for themselves.

But I have nothing else to say. Daffodils,

Shyama, I ask him does he have a letter?

No, not yet. He’s only been living two months

in his new situation he says. We talk of

Shilavati’s success in the theater. He said she

plays a very heavy tough character and she’s

getting exhausted by it—the play has been

extended until Easter.

And you? You paint I know, but what else?

You feel sick often, but what else? Can you

tell us of some preaching mission or of

Vrindavana or your soul or Therese of

Lisieux’s soul? A poem? Can you give

us some food? Anything deeper.

I sigh and say no, just this

while you were watching, I gave this.

9:30 a.m.

The Forth Canto starts with a genealogical table. You don’t read each and every one. One son born of Ruchi and Akuti was Yajna, an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Work must be done as a sacrifice for Vishnu; otherwise it binds you to this world. Yajna married Dakshina; they were an ideal couple. In Kali-yuga, “there are no ideal husbands and wives, therefore unwanted children are produced and there is no peace and prosperity in the present-day world.” *(Bhag*. 4.1.4, purport)

Pure Krishna consciousness is the birthright of all *jivas*; all are part and parcel of the Supreme Lord. “The consciousness of the Lord is also in the part and parcel, and according to the proportion to which that consciousness is cleared of material dirt, the living entities are differently situated.” *(Bhag*. 4.1.15, purport)

11:15 a.m.

The EJW I’m proofreading tells of our visit to Spain in September of 1997. It’s called, *Econoline Preacher*. Kdd edited it and passed it on to me saying there is more worrying and doubt in my writing when I am traveling than when I am at home where I usually face my reality. Okay, let’s do it, accept the rain on the skylight and love it. The men coming into the house . . . Aniruddha is going to make a little art table on the second floor landing and I hope that will impel me to more of those Bristol board calligraphy drawings. Accept you don’t go out, you write and read within an enclosed day. You range out in the mind and the imagination. There is plenty of scope for it. Be at peace. Tell your story.

You mean when you stay here you don’t have doubts?

I have doubts and bouts too. But I resolve them without traveling. Lecture in your head, let your hand go free to write something in *parampara*. Shukadeva Gosvami . . . Suta Gosvami spoke near the Nimsar. Still in India that place is there near the Naimisaranya railway station. It is a very peaceful place I’ve heard. Better in a material sense than Vrindavana. It’s not far from Wicklow, I mean Lucknow. I was in Lucknow also I remember to see an Åyurvedic with Baladeva and Madhu, the year I resigned from the GBC. It wasn’t a very good thing, was it? No, I didn’t do so well there but believed maybe they could help me. A doctor and his father who wore many rings. They were supposed to get you to gain weight and learn how to cook the Ayurvedic way with the right spices and take the medicines and do exercises. I think much of it was bunk.

Oh, and now it’s not bunk what you are getting from Johns Hopkins?

I don’t know. I only know I feel okay today. But we want to hear more Vedic knowledge. Aniruddha confessed to me he really balked the other day in his reading of the Forth Canto when he came upon the purport stating three kinds of travel, one of which is by pigeons. A bunch of pigeons get together and they carry a man, something like you ride on a carpet. Ani said he had accepted that man hadn’t gone to the moon and many far out things but this tripped him up and he thought, “Come on, man, you can’t be serious?” Later in his letter he wrote that if his faith could fly off when he read that purport, why not believe that the pigeons could fly off? He didn’t ask me to give a scientific explanation. I’m sure Sadaputa could give one. Or perhaps he’d have to laugh too and say it was inconceivable and say it really means something else.

Hickory-dock, I am racing with the moon. I am a boy in short pants. No, I am an old man in a *dhoti*, I am not a *maha-bhagavata* and neither is anyone else I know except Shrila Prabhupada.

How do you know he is?

Because he spread Krishna consciousness all over the world. His books make many devotees.

Hickory-dock, I’m waiting until 12 noon and then I’ll over *prasadam* to Their Lordships and I’ll eat the remnants while sitting in front of them and hearing a lecture on Shrimad*-Bhagavatam*. That’s the way to live, one day at a time, an hour at a time. It may break down at the end of the year, that’s true. They gave Clinton another second chance, and we too are given many extra chances. Please forgive me, I am profoundly sorry, he said. It’s ludicrous. Just think of what he did. Well it’s actually not so serious in a worldly sense, therefore they could not impeach him. It was only adultery and that’s a moral issue. He did what anyone could have done, a man of flesh and blood.

Now here’s what I say: It’s better for me to be a *sannyasi* but I don’t say it’s better for you. I don’t say I am better than you. But I want to stick to this path all the way out. I don’t have so much more to go. You could look at it that way. Not that death ruins all your plans and fun. You go on to something better next life. Why not see it that way? You are always afraid of the next life and your foresee tortures. But for being a devotee you could—even if not going at once back to Godhead—get a better next life for devotional service. Yes, and there will also be pain, but it will be *tapo divyam*.

2:20 p.m.

Atri Âßi prayed to the three main deities, Brahma, Vishnu, and Lord Shiva, and all three appeared before him. He had prayed for the one Supreme Lord but didn’t know who He was—so all three appeared. They bestowed upon him a son like them. Actually they each gave him a son. Later Nara-Nayanana appeared.

In chapter two, Vidura asks why Daksa was envious of Lord Shiva and why did he neglect his daughter Sati? Lord Shiva symbolizes the best of gentleness. He is detached from all worldly things so why was Daksa inimical towards him? Maitreya replies by beginning the history of the great sacrifice performed by the leaders of the universal creation.

3:10 p.m.

Peace and quiet, empty house. I’ve been “seeing” mental hallucinations when I read my writing. It’s just a way of thinking and in your mind people you know or faces you’ve never seen are suddenly present. It reminds me of the figures I see when I start to draw with a free hand. It’s something like the game where you make figures out from the shapes of clouds or an ink blot—“It’s a man with a big, crooked nose riding on a horse. But is that KC and if not why are you telling us?

Caitanya ought to come by and put up blank canvases for me. If they were already up I might go down now and paint. Shall I try for it at 2:30 tomorrow morning? That’s a time when no one will be up to bother me. Yes (reply to nagging voice), I will make it KC. I’ll draw a picture of Prabhupada or Krishna or I’ll go wild and free and *that* too will have some Krishna conscious imagery or words, don’t worry.

Don’t Worry ’bout Me. I’ll make the right marks. Now listen in this silence and hear what might come. Daksha and Marici will stand and fire accusations and curses back and forth. Lord Shiva will leave the assembly in silence. He’ll be spared their bad association. But Sati will be very disturbed. It’s a tragedy. On the one hand she appears to be victimized by womanly weakness, but she also acts bravely to defend her husband. These are pastimes or histories given in *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* because of their instructional value in God consciousness.

Sip a little water. There were some confessionals in the EJW you’ve been reading from 1997. Now it’s different? Is everything okay? Do you feel ill? Would you like a pill?

3:30 p.m.

No canvases, no people, no clear empty

stomach of appetite. No love burning for

the personal God, no yearning for Him no

capacity to read as a student in *Bhagavatam*.

But no rancor, no demanding wasting

meetings. No angry faces. Left out of

the action, where I want to be.

No shame? No adventure? Would you

like to walk a dozen yards to the shed

and turn the heat and light on and write

whatever comes, no fear of failure?

No women, no men, just a snack

in the kitchen. No fear of this neighborhood.

No extra language you have to learn beyond

your American.

No deep awareness of your coming end

when it’s too late to look for a poem,

when writing doesn’t matter any more

because you did all you could

in your up time (one of six signs

of life—giving off by-products)

dwindling and death.

