

May apples

Writing Sessions,

May 5 to May 13

1996



Satsvarūpa
dāsa Goswami

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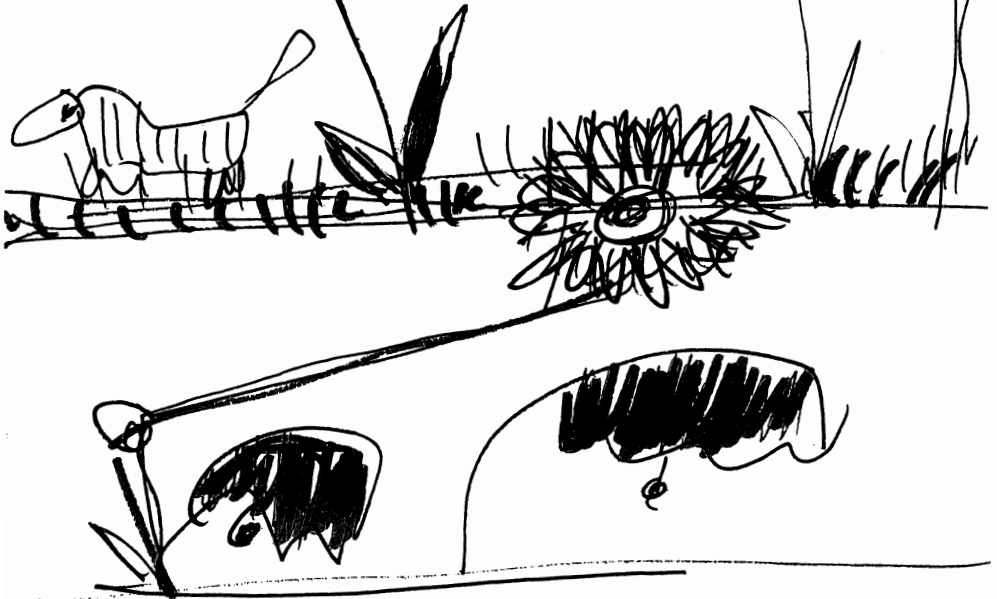
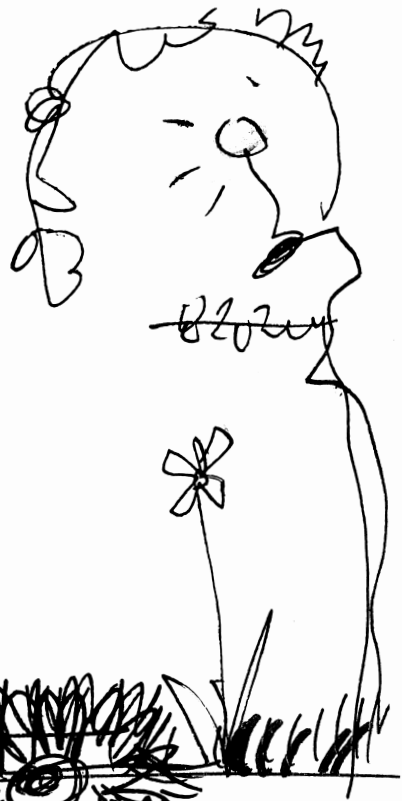


Satsvarupa dasa Goswami

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Mayapples



Writing Session #I

3:25 P.M.

Starting the day after tomorrow, I count twenty-five days until we have to (want to) leave for England-Ireland.

I've suspended my *A Poor Man Reads the Bhāgavatam* for now. So you could write a collection of Writing Sessions. Several times a day, the writing practice method. You could be serious and capture sad or lonely feelings. Some diary reportage, repartee, fly by night. Some thinking, "This may be used later." But some freedom from that.

You could write awhile like that. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. Can you last?

Letters. M or S.M. or whatever, wrote me that she loves the Pañca-tattva. They are potent and present and not in a *puruṣa* mood, but they can conquer by Their sweetness. Sounds nice. I'd like to be conquered by love and not afraid, safe in the shelter of Nṛsiṃhadeva. O whose worshiper am I? It appears I worship my Guru Mahārāja.

I practice (worship?) at the fount of writing too.

My beads in hand, I chant the quota with much attention focused on the counter beads and the clock. Less than ten minutes per round. Sometimes eight minutes per round. That sort of thing I watch carefully, but not the individual *mantras*.

By writing here I gain access . . . the cliches, relieve yourself (aware of derogatory connotation to that one). Aware of critics and censors and hamperers.

O God. You don't have to write anything special. Just go. Your collection of sessions for approximately twenty-five days in America, going mostly to preaching places. Starting the day after tomorrow, going to New York City. Then Philly. You write here what you did.

But is it right to abandoned the PMRSB? I thought everything was going to go into it. What's the problem and reason why you are stopping? Is it because you don't like the regimentation? There are a number of reasons that keep coming up, so I thought to honor the resistance I feel. Take a break from it. When you get back into a retreat mode you could take it up again. Last week in May may be like that. May may.