Is tomorrow Ekadashi? We don’t have a

new calendar yet. Do you believe in

ESP, ghosts, telepathy and that?

I believe anything is possible but I

don’t like to think of evil or scary

things. Like things this way simple and

spiritual is pure we can’t know it

until we get a spiritual body.

March 11, alone, look out the window

for someone who may come to give

me canvases so I can paint. Meantime

I can write and read and feel

Hare Krishna a silent mantras.

3:48 p.m.

No clock to push me with its beating seconds, no doughnut cushion for my piles, no heat on, but I’m in the shed, this non-rainy afternoon, the sky is still blue cloudy down the hill. Krishna consciousness can be written by a poet like Rupa Gosvami who visualizes Radha and Krishna and praises Them or praises Lord Caitanya. Poetry could be written even by a lesser devotee who said something fitting, say about an experience in the temple during *arati* or a *kirtana*. Or he could write a preaching piece to the nondevotees, “you better surrender or I’ll hit your fender.”

You better love God

or you’ll soon be a dog

you jerk, wake up

don’t meat-eat sup,

take *prasadam* from my hand

I’m better than you—

you belong in the zoo.

Or you could forget that enterprise. Pull your wool cap over your ears. I guess he had to go to work and that’s why he brought me no canvases. If I really wanted to paint or draw, I could do it on small cards or Bristol boards using crayons. Nothing needs to stop me. I could paste up pages from a sketch pad and go at it. Nothing needs to stop you. You’ve become conditioned to canvases, I know.

Raspberry jam, empty jar, black currant jam not empty. Go into the kitchen and see what today’s snack is. The doctor told you to gain weight (but not stuff yourself). A good excuse to binge out on the 4:30 snack even when you can’t digest it despite two Pepcids a day.

Your self is pure *atma*. You can read about Therese and her family and her convent. You can read about migraine. You have books on those subjects. And poets’ poems. You don’t want to make trouble. You could chant an “extra” round to make up for the poor mantras along the way. Make an act of Confession to an unknown priest. What happened to Father Eugene Hicks—how did he become so famous that they built a building in his honor? I knew him, Horatio, a fellow with infinite jest. Where is your smile and jowl now? I knew him, dasa and dasi, Satsfer, a gentle fellow, went alone for a while, we used to see him yearly, he’d come around with Madhumangala in their white van. Then he wrote letters—he would always answer your letter. Then we didn’t hear of him any more.

Tinsel and Barleycup drink. Mix things in your sentence that don’t make sense. Keep eating even when you are not hungry? But if I wait for clear signal I may never eat. Oh, where is the fire? Where is the health?

He smiled, he grimaced, I hadn’t seen him in years. He told me he’d been through a terrible, drawn-out divorce contest. Another said (imagine) I don’t care to talk with you because you will write it up in your diary. You’re a non-ethical person because of too much dedication to writing down things that happen. Why don’t you get a life?

He said I believe in Krishna. I read the books and have the beads. I am a new *bhakti-vriksha* member. I want to be on tap if there is an initiation just let me know and I’ll rush to wherever you are and get my spiritual name, you understand?

I replied I don’t know you well enough and you don’t know me. Let’s give it some time. Write to me again. He said okay, how’s this—some letters get lost in the mail. It’s not my fault. I do what I can.

A devotee is expected to live with other devotees and adjust himself or herself to the times. Yes, it’s a changing era. Do you have children to raise and send to school? You’d like them to grow up to be Vaishnavas but how can you do it? What is it they will grow into? To live in a temple? Live as a devotee when they are a kid and then give it up when they grow up? What are you preparing them for? He thought he had the answers. Now he’s not so sure. Hare Krishna, I will tell the world (as a *sannyasi* with no family) what I went through even though it’s not externally so eventful. I like a quiet life. And I’d like to center on God instead of myself but that’s not easy. I seem to come first. God doesn’t force Himself on you. He’s so liberal we say. So I’m writing this in the shed and glad at least the topic of God is central.

Yes, I’d like Krishna to be the center. You’d care more for Him than yourself. You just love Him and get absorbed in Him. Don’t play games of giving up your persona and imagining you are someone else writing. That’s weird mind game stuff like you did on tea or LSD. But who *are* you and who is Krishna, you really can’t say for sure.

Wearing a big winter coat, etching this down. Writing this somehow. They (readers) peer back at you askance and wonder if you are bluffing them, taking them for a ride or what?

You say I am me, centered in the body but aware God consciousness means you care more for Him and pleasing Him. I am mentioning that possibility and wish it could come to me and to you. God, Krishna, the cowherd boy in Vraja, controlling all worlds written in the best scriptures, His names chanted and echoing in city streets, farms for Him, Deity of He and Radha . . .

5:50 p.m.

Yes, it’s getting lighter at night. Used to be totally dark at 6 p.m. The little crocuses here are not doing well, though. Not like the big bonnet sensational daffodils blaring along the road to Dublin. Do you hear a van or car coming back? Chaitanya and I read some poems of Rupa Gosvami’s, prayers to Lord Chaitanya. Blissful. I enjoyed it and liked it. Then I read him some Tukarama, very different but also nice stuff, a little like what I do in talking about poetry and how one is not qualified and the Lord is not revealing Himself.

But Rupa is most splendid with all the jewels of Radha- Krishna worship. O Lord, O energy of the Lord, please engage me in Your service. Trying to find out when next Ekadashi is. The branches, the twigs, the limbs, the boughs, the dumb tree reaching upward against the blue-gray sky.

O Hare Krishna, I failed today to chant nicely. Please give me a better chance tomorrow. I will be here, will You?

March 13

2:25 a.m.

When you come straight from fourteen rounds of *japa* you expect to be tingling with *nama* realizations. Or (I know) it’s just the opposite: some same old lamentation about how poor you are and insinuations that Nama Prabhu, Lord Krishna, isn’t kind enough to you. Boo-hoo. Hoo Ray.

Well, I’m neither nor there. My piles are shrinking up and I don’t feel nauseous. It’s the first Ekadashi of the Chaitanya new year. I don’t know if Fibercon or Riboflavin tablets have non-Ekadashi ingredients. St. Patrick’s day is four days away, so what? I phone Dr. K. on March 16. Beware the Ides of March but I think you’ll live through it; no one will assassinate you.

*Haribol* Prabhus, we have to do our thing and not fear repetition. Face your reality. You are the EJW man. I’m happy to be living with spring coming on, even though it’s not so distinguishable in Ireland since it’s *always* cold and wet. But if I can get outside for a walk I’ll notice something, I do hear a bird singing but I don’t remember as a winter long resident.

My early rise schedule is jumbled and uncertain because of new health regimen and setbacks with illness. Don’t really know what schedule I’m following. Yesterday painting at 2:30 a.m., today my first writing at 2:30 a.m. and no reading of *shastra* yet. Hare Krishna, the little life rides on a horse like high-ho Silver but doesn’t know where he is bound. Write for yourself, for your purification, as an act for God. Dear God, I write for you and hope to publish for You. I deem this is the best way to write to convince others of Krishna consciousness. No tricks, no ruse, no cuty propaganda fiction. No imitation of *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas A. Kempis. No allegory, no shift in emphasis. When I use a metaphor you’ll know it—“just like.”

No booze, no whoos my temperature is average (or a little low), my heartbeat borders on bradycardia; my symptoms of respiration and metabolism and contemplation are normal for an ironic boy my age. The heart is mighty, lion-hearted *(coer du leon*). My feet are knob-kneed with some fungus on the toes, that’s all right and moles are all right, non-cancerous so far. The false ego is enormous (or small); the compassion is tiny or non-existent. He begs for the holy name, like pigeons in the park in Manhattan. He scrubs for devotional points.

What is the average number of *Bhagavatam* pages he reads with sincere desire? And he thinks he’s the best. What a farce.

Having considered it his spring I can stay here and live here for months to come. It is “gravy, pure gravy,and don’t forget it,”—in the words of grateful Ray Carver who the doctors said should have died ten years ago but he was given (by God) ten good years with a woman he loved who loved him and his poems. Grateful man, I am too for all this pure gravy or let’s call it *amrita* of the gods. They give me a chance to praise Lord Hari in the assembly of devotees and seekers. May the day come when devotees’ books will actually be in your local bookstore, no bluff.

May the day come earlier and we (me and you and Bobby Socks) go out to greet it with our walking stick and forget-me-not. May the evening be gray as usual and most days misty on the mountain, that’s all right with me. And may I continue residence in this country—or even if kicked out may I write of the exciting run for the money wherever I go, even a hospital ward, with guns or none, some *shastra,* please, served on a platter to the solitary reader whoever he or she may be. *Haribol,* I want to see Krishna everywhere, but He has His separate persona and that’s available straight from *shastra* and guru.

I dreamt all night I was in Dallas ISKCON where they wanted me to hold the *darshana* and I was willing to do it and I preached nicely on Shrila Prabhupada in the dream.

4:09 a.m.

Feeling good and chipper, that kind of rise will dip. A brother writes that he thinks (intuits) that ISKCON will have a rough year, don’t look to the GBC for leadership, tighten your seat-belts and develop your individual Krishna consciousness. Maybe the whole world, he says, will be topsy-turvy. What is that intuition? Can one foresee? It doesn’t take much crystal ball gazing to know we must take care of ourselves. But the society of devotees . . . there is no more grievous sadness than separation from them.

Plenty bliss, boss. Don’t make fun. Please see the good in this music, this breathe, this is from Krishna. Take some from here and some from there. We are each spying on the other. I believe there is no better way. I attended the Sunday Mass where Booker Little was preaching on a golden horn, Eric Dolphy stood by reverent and ready to go. I attended the Mass in Great Kills RC Church by not attending, sat outside in protest by myself at the train station. Yeah,

*“Memories* made me cry,” said Bhaktin Anita in Leonara Shantytown, Guyana where she is only a child but has a baby child of her own. I am touched to know that she is like that and my book she liked. We are praying folks, each has to go his own way . . . listen, turn it up a little louder . . . I am telling you Krishna consciousness is for individuals and the institution is the framework we live in. But yes without *kula-dharma* or *jati-dharma* we can still prosecute pure loving service unto Krishna.

There is no way around that. On one evening fair he played the best way I know. He held a *darshana* in Texas and the disciples of the other guru encouraged him, go on, tell us. “Yes,” he said, “but don’t mind of I say something different from your guru, just don’t be bothered.”

Wriggles and Andy, Amos ’n Andy and Kingfisher all gathered to be present on the occasion of the unavailing of *Bhagavad-gita* edition by Swamiji. Out my peripheral vision I saw danger coming but I kept playing even faster on my crying bass clarinet. Defying the crowd and singing and crying. He is too real, too human, can’t belie the fact that we are people. Relief from the repeated reform. Six devotees on stage singing a *bhajana*, then three hour long lectures by three distinguished speakers. You bet we were ready for a break. Two *bharata-nama* dancers weren’t much help really or the *gurukula* recitation of the *Brahma-samhita* backwards—when it was time for an *arati* to offer the feast I was so fried I kept it in and by the time the feast was served I was hungry but also ready to go home where I don’t have to do things by rote according to someone else’s schedule. Just relief to be natural and always serve the Lord.

Mister, I am writing you a letter from Central America and my name is Lakshmi. I don’t think you know me but I saw your name in BTG—What if my guru has faults and I see them? Huh? I replied in general, see his perfection as fully absorbed in preaching and practice. But what about the individual case. Aye! Don’t ask me, you’ve got to gut it out. Hare Krishna, chant and be happy.

The music wafts under the doors. We’re happy it’s March 13th and don’t think it’s unlucky. If we can be with the Lord in some direct way. For example, the fight at the Daksha-*yajna*—it teaches us not to get heated. Daksha was wrong for not honoring the greatest devotee, Lord Shiva. Learn that and neither should you be like a ghostly follower of Ûiva. Be a true *brahmana-vaishnava*. I am a rubber band around a micro-cassette. He plays so sweet and tough.

We are not fools, we worship Krishna. They say it was written by savages because five thousand years ago that’s all there was. Such intellectual, spiritual books and they say—it was done by savages. Just see. The fun. O Krishna, I’m Your *cela*. I read the book, chanted on the beads and now worship my Radha-Govinda. Lord Chaitanya and Ramananda Raya loved just *talking* together about Them. Just two devotees together and remembering Their Lordships is top perfect.

7:27 a.m.

Face your reality here. Don’t go out until Janmashami, then go to Inis Rath and on to England and Italy. *Haribol*, you mean face that I’m a mean kumquat who doesn’t travel to assuage the disciples of a gone guru and I don’t travel to make temples and homes happy in America and Australia and South America? Yes, I mean locate yourself and look at him eye to eye.

Don’t doubt or complain. Keep up your art of writing and painting and go on bit by bit recording readings of Six Gosvami literature. And the other things you do here.

Hare Krishna, and watch if the tulips come out, smell the outdoors aroma and a fresh feel of morning air. Pray to Prabhupada and hear plenty of his lectures and lectures of others. Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, I will do that all right.

Many rolls of canvases, completed paintings, gather in the hallway. Many cobwebs and when spring develops later, there will be Wexford strawberries, even now made in Ireland honey and jams. M. rented a harp. Let’s see him play. He has finger exercises to practice. We spoke about one of my disciples who is hooked on drugs. What can we do to help? Not much in the way of asking them to break the habit. But he is wired up when he writes to me on his high and doesn’t listen to sattvic or transcendental reasons.

I’m waiting for you to break through this chatter and give us more solid Krishna consciousness. A college preacher in Italy wants me to tell him a Prabhupada-inspired version of how to present Krishna consciousness at the colleges. I don’t know. Tell him what comes to your mind, your experiences . . . Hare Krishna.

Now if you can’t break through at least don’t break down. Keep moving along as you did with your mama when you were a little kid keeping up with her as she shopped at City Line (between Brooklyn and Queens). In Uncle Sal and Aunt Mary’s place at the end of the street that may have been a dead end, at least it had a brick arch at the beginning of the street leading down their block and peeling sycamore trees just outside their windows. I remember that and their enclosed “porch” room that faced the street. It had bamboo rattan chairs and a low coffee table with a mirror top and an automatic cigarette lighter and a box of cigarettes. And a painting of the bare breasted and winged white rock lady kneeling at the edge of a lake. The strange worlds of grown-ups that we moved in.

The sounds here, a bird, a car. The bird is talking his chip-chirp language to other birds. Emmet Kelly, Willard Mullins, I may have the names wrong, the cartoonist who drew da Bums, the Brooklyn Dodgers, shoes with no soles, unshaven face, old stogy cigar, that special look of beat and triumph in the glint of his eye,—you know he’s a bum, a Dodger.