Hare Kṛṣṇa
and do you read
and do you weep
and do you keep protected in
your patron's houses and

your spiritual master's temples?
And does the roof of the van or
car you ride in present you
shelter? But the fumes and
toxins are coming in too.
There's a process by which you
can increase your circulation
so the arteries don't harden
too soon before you die.
But more important is—
the numbered prose
and a daily shot at poems.

Harken. We are writing anyway. Sunday
afternoon in a Poconos suburb. Lawn mower sounds
and kids' voices. On Monday there won't be so much
of this. Tomorrow is the last day here. Carpet of
leaves. Stories of a big black bear seen in the
neighbor's yard. Sound of Blue Jay alarm clock. And
the highway I-80.

Hey hey, where are my red sweat pants and, one
more time, where is the right clock to travel with?

If you could hear more about Kṛṣṇa. It's worth
the effort to turn your thinking in that direction. I
read a couple of entries in *Nāmāmṛta*. One said even if
you have sins, they can be removed by chanting. And
provided you don't commit new sins (*yeṣāṁ tvanta-
gataṁ pāpaṁ*), then love of God will manifest in you
just by chanting the Lord's names. (*Kīrtanād deva
kṛṣṇasya*).

I read it. And a light of hope is in me. To chant and to do it in prayer. You don't have to read a certain numerical quota of pages. But stay with even one marvelous purport of His Divine Grace and pray—please, I'd like to enter the nectar of loving service in chanting. Śrīla Prabhupāda says Kṛṣṇa doesn't need your offering of food. He has *lakṣmī-sahasra*, millions of Lakṣmīs, serving Him with reverence and affection. He wants your love for your deliverance from suffering. (You cause your suffering; it's not caused by Him.) So offer Him even a little water or a leaf. He wants your love and serving mood. Think—please, Lord, I am fallen but I want to serve You. Please accept this offering from me.

And the best offering is to chant His holy names. Know you have nothing that Kṛṣṇa needs. But you need His love. Pray He accepts your chanting as service.

May I think of You.

All those faces I was drawing over ten days and saving them now. Seriously playing at collages. But during that time I didn't think much of writing. And here I am now—trying to catch up? Trying to build up, starting off a half-hour dedicated to easy writing practice.

You be serious. Massimo wants to be an artist. He said he'll go daily to the academy. But they will have live nudes there. I said better not to paint live female nudes. Why is he so academy-oriented? Is that

the way to become an artist? I guess so. You learn how to draw a likeness. Not like me. He wants to paint back-drops for the altar on canvases and be admired for it. Just another kind of labor.

And Hare Kṛṣṇa dāśī asserts that it's good therapy to smell the earth. Kṛṣṇa is the original fragrance. And to pull weeds, it's a sensual act, get close to the flowers and *be there* in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Yeah and who else said what? I'll tell you by and by.

What's the sadness? Empty . . . alone . . . lack . . . No reason really. Aware life is passing us by. We don't have the guts. Neither can we reform in our own Kṛṣṇa conscious movement or in our own lives. At least then don't deteriorate. A book that says we reach full growth around—was it fifteen years of age? Around eighteen or so it goes downhill and the downhill starts picking up speed in old age. You die of some related breakdowns, poisoning etc.. They have a medicine that you take; intravenous liquid drops over three or four hours, and you need to do it about twenty times. Chelation?

And the acupulsar.

He wants me to do these two the next time I come here. I'd rather not. They give you rich food, though.

Good to leave here and not be pet resident. Move along.

The trees don't move. The sparrows do. I don't need more food today. A tea only. No food, please.

Go see M in his van (my van?) which he cannot get started until he calls some company tomorrow.

I am recording things so they won't go into oblivion.

If you chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, you will escape the worst of Kali-yuga. You will go on chanting and attain the blessed state of Kṛṣṇa-*prema*.

If I meet my Godbrother I'll talk with him about the possibility J.S. raised that no one in ISKCON may be qualified to initiate. Say, "This is scary." Assess our shortcomings and what to do to become more qualified. Chant more rounds. Or engage in more book distribution and *hari-nāma* on the streets? People will have different prescriptions as to what is right to do.

OK, approximately twenty-five days and during this time you are not doing your daily PMRSB. You can come here and write.

Shout

I'm alone

head newly shaven

I'm alone in peace

apart can chant

an "extra" round.

Christ will accept me in

Hare Kṛṣṇa mode which is

best for me more and more

in my master's books

whatever he has written

about Kṛṣṇa.

See you later at the tall gate. Be there soon, son.
Say your Amens.

I wish you'll fall asleep and not dream you have to go to the *karmī* movie show. Not a moment need be wasted in that, nor pleasing nor serving any such nondevotees.

Old age breaks your day, arthritis, coronary, lead poisoning. Take the cure. Or don't take it and just depend on Kṛṣṇa even if you don't live so long. Die a natural death.