Now enough of that trivia. Tell us of Vaikuntha or Goloka where the pure souls go. One is not a *brahmana* by birth, only a *brahma-bindu* or *dvija-bandhu*. You have to qualify to become a *brahmana*. This can be done by the practice of Krishna consciousness. There are many examples. Hare Krishna, he’s telling him in a lecture what a devotee must be—attached to Krishna, clean, merciful, austere, religious, simple, controls his senses and mind, learned in the scriptures, non-violent, detached from material sense gratification, and so on.

Enough of that rat-a-tat, we want to hear of someone being a genuine devotee. Yes, I am one. At the Smithsonian Institute just outside where they come and go, a Hare Krishna book distributor stands and waits. He first offers the passer-by a bumper sticker, “I like your smile,” or “The udderly cool,” and then follows up with a book like *Quest For Enlightenment* by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. It won’t be long before the cherry blossoms bloom along the Potomac. May the year not be as bad as some intuit, may next year be even better so we may peacefully carry out Krishna consciousness.

Now this is better than chatter. Your soul must transmigrate. So think of Radha and Krishna and you can go to Them for specific service. Don’t be hung up on nasty stuff or pleasant stuff of this body. The eternal souls links with the Supreme. You ought to feel the bliss of it and then you are inspired to detachment, following the rules that prohibit illicit sex, gambling, meat-eating and intoxication.

Do you people really do that or is it just a kind of lip service, an ideal?

I follow it. For thirty-three years I’ve done it. Many do it. You develop a higher taste and that’s how you obstain from the lower nature. It’s taught in the *Bhagavad-gita* that way. By developing a higher taste. You lose taste for the inferior.

In the home stretch it’s blue and black, blue by a half length over black. And as they come to finish line it’s black, black by a head—black is the winner! Shyama is the Lord of all.

9 a.m.

Oh, I am one of the Krishna clan

I’m six foot eight so don’t mess. No

I’m only a shorter skinnier orange-pale

dhotied *sannyasi*. Do you know what

that is?

He’s a celibate monk, wears a “skirt.”

He’s a serious renouncer, listens to

Miles and Trane and Mingus—from his previous

life. He’s an Augustan poet plays with

words in “First come/ first served” manner.

A *sannyasi* is a freak. He doesn’t masturbate

either. No not in dreams either. He’s a

strict clerk jerk, worrier timid church

mouse who lives in his own house

converted into an *ashrama*.

This is one kind of *sannyasi* I am. Typically

they travel widely and lecture and mix,

talk with Indians, visit India, live

in India, carry a *danda*, attend

managerial meetings, big-shots of the cult

I’m not a typical one but I can tell you

the essence of *sannyasa* is freedom from

sex so you can devote your time to

chanting Krishna and reading the books. I

don’t do so well at any of that—

but I’m still a *sannyasi* and pray to die

in this outfit, smiling at my freedom

from battle-ax wife or new younger

versions. We are very lucky.

I just hope I don’t get reborn

but if so I pray like Maharaja Parikshit—

another renounced man—for fixed

devotion unto Krishna, friend to devotees

and giving love to all.

That’s all.

9:40 a.m.

Daksha became offended when Lord Shiva did not rise to show him respect. Daksha spoke out in envy of Lord Shiva. He condemned the marriage of his daughter to Shiva who he says is unclean. Actually Lord Shiva is auspicious and so kind that he takes charge of persons in the mode of ignorance and uplifts them. Daksha cursed Lord Shiva to not receive a share in the yajnic offerings.

11:37 a.m.

The bows on the tree are white-silvery. Do I see tight buds? No, I can’t say that. They are so tight, the fingertips of the branches, but I can’t call them buds. They are closed shut as they are all winter. And yet it is not the winter proper right now. If I keep coming to this desk for pole penance, looking out the window, I will gradually see the buds swell. It seems not long ago that we moved in here, before Easter last year, and I watched the tree branches swell at the fingertips until it gradually or suddenly became all leaves. The hill is green, grass and evergreens in the distance. From here you can see only the top of the tree, the telephone pole in front of it and in the background the top of the distant hill and the sky, blue and white right now.

Hare Krishna, the hawk is flying low, the Italian field is dozing. This writer has not got a hemorrhage. He’s relatively peaceful. M. took a *japa* walk over to Patri’s house and delivered some korela to them. They will put it in my lunch, Ekadashi. I hope they don’t make that pizza-like cheese covering over mash potatoes. Oh, sigh and gasp, you are about to tell us something about the Supreme Lord in your life.

Yes, He’s there in the heart but I can’t see so well. My eyeglasses, my lack of spiritual 20–20 vision. My inability to see with love because I don’t have the ointment. It is like Sharma or Shirma, Prabhupada says, some product in India they use to clear the vision. I don’t have that *premaïjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena*. they can see the Lord in their hearts with the eyes of love. I see nothing. I bounce off my false ego attempts to know the self and enjoy life and live with these thoughts. I don’t take my position happily as the servant of the servant. I don’t know. But I do think that I am fool number one and I am not a *paramahamsa*. Therefore, there is chance for improvement. If you think you are already perfect then how can you improve?

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, the chanter does twenty-five rounds. Someone I know is increasing their rounds. As for me, I keep it to the bare minimum. But I was happy this morning despite the mechanical nature of that *japa*. At least I lasted for fourteen in a row and that brought me satisfaction because I’d been ebbing away and not able to sit up and chant. When you can be spring-like and jump up and utter the names, you have a chance, you are not dead. You can say again and again the holy names in the formula of mantras and watch your stopwatch and the counter-beads and the clock moving from 12:30 to 1 to 1:30 and the Prabhupada *japa* tape is accompanying you, the mellow one. That’s a good time of day.

The pole is in front of me. Tukarama says it well, that he cannot praise the Lord because he does not know Him. But then he asserts himself and says actually my poems are being written by Vitthal, he speaks through me. There is a thin line between abject humility and poverty in not knowing God and a feeling that God is speaking through you. If you are unable to speak of Him and yet you write sincerely, then the poem that comes out, Tuka concludes, was composed by the Lord Himself.

The pole is in front of me and it is not so gray just now. It is a brighter-than-usual day. We are planning to stay here for several months without budging. You get a chance to face your reality. You see who you are. And as for Krishna, you say I see Him within the cloud. That thing which is moving towards me. The variety of objects, the self which I live with. In my friend’s eyes too and in the plants and animals. Krishna is everywhere and it’s just a matter of waking up to that. See Him in the coverings over the holy names and in your little attempts to read the scripture. Be with Him Hare Krishna Hare Krishna. The thing I want to tell you is that random words find their purpose and that’s Krishna too. He will never leave, we live in Him. Lord Krishna is no joke.

2:10 p.m.

It is wonder when I am actually attracted to Shrila Prabhupada’s writing in his purports. I pray for this. What a great gift it is, this simple thing I once took for granted. If I could have it, almost nothing else is required: full admiration and enthusiasm while reading the Bhaktivedanta purports. Just stay with one after another, and let an hour pass that way. Share it later with others. Was my youth (post-twenty-six) rich in this? May I have it again. How to gain it? It’s not just a matter of the discipline, “You must read.” But some of that is also required.

Nandishvara cursed Daksha—“Within a short time he shall have the face of a goat.” And whoever cursed Lord Shiva was counter-cursed: “May they continue in the cycle of birth and death.” The *brahmanas* and Shivaites forgot their positions (as decent persons, *sadhus*) and became infected with anger.

4:12 p.m.