He died. He was sixty or seventy years old. And did enough work. He did or didn't attain his goal. He copied, moped, watched the clocks
and was named a guru.

These eleven are hence forward eternal *rkvik* gurus. That's the logic J.S. exposed in sarcastic words. They think it's bunk and not for love or money would they be *rkviks*, the survivors among the eleven.

So I guess you know
or don't
my code here.

Get a new heart or just die a natural death and if anyone is interested they can print books in Hindi. The book saved a marriage from breaking up. "I liked them," said a boy in France, "because the hero Nimai has the same name as I."

(35 minutes, written in the Shack, first of a proposed month-balance of Writing Sessions, while a bird is whistling *bird bird bird*. Sunday. God help us. May 5, 1996)

Writing Session #2

I:IO A. M.

Writing . . . after reading fifteen minutes or so in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and at least that long in Bhaktivinoda Thākura's commentary on *Upadesāmṛta*. Good boy to be up answering your clock alarm and reading. A new schedule for the balance of May as we travel. And this writing.

I've suspended *A Poor Man's Reads the Bhāgavatam*. But I intend to return to it. If it's my only writing in life, that seems not right.

It could be all consuming. A formidable literature with regular addressing of substantial *Bhāgavatam* themes. And free-writing. I still would not capture the wider audience of ISKCON including Godbrothers. Mostly the new generation reads me. And they like my more intimate and honest writing (which they also can get in *Poor Man's Bhāgavatam*).

I'll be thinking of *A Poor Man's Reads the Bhāgavatam* even while I take a break from writing it. See where it fits into my life. See if I'm drawn back to

it. And see, in its temporary absence, what other kinds of writing I take up.

Don't rush. No *preyasa*, useless endeavor, or *jñāna*, or karma. Some *bhakti* endeavor is required. *Atyāhārah* means you can do things for Kṛṣṇa but not otherwise.

Hari bol. You'll be speaking to groups in the coming days. Partly you feel it's a presumption on your part, a strain on inner credulity, bordering on hypocrisy. If I don't have deep taste for attentive chanting of the holy names and hearing *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, then how can I lecture to others? In general one feels it's better just to advise oneself. And also, lecturing is a performance. A natural, quiet *sādhū's* contemplation is perhaps disturbed by the outgoing act of lecturing on perfection and advocating that we endeavor for perfection. You can do it honestly. At least, as far as possible.

Don't get on a high horse.

Hari bol.

Dreamt Rūpānuga was a spiritual leader for a group of people. One practice was to go on the city streets and walk in a line. A bearded man with knives in his belt went first. Others followed, interesting folks of the congregation, which Rūpānuga was cultivating. I was there too. I don't recall that we chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa but there was some kind of walking in file. Then later it was over and we went somewhere to eat and rest but it was sparse and austere. I was looking for a place to lie down.

I woke from this dream impressed at Rūpānuga's natural role as a spiritual leader. The actual Rūpānuga . . . in Buffalo in 1969 was like that. I should honor the older devotees and see good in all sincere devotees. Feeling of my place in that group . . .

Now awake. Rain dripping outside. I hear it at the window. Frogs chirping at 1:30 A.M.. Last day here in the restful house. Two days in a row with no headaches. I look forward to leaving here. Test your capacity on the road in Northeast USA. There's a chance to go on the streets for *hari-nāma* on South Street in Philadelphia on Saturday. But on the same day I will give a morning and evening lecture. Don't know if I can do it all. And then to return at night to Philly temple.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Prabhu Nityānanda . . . try to get these early morning hours.

Expose to "new" realities. The reality beyond my own little world of writing and limits. Your conceptions come crashing down. Let it happen in a gentle way. You see others at work at life according to conceptions that are different from yours.

Rain dripping. Florida Scott-Maxwell writes sensitively of old age. Some devotees I know complain, or are occupied fully with their bodily pains and are not as personally reflective as Ms. Maxwell. But her thoughts are not much Kṛṣṇa conscious although somewhat God conscious. What is their ultimate value? At least she teaches me to be

perceptive and honest and write even during extreme old age. She was in her eighties when she wrote *The Measure of My Days*.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

God is the center of life. I want it. Maxwell says it feels to her that God is the central meaning of life but, "We have tried so many ways and have let them become bigotry or tyranny or dreary pretense."

I am completely within a life of religion and spirituality as a *sannyāsi* member of ISKCON. But I seek a genuine essence, not a bigotry, deadness to life and my own humanness. Want to be creative etc.. Many older ISKCON-ites, younger too, are also seeking that authenticity. It doesn't come so easily just by carrying banners and beating drums or being hard-line or soft-line.

The poems you'd like to write are like these jottings, but they become some kind of separate pieces as songs. It's the philosophy and it's a feeling but it's also a unit as a song. How that happens is by practicing them.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Prabhu Nityānanda.

Will you draw your doodles as you travel? If I get time for it. Don't make a big to-do over it in terms of art supplies and color. For now it may be better to just use a black ink pen whenever you feel inclined. Express friendly figures or tension. Don't think about what to do with it. Image-making version of free-writing. I'll look for how to take it up easily. Maybe

after such big collages I'd do better for awhile with a small sketch book.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare.

Oh now I'll end this. Just a little longer.

I'll go now to chant. Getting my act together. In these twenty-five days I'll tell you . . . But I can't say if I will write the whole twenty-five days, so it's a presumption to give the writing sessions that title. Yet you want to start out with a title. How about a purely descriptive one? That would be "Writing Sessions in May While Traveling in Northeast USA." But that's more like a subtitle. Give a poetic one. Uh . . . Back to Writing Session. Measure of my days. Spring watch. But will watching spring be a major occupation? I don't think so. Not in the cities. More like self-watch in May.

In May. Weeks in May. Not watching spring. Myself a spring, a mechanism like a spring in a watch or car springs. Writing Sessions in spring. Oh I can't hit on the right title yet. But will try to come up with one. Make a list.

US Air, here we go. Okay end this one. And dictate it so you won't be late for *japa*.

Be your friend. Death be not a tyrant over me. I still have life to live. Don't be timid. Write on. Maxwell wrote at eighty.

Bhaktivinoda Thākura, Śrīla Prabhupāda . . .

(30 minutes, at Śāṁika Ṛṣi's house while it rains outside, May 6, 1996, Monday)

Writing Session #3

9:15 A.M.

Read *Bhagavad-gītā* and prayed to be able to enter the meanings. Thought, "Should I read TLC instead?" But this is good, *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. It's personal, Kṛṣṇa Himself instructing. That makes it special. And Prabhupāda makes it more personal, explaining that you should chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* and achieve Kṛṣṇa in Goloka as described in the eighth chapter verses and purports.

O Lord, let this pen run smooth and speak what I have to speak. Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa.

There is no teaching like this. Lately I am not attracted to read Christian descriptions. God seems so far away to them. He's never Kṛṣṇa as taught by Lord Caitanya. So I should not be afraid or feel guilty to study God consciousness without the Bible or Christ-centric teachers. May they be peaceful and devout to their *istha-devata*, Jesus Christ. May he be pleased with me.

Neither could I accept worship of the Deity of Lord Nṛsimha as proposed to me the day before yesterday. I worship my guru and the Pañca-tattva in Their picture and the picture of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. All glories . . .

You are writing for solace against loneliness, isolation, fears, passing moods.

You felt some anger or resentment when he gave you the wrong pill out of his desire to save money. But don't cause anyone pain. Don't bring up objections. What am I doing? Trying to spare myself pain. Trying to be cured.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa. There's no way . . .

Let words come, a List:

Filing cabinets, drawers, jokes, a disciple who turns to Christ and away from Kṛṣṇa, someone says someone else threatened him with a gun, waiting for another Fax, for this day to come to its end. The fact that time flows and can't be stopped, not this day or hour is symbolical and factual evidence that we all will die. But *Gītā* teaches us the soul will live on. Scientists say no. "After death, Swamiji, there is no more life." And he was a big professor, Kotovski.

Don't care for them. Accept the authority of Kṛṣṇa. "Many lives both you and I have had; I remember them, Arjuna, but you do not."

I will continue to live after the body dies. Turn to these truths.

To the ultimate.

On Friday you meet for lunch with R.S. and his wife. Auld Lang Syne. Play the tune by Guylambado and the Royal Canadians, "Should old acquaintances be forgotten and never brought to mind?" And I'll have topics although they say lunch topics shouldn't be heavy. Here's a spoof on them:

What does he think of the essay "Where the *rkvik* people are right." J.S. wants us to discuss issues facing them, including possibilities that no ISKCON guru is qualified. What do you want to ask R.S. to comment on?

Are you playing a game as if you are his student? Do you ask out of curiosity to disarm the big-bear intellectual? You are not on his level of philosophizing. So no harm in taking advantage of his friendliness to ask some questions which you do ponder over.

Another is about . . . uh . . . Mangalya turning to Christ. Or what is there to say? Or R.R. doubting why the GBC silences Kundali and his arguments on the origin of the soul? I don't really want to ask those.

I could say I saw Jagadīśa Goswami living in Śaraṇāgati and liked it. But that might be an intrusion on his privacy. I'd be speaking on his behalf, saying he was good. Maybe it's not my business.

Why not say, "Satsvarūpa was at Śaraṇāgati in a cabin his disciple built him. He stayed there about four weeks and wrote to complete Volume Two of his PMB. Do you think he's a good guy?"

No. But talking about J.G. or others is a kind of dodge from talking about yourself. Say I was pimped

scarf, a word with no names or wounds. I took some allopathic pills and it stopped the impending headache and that's why we are able to meet now.

I said bear, a baby bear, a Smoky State Trooper, a slang dictionary, forget it and leave it behind. It's less than sixty degrees and so I stayed indoors. It's also dripping rain. Monday and a neighbor man is not at work but staying at home today in his backyard, working now with wheel barrow. This house needs repair to the front door, the cellar, the lawn and many places . . .