Passionate go-for-broke feeling as I execute the canvases in the art room. Beethoven late quartet, Shrila Prabhupada’s Shri Krishna Chaitanya, me on my knees, pushing, scratching, gouging the sandy paint onto the canvas stretched on board. Outlining with the Siva oil stick stubs, gripping in my gloved hands, soiling, sighing, heart beating . . . who can describe it? Whatever comes out . . . is it secondary to creation itself? Confident it will be KC. One of three ambiguous (in sex and attitude and posture) human-likes with caption, “Join KC society. Be Happy.” Ironic? Jest. Dead serious child artist. Smasher joke bluffer. No, I mean it. This is the best I could do. This is what I do to stay out of trouble and away from meetings. This is what I would do more of it I didn’t have headaches. This is . . . art, allowed by Lord Krishna. And Prabhupada.

4:28 p.m.

They cursed the *brahmanas*. I want the blessing to read enlightened, happy student-like, non-headachy, loving my master’s purports so I don’t need anything else. And give more to you, dear (solitary) reader, through the sifting medium, him to me to you. You can go directly, of course. But since you are here with me, please hear.

The curses by Nandishvara are “completely functioning in the age of Kali.” *Brahmanas* claim birthright brahminical status even though their occupations are degraded. Nor do they want to allow anyone else to occupy the post of *brahmana*. Lord Chaitanya uplifted many persons who were not born as *brahmanas* such as Haridasa Thakura and Ramananda Raya. He made them first class Vaishnavas.

March 14

2:28 a.m.

’fess up—after fourteen rounds in a row. You deliberately did and thought of other things. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna —but I also did listen sometimes to the vigorous sound. I’m happy with my life. Chanting is the essence. Oh, I wish that were true. Chanting is just one of many things I do. I was going to say, “many things I like to do,”—but do I like chanting? It’s more than like and yet less than love, less than spontaneous joy. I cannot say as Shrila Rupa Gosvami says—How much nectar is in these two syllables, Krishna. I wish I had millions of mouths and tongues to chant it. But I do. I does. I chant.

*Haribol*. Count them. Count them. Minutes and seconds. It’s not so hard. You could go on and on after sixteen. But I have many things to do, write this, read stuff especially *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* but also my proofreading of EJW, and letters—surely they’re important too.

The chanting goes first at midnight until 2:30 today, I like that schedule. At least it’s a sincere gesture: Lord, *hari-nama*, I get up at midnight *for You*, to meet You and be with You, to discharge my obligation, first things first, and even though my mind wanders and I even pause in mid-round to write a few Post-its, I mostly refrain myself and go on chanting and chanting.

I place the picture of Lord Chaitanya chanting on His *mala* (Jagannatha Puri) closer to me. See Him, He chants. And I think, “It would be nice to read *Chaitanya-caritamrita* again. Oh, please let me enter, and write about it too.”

So I fessed up that my chanting was distracted. But I do confess that I’m obliged, tied to these names. I won’t give them up. Please let me chant *hari-nama* life after life. I don’t know what I’m saying, but I chant Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare.

4:12 a.m.

I am the boy. You are the girl. Here is the tree. This is the fw exercise. Please don’t forget. This is KC. Ramananda Raya said, “Lord, I see You now as a darkish cowherd boy and also in a golden form. Please tell me without duplicity what is causing this.” Lord Chaitanya replied, “You are a *maha-bhagavata* so wherever you look you see Krishna.” Ah. Seeing Krishna a everywhere is not primarily a pantheistic vision of oneness, but it’s a kind of super imposition of Krishna upon all that we see. The pure devotee doesn’t see things as they are, a tree, a hill, a cloud, but wherever he looks he sees Krishna. Because it’s all Krishna a’s energy, so each thing reminds him of the Lord. I don’t know, I’m just repeating.

Oh, you don’t know. Then how can I believe or take it from you? Your, “I don’t know,” is almost like a doubt. The agnostic also says I don’t know.

No, not like that. I meant I don’t know from personal experience. But I believe it from the mother and father, *Vedas* and Krishna and guru. The pure devotees see Krishna everywhere. I believe it. I trust them.

Krishna fun and frolics. This boy is happy. He says he wants to face his reality. He means he wants to be good and see good. But reality might be more stark and stripped away than that. Do you know what you are saying when you declare, “I’ll face my reality”? I’ll see. I have no choice.

We are in mid-March. We march pushed by time. Reality is I am so tiny I almost don’t count. I can’t change the universe. But I try to write what Shrila Prabhupada taught and some people like it. Not the masses, not the top ten books bought in Maceys. I don’t know. I don’t know. Face the reality. You are a jerk. You still don’t have the guts to face my your enemies and embrace them. Real, real.

He’s got to admit he takes joy in rhythm and blues. On Blueberry Hill. Pick blackberries for poems. Stains his mouth bear-like. Hide from mouses. Spiders dangle in front of him down their amazing cable. Little white shoes dance in his dream. He harbors hallucinations to paint them. Saw a jet in the sky. The Irish lane, don’t talk to him, he hopes. Rocks and dirt washing down the hill.

This is no springtime, it’s always cool and wet. Hare Krishna for Easter will you again view the Zepherelli film? I want to know. You keep saying I don’t know but you *should*.

I know I am a devotee-connected by initiation and service to Shrila Prabhupada. Not a devotee, but aspiring. Oh, I put down whatever I think of therefore I play dumb (like Jada Bharata) and say

I don’t know

Monk’s dream

body and soul

there’s no way.

Fresh and direct as the morning. Eternity horizon. Write pen bliss ink dries in your eyes the fleshy, knotty, bony hands operate no thanks to Darwin—he picked his theory up from hints in the *Padma Purana* and got paid. The thing is playing the way you like, fun and surrender don’t have to be so far apart.

Face reality— Krishna is in the cloud of your misunderstanding. He’s the mystic black cloud of unknowing. Mystic nowhere vast abyss, you mean? No, dainty strong Govardhana lifter with left pinkie, pleaser equal to calves, cows, *gopis*, boys, He embraces them each absolutely according to their tastes. Vrindavana in *rasa*—somebody wants to be His father and mother. *But* the *gopa* delightful Madana-gopal is in the cloud when I looked to Him because—

I know why

you’re a jerk

you can’t see what’s as plain as

the nose on your face

God in person

in sound form

the words He teaches, His guru rep. You see

the dark cloudy mirror of covered self.

6:44 a.m.

Bhrighu Muni countered with a strong curse against the followers of Lord Shiva. The best way to transcend curses is to take shelter of the Supreme Lord. Devotees don’t curse anyone. Bhrigu cursed the Shivaites to become atheists. Some Shivaites don’t follow sattvic regulations but smoke *ganga*. Thus they rebel against the Vedic principles.

Lord Shiva remained sober during this cursing. But he became morose and silently left the arena of the sacrifice.

Read a little and stop, stopwatch. Heat in the shed. Tapioca and milk for breakfast. The blue very early morning clouds. The nature of the animal is that he feels tired after eating. But we push him to read a little and to write. No sign of progress. He read the cursing and counter-cursing. Thought of Hindus who don’t like ISKCON’s “anti-Shiva” slant. These chapters prove Shiva is the greatest Vaishnava. But he is not the Supreme God. Nandishvara, Bhrighu, words fly back and forth. Stay clear of the crossfire. Honors to Lord Shiva. Honors to Lord Krishna, Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And honors to Their devotees.

Avoid the devilish, tantric worshipers. Stay with devotees. Push yourself a little, brother, to do the needful. Hare Krishna comes straight from Krishnaloka but with chanting I have no connection. Day and night . . . I don’t feel like that “burning in this dark world.” Maybe that’s a fault in me, that I’m easy going and don’t see the world as a horrible, dangerous place. I just want to write and eat and breathe and sleep. You have to really dislike this place to get out of it? But this earth was blessed by Lord Krishna and His pure devotees. It’s a good preaching field. We can remember Krishna here, especially in Vrindavan where He played. Shrila Prabhupada’s places are everywhere. He empowers us to serve anywhere. Pick a *prabhu-datta-desha* or several of them. Go all over the world.