We leave—mendicants who don't have to repair their house. Suggestion: When you get old, don't travel so much. Stay in one place.

But sir, I have a van to live in.

Oh but that's too tiny a space for a human to live in.

But for now

vita-rāga-bhaya-krodhā.

I'll mosey along the trail, cactus to the left Old comedy routines I saw on T.V., masses laughed and I laughed along with them, my upbringing in humor and songs of tin pan alley. But I'm not that body, drifter, your body does grow old. You will take a new life in a new body. Just as the clothes wear out and you get new clothes, so the soul has a body and when it grows old (or it gets ripped apart, burns up suddenly etc.) the soul takes on the dress of a new body. The self-realized (*dhīraḥ*) person is not disturbed by this.

Drink a little water.

Depend on your thumb.

Oh I can't call out but

send my signal, Lord.

I read: He is smaller than the smallest, He's the oldest, knows all, is always a person. Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya said that Brahman is impersonal and so Lord Caitanya says that's nonsense. The direct meaning of the scripture is that the Absolute Truth is a person, the Supreme Person. He has qualities but not like you and I. He has no origin because He's God. If He required an origin He wouldn't be God.

Do you have any theological
topic for your friend?

Do you have a wiener to roast
a pickle to boast?

I have an ace card
a kite with rags on it,
delicate wooden ribs—
I have a poem I wrote in
Delhi and would like to
start a new one.

You have permission to glorify Kṛṣṇa and purify your mental condition. Do it by chanting and writing in your own words what the *śāstra* teaches.

Persian carpets for sale. What you see from the car or van window. For sale. Hamburgers. Pada-yātrā America. Parasarama dāsa the leader. The Manor campaign. Preach to young people to go out and sell CDs and *prasādam* and books and make as much money as possible.

Ambarisa dāsa in Poland writes that he doesn't get as enthusiastic as he used to when he hears the *saṅkīrtana* scores, or to join in a raucous *kīrtana*. Things aren't the same. He grows older. Ought to get married like his Polish Godbrother.

Present GNP books as good for all. Buy them in sets. We are a valid ISKCON entity.

Ki jaya.

Thanks for improving our image.

(1/2 hour, Monday morning late, rain still dripping, Stroudsburg, May 6, 1996)

Writing Session #4

3:44 P.M.

Reading a little in the *Nāmāmṛta* with some feeling. And I think about taste. Could I discuss such a thing with R.S.? Say, “You know our philosophy has all the answers. Steve Galeburg said to me he didn’t want all pat answers to everything . . . ” Say I believe and accept and live in Kṛṣṇa conscious teachings, but what do I feel? Or say I used to feel this more keenly and was more willing to tell the world with hopes of “converting” them to Kṛṣṇa consciousness or at least I had faith that even if they didn’t join us and become devotees, people would become greatly benefited just to hear Hare Kṛṣṇa chanting or to take *prasādam*. Where is that fervor? Gone with the old days of the Boston temple? Did it exist even then? I was always one who preferred to stay indoors and read . . .

You couldn’t very well discuss these things with R.S.. As soon as you say, “Our philosophy has all the answers” he’d laugh. He can take on strong attacks to

faith because he's so philosophical, sees and analyzes in that light. Things come back to *brahma-śabda* as the best proof and so Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the best knowledge. Epistemology.

So you can talk of other things at the Friday lunch.

Reading C.K. Williams telling of cruelty and violence and lust. Puts it on the page in his poems. Confesses, attests to it, all details of the gory and horrible. I flinch from it. Yeah. Timid soul they say, took to the Kṛṣṇa conscious movement (Religion) because it provided him Answers to all the sufferings. He couldn't handle it in the real world of lust and crime and injustice and competition.

So he opted for religion, like joining a monastery. Neither could he go the way of middle-class values; he'd revolted from that so much in coming of age, getting out of parents' mode, US Navy and then Lower East Side.

What are you trying to say? I know worldly people, poets like C.K. Williams and so many others see Kṛṣṇa consciousness as a—

Whatever.

Here we are. Leave at 4:30 A.M.. M is waiting for a mechanic to come and he's got washers and bolts, big ones, and they'll tighten the parts under the van. Hope that will be good enough until the company sends us new parts in the mail. Sure hope we don't break down on route to New York City or Philly. It's

my van, Steven Guarino; although I don't drive, I'm the owner.

Don't want it that way, to be accountable. M says don't worry, it will go all right. Whatever you own can get you into trouble but you need to have things . . .

If R.S. asks me what are you writing I'll say, "I haven't finished my memoirs with Śrīla Prabhupāda. I'm writing comments on the letters he wrote me. Did one volume years ago and only recently continued it. It's like a history of ISKCON for me in those years."

But I'm not actually writing that. I could tell him, as his wife also hears, "I write poems. You know, of daily experience. I just did a first draft of one the other day which could be a series to continue during these weeks of May, where I said I have drifted away from inner core of ISKCON."