Hare Krishna. The truth is two pennies worth. Try to concentrate on a simple smile. I am not this body. I am spirit soul—*mamaimvamsho jiva-bhuta˙ jiva-loka sanatana*. I am an eternal fragment of God and my nature is to serve Him. Hare Krishna chanting is the first way to serve God. He likes to hear a devotee chanting His names. But you have to do it sincerely, attentively. O Lord, O energy of the Lord, please engage me in your service.

Laying down paragraphs like a brick wall, one layer on top of another. Krishna Krishna this is the jungle and the law of the jungle pervades. The society of devotees is different. We are at war with *maya* and her agents, lust and sin. “Anger—this is the age of Kali and we are going to do you in!” We chant and get through. Not afraid of a gorilla or two of them, the pure soul depends on Krishna to save him or kill him. That’s the mood of Shri Prahlada Maharaja.

There is no business like show . . . I mean. You die and get racked up, your karma shows you still have a lot of material desire and will have to come back next life as a hairdresser. I thought I was free of that, how ironic. Or you were born as a woman (you prematurely thought you were a *gopi*) and you were subordinate to your husband who is a pig and wife beater. I thought I was finished with that kind of suffering. Learn to tolerate it. Women crowd up in the temples, churches or mosques in greater numbers than the men.

*Haribol*. Wide open yawn and tears pop out of eyes. Hare Krishna a is the simplest way to contact God. In the shed it’s warming up but I intend to leave here in about seven minutes. I’m just tapping this teletype to see what may come over the wire. It says . . . divining rods for sale, cheap excelsior print, whither goes’t thou old mankind? It says, What hath God wrought? Give credit to God, name the stars, planets and parking lots after Him. People don’t believe in God so we can’t be with them.

It might have been a ghost. Or his suppressed (Jungian) shadow. The shadow blew his top like a volcano erupting. Out spewed all the hot gunk he tried to suppress. Then they knew they had better . . . listen to him and give him a break. People can only be forced so far and then they snap.

Krishna rode a horse into the forest in search of the Syamantaka jewel and to rescue His reputation. He saw that Satrajit’s brother had been killed by a lion. The lion had been killed by Jambhavan who took the jewel into his cave. Lord Krishna entered the precincts of Jambhavan and They began to fight for the jewel. After twenty-eight days the near-invincible king of bears (or monkeys) acknowledged that he had never fought anyone so powerful. “This must be my Lord, Shri Rama.”

Now into the three quarter turn and heading for the home stretch, it’s black glove and bare hand, bare hand by a length, bare head by a bandage. Into the last yards it’s bare hands pulling ahead two lengths and as they go over the finish line it’s Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, everywhere in the vision of the *maha-bhagavata*. Stop teasing me, said Ramananda Raya. But Lord Chaitanya said, “Don’t tell anyone what you saw—I am madman number one and you are madman number two.”

I am foolish man six-hundred thousand trillion skillion, innumerable removed from the center.

8:30 a.m.

Hmmm, down rocky road all I noticed

were rocks. Play that game after a walk

in Vrindavana. At first you think, “Nothing.

I was totally distracted.” But then images

come *sadhus* walking playing *karatalas*

et al. “I love you,” says the man in

his poem and you wonder whether he’s sincere,

does he know what love is, is it some-

thing embarrassing?

Down the rocky road I saw two empty open

gates. No people. I was timing my sixteenth round.

That’s the benefit of this place—no people whereas

in Vrindavana it would be Hari-shauri, Harikesha,

Hari-nara, Noohah Hoohah—Satsvarapa!

Satsvarupa! I’d start running but they’d catch

me at the gate—“Where do you think

you’re going? Outside the association?”

No-sociation, sociation, socialization

civilization, institution, number 42

in the guestroom house, sing every line

two times, stand 30–40–60 minutes,

sit down, headache, holy *dhama*

you should be glad—don’t offend

Radharani’s watching. And the GBC.

So I stay here in white adobe thatched

roof, obeying the ISKCON. Living the

life I choose and facing it,

unmunched grass, wild horse,

private allusions, less than holy

*dhama* and yet strange as it sounds

it’s better than the *dhama*, for me.

On rocky road, my hopes up

to contribute to his mission

for everyone, for no one

the silent house is home

the noise is in the art room

where Chaitanya is stapling them up—

blank canvases for me.

9:30 a.m.

Keep me away from the controversies, please. Let me subsist on the diet of legal pads and ink flow, canvas and paint daub, silence in all seasons, happy in the empty house, filled up with sentiments I like, striving in my way to reach my Guru Maharaja and deliver him my service.

Keep me out of the political fray. And even the social stuff. If I have to meet with Joe and Tom let it be in some neutral ground as when Reagan met Bresnev in Iceland. Give me fresh and hearty but not too much porridge in the a.m., even if I ask for more. Enough is enough.

Oh, you smarty, you can’t have it that way. Others are mucking and you have to too. Keep me fit on preventative and rescues. Let be natural and allopathic. More poetic than expository. Let the dogma come in rocks and mud and plenty of rain in misty, rural Ireland.

I want a transcendental feast in a quiet house. I want to think clearly, like looking down into clear water from a mountain stream. Avoid the issues but then face them on my own, in the only way I can, the way that’s best. If they want me on the phone or e-mail, say I can’t—and it’s true I can’t and won’t. My citizenship is not dependent on that. Having said all this, I realize it’s up to You.

Egyptian hieroglyphics*? Yeah.*

*Let’s hear some Shrimad-Bhagavatam*, that’s what we want. Daksha-*yajna* is as good as another section. Get into it again. Who cursed who. Lord Vishnu will appear in this scene later. But first we’ll have to see the awful results of offending the great Vaishava, Lord Shiva. Don’t be a self-righteous *brahmana*. In the name of upright cleanliness and rules and regs, don’t blaspheme that *avadhuta*. And be kind to all creatures. Flow sometimes overflow with your good cheer. This new year is running quickly to the very end of the so-called you-know-what. Before the last gasp I just wanted to say these things.

Okay, okay, I appreciate it, but let’s get back into the text of reading that book and you the submissive student. Your reality is that you are somewhat off. But we are prescribing a treatment you can live with. Read sometimes.

11:35 a.m.

Sonny Rollins with the MJQ. But they don’t know . . . you greedy S.O.B. Be careful of your speech, I don’t want to be a bore. I want to be a nice guy, a *sannyasi* who dies with the names of Radha and Krishna on his lips. Leave me alone is the best thing, more solitude. I’ll come out when I have to and deliver an ordinary lecture. This story takes the shape of a day. He is not a great reformer or follower of Christ or Buddha. Is he a follower of Krishna in Krishna consciousness?

Who are you talking about? Felix Frankfurter, the great supreme court justice. We are talking about Phil Harris and his fast talking song, “That’s what I like about the South.” I know you don’t want to hear all those things and so I won’t . . . Abbott and Costello meet the Wolfman is just to tickle your fancy. You might have to be reborn in the material world, to be dragged through the whole hell again for one of those Marx Brothers fancies. In the Navy again.

Yudhishthira had to see hell just for one small discrepancy when he hesitated to tell a lie on Krishna’s order. You may also be held back because in the quiet ways that tests and temptations were offered to you, you didn’t pass with flying colors. No one noticed what happened, but Krishna noticed.

It could like that? I thought there might be a mercy clause. I’d be allowed to go back to Godhead in the quick way. You know, the way Madhu and others find these very cheap airline tickets to India or to New York. I thought a deal like that might be worked out with Krishna. Don’t we have some inside contact with Him or the powers that be? Yes you have a very inside contact in his dear servant, Shrila Prabhupada. But Prabhupada is not about to make some cheap deal for you. No one can go back to Godhead unless and until they have a hundred percent loving service to Lord Krishna. He has to be the be-all of a person’s life. You haven’t yet reached that stage.

Arjuna did not hesitate when Krishna told him to kill Karna even though it was against military etiquette. Karna was down from his chariot unarmed and fixing a wheel but Krishna told Arjuna, “This is the only chance you’ll get to kill him. So do it right away.” And Arjuna, the military commander and obedient servant of the Lord acted right away. If you act on the mundane plane, Shrila Prabhupada says, then you have to obey all the rules and regulations, but one who simply does as Krishna orders is above all duality. Wow.

I am hesitating. If Krishna or Prabhupada said, “Go ahead and do this,” I’d want to ask but wait a minute, can’t I think this over? What about my publishing plans? What about my author’s rights? Can I listen to another CD for inspiration?

They will reply, “Yes, you can listen to as many CDs as you like but you’ll have to do it in a material body with material ears.” Ears that eventually fall off, a body that eventually (soon enough) decays back into the earth. You’ll have to live in a most dangerous Kali-yuga society which is going to blow up or collapse in one way or another. You’re going to get caught in the cross-fire. I told you to just surrender to Me, to Krishna, and you’d be free of it. But you are dallying in this world and you’ll have to pay for it in your karmic blood and pain and tears.

You fool.

Ah-ha. I’m waiting for lunch. In these fifteen minutes I don’t think something bad will happen. I’m holding on to my rosary beads, my *japa*. My good will, my passport hasn’t run out. My face isn’t drained of all color, my collarbone is not broken, no sharp pains. In these fifteen minutes I pray Krishna will accept my little literary service.

3:45 p.m.

Honcha adorey. I’ve been painting. I’m no Padre Pio. I’m no Renault Pierre or Renoir Jones. Or even Effijany Bore. I’m just little old. Many men (and a dog and a cow and maybe one of the “men” is a woman) walking at the bottom of a mountainscape. Sky and rough clouds pour down snow-rain-hail-sunshine-surf-breaking white skuds. It’s a Hare Krishna painting because the men wear *tilaka* and everything belongs to Krishna. Of the mountains He is Meru, of unmovable things He is the Himalaya mountains. Of light, the sun and moon, the skies within Him. *Mayadhaykshena prakriti˙*, all nature is under His control.

Daksha and Nandishvara and Bhrighu fighting. The *brahmanas* say you guys are against the *Vedas*, you don’t honor *brahmanas*, so you are condemned. The very fact that you are rebels against the *Vedas* proves your rascaldom. You lousy, stinky, atheist, crematorium hanger outs!

Oh yeah? said the Shivaites. You slobs are just materialistic priests after money. You dare to insult Lord Shiva, you are absolute jerks. You will fall down more and more into hell. In fact, we’ll do the job ourselves and kick the hell out of you.

Lord Shiva didn’t want to be there with all the roiling so he silently left and then his followers left with him. I’ll tell you more about it. I won’t fail to read some more.

4 p.m.

Bird (I don’t know his name) singing out the

window it’s so hard to trace spring in Ireland oh

yeah the dandelions and St. Patrick’s Day but I

mean it turns to the same cold and rainy all

year long at least here in Rathgorragh.

I’m happy to be here Secret Service agent

paints happy-go-lucky people with one line

mouth or fulsome classic lips, I’ve been

learning to draw like the ancient Egyptians but

always Sanskrit and *tilaka*, like ice-cream and

cake, or *dal* and *chapatis*. You can always

tell my propaganda piece. That’s all right.

All the effort and quick as can be it’s

just an ordinary chiwawa dog or

big cartoon rodent that never was

my friendly inner creatures and sub-

persons coming out this way (guy with

arm around neck of stocky girl,

both with Gaudiya Vaishnava *tilaka*)

rather than ghostly haunted and me

afraid, grinding teeth going crazy.

Hare Krishna, Gaura-Nitai festival

sublime hard work believe

in God my own mottoes like

Dr. Bronner of ISKCON—no one

knows much about me but everyone

has my soap. *Haribol*.

One more. I deserve (a smack)—

a snack at 4:30 my doctor

wants me to gain weight, ain’t that

nice? I’m not writing a political

epic on terror, this is just

my notes, my painting, my notes

my special telegraph—like Tuka,

I claim God talks through me.

4:22 p.m.

There is a special way to read *Shrimad-Bhagavatam,* verse and purport after verse and purport. I know how to do it. It’s something I’ve been blessed with, me and many other devotees who read that way. I can’t tell you if you don’t know. I can say “submissive reading.” But you might misunderstand. It’s deep safety, transcendental knowledge, best way to spend time and go to transcendental place of shelter. You read and read. Pranada knows, Uddhava knows, they told me how they spent almost their whole time in Vrindavana reading. And chanting. Do it anywhere. Live in such a way/ that you can read the Krishna book. I like the old editions before the Australian BBT came out with the thicker volumes on cheap see-through paper. Be happy with them. A reason not to travel: Oh, your *Shrimad-Bhagavatams* are here.

Daksha had left the *yajna* and then Shiva left. But the sages continued to perform the *yajna* to Lord Hari. One doesn’t have to worship demigods but a devotee always respects them. Even if the demigods aren’t present you can go on with your *sankirtana-yajna*, the only *yajna* possible in this age.

5:56 p.m.

No out loud reading tonight. Madhu has to chant his rounds. He was on the phone inviting Shraddhavan to come here (he’s passing through on a round-the-world ticket) and cook for Radha-Govinda, Prabhupada, and me. It’s a nice way to reciprocate especially since I haven’t heard from him in two years and I’d rather he not blurt out all the news in a conversation. I’m asking him for a letter. Oh, this is real diary stuff.

Can’t you make a literary goal? Can’t you tell a make-believe story? Wouldn’t that be fun. A novel on the run like Jackie wrote so quicky. But I’m not running, I’m just sitting.

So much the better, you can spin a tale. No thanks. Hare Krishna. Get serious. Shiva went home and the next chapter tells of his talk with Sati. Unless you have this anchor to return to you are “dir diry” diarist. Oh, the picnic was fun today, oh, the guests were horrid and so was the weather and Deeny doo just looked ridiculous in her pink feathery hat. Mr. McComber called on me for my guitar lesson and my mouth fell open when he entered the room! You guessed it—I’d forgotten all week to practice my guitar. Dir diry, don’t you sometimes wish you were someone else?

Enough triviality. A man like you ought to frown and wax. Pray on your kneeler, monk, pray on your beads.

March 15

2:20 a.m.

Last day for this volume. Seeing Krishna within the cloud. You know what I mean. Sure, sure. You see Him and you don’t. You are mostly an echo chamber when you chant. Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, you tell yourself you have nothing to so except chant and hear, chant and hear. Did fifteen rounds in a row. But some many thoughts come and go. Henry Adams, jostle for the ones to go through the pipe of consciousness. The emerald admiral. The father and mother. I am not this body. Shraddhavan coming to make lunch tomorrow; tomorrow we also phone the doctor. Tell him it has been a pretty good week once I got over the vomiting. But this life cannot be forever, so that is a major flaw. Or is that the best way, to live a while and then leave this place? We may say, yes, it is good that life is mortal, it adds poignancy and anyway there is nothing you can do to change it. But it’s not good, it’s a source of constant anxiety. Going to the eternal spiritual world.