No, I'd never say that.

Poems. He once said he'd be willing to talk with me about a poem I wrote. He meant he'd be a teacher or critic. I didn't want that. I can't stand that.

And so I'll have to think of a few luncheon topics, otherwise it will flow of its own as I ask him about his grown-up children, the one who was discharged from the Navy. They may ask me why I wrote what I did about their daughter in *Litany*. I'm counting on their not having read it, but maybe someone showed it to them.

I write of the past but the present too. Well, *May apples* was my happy choice. I opened a dictionary at random and immediately turned right to the page where May apple appeared. Those yellowish apples

are edible but no one eats them. They grow along the banks of the Tuscarora Creek at Gītā-nāgarī. I'm not there and can't be. They don't know why. It's because I can't be myself there; too much has changed. I have to move on but can always go back and visit.

Hare Kṛṣṇa

until you die. If Gour Govinda Swami can die, I can too. That's the logic. It's like saying that Socrates is mortal; Socrates is a man, therefore all men are mortal. But Socrates said he was immortal. You know what I mean. Don't say "die" then. Say as the ISKCON World Review did, "ISKCON leader passing on." Passes to where? That's unknown. But as that Swami passed on, you will too. He went suddenly while discussing Kṛṣṇa's pastimes as Lord Jagannātha in Dvārakā. Clutched at his heart. Asked them to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. They did. In fifteen minutes he was gone, in Māyāpura, on the disappearance day of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

You have a little story of bare facts too. Your father, it says on his death certificate, died of a heart attack in Philadelphia in 1989 (I think). Mother is now eighty-five. They were both twenty-nine years old when I was born on December 5, 1939.

I was surprised to hear a Godbrother telling me what the astrologer said he was going through. I thought he was above that. He said, "Don't trust anything Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't specifically tell us by 1977." Well he didn't teach astrology; only at the end of his life did he consult. And those predictions didn't come true, they said he would live longer.

May apples

Premis are barely edible

I think he better improve
on tastey quality by trying
to write out of feelings and
reaching further to essence
beyond the limited self.

Yeah but you got to
be rooted, I know

Oh
Shenandoah,
I love you
daughter
Away, you big
sea river
Past the
wide
Missouri



May
apple

I say don't bother with it. Keep your resolve not to get a horoscope done. I've stopped listening to jazz, and no horoscope, no women dallying and no serious interest in Christianity or any writer. If only instead I could be "into" prayer or *hari-nāma*, or preaching *saṅkīrtana*. At least I've got this writing.

May apples. Crab apples. May fly. Tsetse fly. No, no kidding. They are May apples, seasonally raw woods' herbage, not so pretty, shy plant that hides its waxy white flower under a broad waxy green leaf, and later that flower becomes the fruit. You know when they come it's full spring. May at Gītā-nāgarī. But I'll be in the cities mostly, NYC, Philly and then suburbs of Baltimore and then Boston. Won't see much of spring apples but I'll be thinking of them. And maybe when you see white blossoming trees. I know in Philly suburbs, around Mt. Airy, it's spectacular—pink blossoms in the trees of many yards, maybe in the temple yard too. All these years Saudamani and her husband there. I come and go,

slippers

shopping bags.

Pens, for writing and making doodle pictures.

The serious frown of Kevin of USN and others, Dhira-Kṛṣṇa dāsa (Dallus Weir) in prison . . . And me on the road, seeking protection, solitude, a room alone and then I come out to lecture on Prabhupāda and his teachings. Don't let it all show when you lecture. Put on a bold front. It's required. Advocate what Viśvanātha Cakravatī does and what Śrīla

Prabhupāda does and say I have not realized this “fully” but I do follow it and *isn't it nice?* Isn't this a beautiful truth to live by? Is it possible? Let us hear it more, how chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa can wash all dirty (material) things from one's heart and give you the original position of loving service to Kṛṣṇa. Yeah I can do it.

(1/2 hour (afternoon), May 6, 1996, indoors at Śāṁika Ṛṣi's house, 50 degrees, rainy day)

Writing Session #5

7:03 A.M.

Traveled to NYC, Queens, to P.B.M's apartment. Here I am in one piece. I can give two lectures in two nights. Given means to repeat Kṛṣṇa consciousness as I've heard it. Play the lecture excerpts of His Divine Grace. Without this Kṛṣṇa consciousness we have no intelligence. New York Yankees. We drove past Yankee Stadium and I said aloud, "There's Yankee Stadium." I thought it would have some meaning to Madhu. Rested for the first time in the back of the new van. It's too early to make a judgment.

What is true in me? I don't even want to know some scary hollowness, cowardice, lack of spiritual realization. I want a cozy, comfortable existence. You can't have what you want. But as a result of my time and service I get some reward, material conveniences. We move from place to place. Stay out of reach of the directional arm of GBC.