No one sees anyone go. We see so little. We see a person die and that’s the end of that person’s life. But the *Vedas* say the life force within the person goes on to enter another life. Hare Krishna. What you don’t see will hurt you.

You have to learn more. Read the books for the essential information. Read with the idea that you need this. It is very important, even more than getting butter on your bread. Give us this day our daily bread of *bhakti* enlightenment. And forgive us for our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Forgive and forget. Move on to the new field of today and praying to the Lord, please reveal yourself to me, beat me into shape so I can serve You better.

Each false ego self is wrong, wrong. The individual soul is an eternal servant of God. Keep learning it and acting it out. Use your imagination, use your feet to push the organ pedals, use your nose to smell the incense offered to Krishna and to insight you with love for the Deity. Engage your senses in the service of the master of the senses.

Now you have to keep going into the silence. During the night Madhu sometimes enters this house to use the bathroom. I never know when the front door may open. The writer kept a diary of the books she was writing and publishing and the social events she was attending. Virginia Wolf. You have read all the diaries you need to in this lifetime. What’s the good of it now?

Lord Shiva and Sati. That’s what we want. There’s a picture of them on the back of the book. He has little skulls in a garland around his neck, and the half moon in his hair and the water of the Ganges there too in a symbolic way. How could he walk around with those things on his head? And he has an earring and Jadurani painted long hairs on him, a bit reddish. He is Ashutosha, easily pleased by the worshipers. He may get easily angered too. But he is steady and ascetic, doesn’t have a house but has a wife. Lord Shiva is Bhutarat, the master of the ghosts. He is so kind he’s willing to accept charge of them for the purpose of gradually uplifting them to transcendental knowledge. *Bhagavatam* gives several accounts where you see Lord Shiva worshiping Lord Vishnu. In the Shiva *Purana*, Lord Shiva is seen more as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But that’s so his worshippers can be enthusiastic. Oh, I see.

Don’t argue please, just pass the marmalade. We have to obey the mother and father. To get knowledge of who is your father, the mother is the authority. Don’t be a rebellious kid. You are not a Mozart child genius or old master genius. Keep your experience close to your heart and be true to the writing vocation. Hare Krishna a mantras stream from you at all times, that is best. Not just a half-hour meditation in the morning and another half hour at night. But try to string one moment to another all day in various kinds of chanting and hearing and serving. Be like the *maha*-*bhagavata*, who when you see him, you think of K®ß∫a. Let there be something Krishna conscious about me that others can pick up. But it has to be natural, whatever that means. Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, the mountain stream of my hopes is not dry.

3 a.m.

Daksha was conducting a big ceremony but avoiding the worship of Lord Shiva. I thought that was okay as long as you worship Vishnu. No, Lord Vishnu wants His devotees worshiped. Lord Shiva is a great devotee so the Supreme Lord won’t be pleased if Shiva is slighted. They can be worshiped as devotees, never as God. I suppose to some degree we do omit worship of demigods, even as devotees of Vishnu. We should never disrespect them. All glories to Lord Shiva, may he see me trying to chant *hari-nama*. O Ashutosha, you are perfect in your own *vishnu-nama* utterances, in your *samadhi*. Please help me to chant also. I want to be a devotee of my spiritual master and please him by attaining the favor of *hari-nama*. I want to be alive and with strong faith in my hearing of *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* and *Bhagavad-gita* from my spiritual master. I pray to you, Lord Shiva, and to Lord Brahma also. Please be merciful to me so that I can represent Lord Krishna and help others.

Sati saw the wives of the demigods, along with their husbands, flying in airplanes on their way to Daksha’s *yajna*. The women’s beauty created auspiciousness. Sati wanted to attend the *yajna*. She wanted to dress up like the other women and go with her husband. This appears to be her womanly sentiment, but we know she had a deeper motivation. Let us hear and connect it to devotional service onto Lord Vishnu, Lord Krishna.

Hrdayananda Maharaja Wants To Inflict Pain On Me

In one scene I rush past Hridayananda Maharaja and I kick him in the knee. He is angry with me and grabs my hair. He is going to punish me by giving me pain. I ask, “Why are you doing this? My pain for you was an accident, but you are deliberately doing something. This is some savage ritual for pain.” I have a headache while dreaming and he is going to pull my hair. The next thing I know, still in the dream, he lets me go. I decide to initiate some young man. Before that, there has been a lot of question if he should get initiated first or a girl should get initiated. I decide that he shouldn’t wait he is so good. Then I have to get the *yajna* ready and cut my teeth and I am running around very hectically.

6:25 a.m.

Head pressure, took an Ultram at 5 a.m. and lay on my back in the dark room. Thought of writing—is there a need to develop anything with deliberate literary goal? Or just write and learn more and more how to do everything—memories, dreams, little life, notes from reading *Shrimad-Bhagavatam*, etc. You write improvised pieces in which all the repertoire comes out as it likes. Not a separate project for *Memories*, a series on a specific topic, and so on. This is the way I’m committed and I like it.

I don’t have a sense that Ultram works for me, certainly not rapidly as my other meds did. One migraine sufferer speaks of the intimate and personal feelings we have towards our meds and the strong opinions we form for or against certain ones. Waiting for the pain to be subdued. Makes me aware how much I want to be active (pain-free). Anticipating at least five months of uninterrupted—I was going to say uninterrupted pleasure. But we say Krishna ‘s pleasure, not my sense grat. But there it is—the pleasure of serving Krishna painfree in Wicklow house alone. Prospects of improving reading and *japa* habits.

2:35 p.m.

Vomiting all day. Headache behind the right eye. Lying in bed drifting through fantasies, half sleeps.

7:30 p.m.

Gentle rain on the skylight, vomit calming down as I lie in bed. Looking forward to starting a new volume on a new day tomorrow.

8:30 p.m.

I have a dream there is a bunch of devotees are stopped by someone who says that they threw stones at his window and had a long time antagonism against him. They are going to have a meeting. He is feeling out the top leaders. I am hoping he won’t pick me. I don’t want to be so involved. He doesn’t pick me. Several times one of the devotees says what about him, what about him? He neglects to put me in the top category. I am really relieved. I get to the end of the line. Another devotee said, “Aren’t you up further?” I say to him, revealing my thoughts, “What do you think life is for? To get to the head of a line? Is that what you want in life?” That enlightens him a little bit and he falls toward the rear of the line also and thanks me for it. I joke to him and say we can be like the hook and ladder driver (who steers from the rear).

See Krishna within the cloud. But don’t deny that you do see the cloud. Don’t say you see nothing at all. Be confident that He, the Lord, Shyamasundara, Govinda, is coming toward you within that cloud. His walk is like a dance. His flute is His constant companion. He wears a peacock feather on a crown on His head. He is usually accompanied by Shrimati Radharani. He stands in a threefold bending form. You can’t see Him because He is covered by the dust from the hooves of the cows. But this is customary time while returning from the cowherds’ fields with His cowherd friends led by Balarama. You can chant on your one hundred rounds of beads the way Krishna chants when He calls the cows by name one after another after another, “Hey Pinga! Hey Mridanga-mukhi!Hey Surabhi!”

Thank you, dear Lord, in the heart for giving me this insight, for giving us this beautiful verse of Krishna within the cloud. Now I know that I don’t see nothingness but I see the Lord. It’s up to our desire.