I don't know who I am. By chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa one can control the mind.

May apples are a sojourn. There's no country lane. Calm down, man.

You don't want a woman.

You don't want worship fuss.

You do like it when they edit and publish your writings. You don't like a headache.

In this room are *Śrīmad Bhāgavatams* and *Caitanya-caritāmṛtas*. Candles in glasses because they know I use them. Bare wood floor, feet cold. It was thirty-two degrees when we left Stroudsburg. Sign for East Stroudsburg University. Small time place. One wants prestige in a place of education he attends. Wants money, sex, security, longevity. But if you strive for those things and don't advance your spiritual cause, you're no better than an animal.

Chant, chant. Road in back of van. No curtain over windows yet. Could sleep, that would be nice.

May apples in secluded lane. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa. Airplane scratching the sky. Delta guarantees a seat on the shuttle. Advertisement for video camera shows three photos of your daughter from childhood to her marriage in white bride's gown. It says, "Going . . . going . . . gone!" Before you know it, your daughter will grow up and get married and leave your home—and if you don't capture her activities on video it will be lost forever. Get in there and take pictures.

"Detroit tonight: 7:35" sign at Yankee Stadium. Who will win the game?

Write a little longer but if you want to doze it's all right. They will leave you alone here. Box of mail caught up with us.

I don't feel a deep urge to preach but when I start I can do it. I'd just like to be left alone. I am not someone special. I don't . . . trust.

The rumba. Let's take a break, man. Write me three more minutes. It's a tough town, a chaos of karma, hell. The rich get richer and you see if I lived here as a nondevotee I'd have to have a job and my horizons limited to daily grind and seeking relief in it. Fears of crime, assaults, attempts at happiness. Foolish attempts. We are transcendental to that. I could lecture on some of that. But have poultry realization. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

(15 minutes, P.B.M and Rasaraja's apartment, Queens, NYC, May 7, 1996, just arrived. A book on wild flowers here but no May apples)

Writing Session #6

3:57 P.M.

I don't want this to be a mere exercise racing by the clock. I feel something that I'm reluctant to preach. I'd rather go deep inside myself and know something. Does that sounds bad?

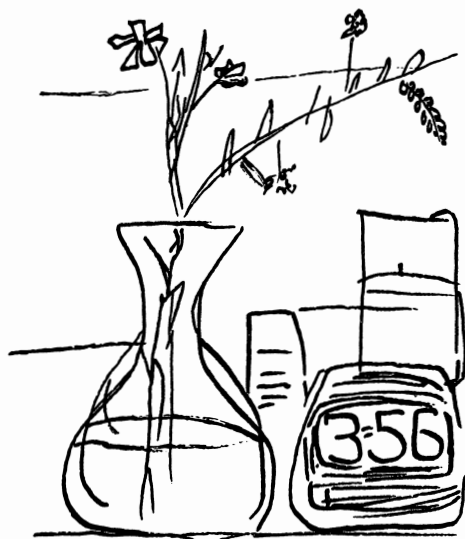
You don't understand (dear reader) what I'm trying to say. I've said this before? It sounds familiar? Sounds like when I was in the Pyrenees trying to decide whether to live in a house in remote Ireland for prayer? No it's not like that. "Prayer" isn't happening like that with me, with heavy Christian influence. Neither am I under Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja or other Gaudiya Math influence or "*rasika*." Or—nondevotee writers or listening to jazz. Or even thinking life means to write non stop.

But something is happening, some tickling sensation inside tells me—if you do need to change for your betterment then be open to it. If I lecture in temples maybe I'll get more taste for that. But I'm in the extreme position of not meeting with people.

Someone might therefore say, “He doesn’t preach much. Not like he used to. Although he does preach through his books.”

I’m on course as usual. Just wanted to mention there is a tickle of something inside and I wanted to be aware of it.

We all want direction from Kṛṣṇa. But we can’t expect the Lord of Vṛndāvana to come and dance for us and play His flute as if He’s our servant. You hear of Him and you serve Him—that’s the way.



Names of flowers in this room, one a weedy yellow and purple, a little bit like a daisy—real American wild flowers. I want you to say as many poems as you can. Rasaraja’s 108 band has a new CD and single—angry lyrics. Feel the void in yourself. I’m sick of society and the slaughtering they do to our

minds. And fools, I'm not going to hide it anymore, etc..

I am hanging around in this apartment doing a little *pūjā* for Śrīla Prabhupāda and answering some letters. Not a very active man.

Hey he's not an active man.

Doesn't like to stay up past 7 P.M.. Ever heard of such a thing? He likes to get up at midnight and read and write and chant his rounds then.

Won't condemn himself for being a non devout, non emotional, non loving chanter. Got a cut on his thumb print from rubbing the beads, and another on his long finger, but that doesn't mean you are chanting with love.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa. The Lord is the topmost Person. I was in tune with His *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and now I seem to have stopped it for the time being.

Say Kṛṣṇa. Do you want to be a devotee? Do you want to pay the price?

This is a fairly quiet street in Queens. Apartment are two stories high. Rent. Mixed races. Cars parked at all spots. I told you Our Lady is out front.

So P.B.M is going to 26 Second Avenue tonight but we will stay back. A devotee named Agni is coming and offers to give a Shiatshu massage. I agreed to take it. Good for health of this aging body. Get on, man. Don't play too old before your time.

I tell you *Gentle Power* is what we are calling our poetry book. Kṛṣṇa consciousness and gentle power.

It was not a mouse, just a shadow. Tomas Kobbs ill in Czech Republic, says it may be due to feelings

within of the injustice against Turiya on the farm. He now thinks that he'd better not meddle with Providence—or is that a way of backing out? You see, these letters I read plunge me into so many issues in people's lives.

So I think you'd be better off—a foreign express, foreign rate, be with you later man. If you write only fifteen minutes it may not be enough. I started this one mainly to express an inkling about change. Don't say I didn't mention it. If it comes again I'll note it. It starts with the recognition that I am not so eager to preach. That I ask myself why. I don't have a clear answer, but it is related to honesty, to admitting I don't have realization or taste for Kṛṣṇa in Goloka. My spiritual ambitions seem tired out. Bugged down with realities of this world, the institution, the physical issues of raising money etc., disagreement among people . . . How to apply the teachings. If I don't realize Kṛṣṇa consciousness deeply then when I preach—I feel the credulity gap between where I am and the perfection of the spiritual state described in the scriptures.

When I read rightly it helps, but I can't sustain that. And all these more letters coming in and more requests that I give a lecture—or demands from my writer self to write something—so I can't follow up this inkling. Maybe there is something different I could do. That's what I wanted to say. But don't forget you are in the world like everyone else so it is not likely you'll discover a way out of it that is so different from what every one of us is dealing with.

(twenty one minutes, Queens apartment, May 7)

Writing Session#7

5:58 A.M.

Here we go. I wrote about May apples in *Journal and Poems, Vol. 1* in 1986:

The large leafy plant I see everywhere is called May apple or Mandrake. It produces an obscure waxy flower which usually hides under the large leaves. These wild flowers are very lowly, and their blossoms are sometimes obscure—one could call them humble. They are not very beautiful or not even noticeable.

That was a pretty May, sensitive to birds at dawn and rain on tin roof of cabin and flowers coming and going but sensitive to too much pain and even medicine couldn't stop the headaches. Much better off now traveling and preaching and writing more. But it lasts a little longer. Blues singer, "Give me another year, Lord."

What will you do with that year or with seven days to help yourself and help others? A young man

came here last night, Agni dāsa, tall and muscular. He is expert in massage and giving massages and he does it free as a service to devotees. He did me very thoroughly and I slept soundly last night. We each have a service. Can I bring people some relief? Yes I know I can.

May apples aren't show offy. Not bright blossoms. They produce only one flower. Their flat green roof leaf is low, lowly, mandrake the magician. Green smelly along the creek, the May apples used to carpet big areas and it's probably still like that. In Manhattan you have to purchase wild flowers from a florist as P.B.M did to give us these yellow and purple ones.

A hundred and eight band. One oh ate. One and fate presides. The old man says, "It hurt when you pulled at my middle toe."

Agni: "That's the stomach."

Oh yes. It figures. Indigestion. Never feel clean hunger.

So this Godbrother was saying "No Vaiṣṇavas ever wrote diaries." Of course, he'd concede to the diary of Svarūpa Dāmodhara on Lord Caitanya, but that's different! Or Murāri Gupta's diary of Nīmāi in Navadvīpa. But because there were no Vaiṣṇava diaries in the past, especially by minor, aspiring Vaiṣṇavas, does it mean that diaries can never be used as a genre? *Yukta vairāgya* tells us yes, you can use it. Claim it for the Lord.

And if the diarist is less than perfect? Never mind, write to improve. Write to help yourself and others.

Why should we rule out this genre as taboo just because it is so honest and personal?

Marines. Go out this weekend. "Take off this weekend—Naval Reserve." No thanks. I'll be quiet on the street in Queens. Get into car and drive over bridge to Lower East Side, Manhattan, and give your talk. Don't yawn or cry tears or beep or belch. Just start saying, "A.H. is glad to be here in this sacred place where the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement took hold in America thirty years ago." Fiftieth anniversary of birth of Bob Marley celebrated in Jamaica with postage stamp of a dollar ten cents. The one hundred years since Śrīla Prabhupāda's birth is much more important, but Jamaicans don't know it yet.

Tighten your teeth, vassal
give us a smart look as you march
by—"Eyes right!" to
look at generals in reviewing stand.

O first thoughts, I have to keep you at arms' length. It's too flotsamy and jetsomy to make a list of what's happening in my little life.

If your read *sāstra* you can tell us the powerful effect of the holy names, even when chanted neglectfully or in jest.

I am tired and need a little break. Get through this day to speak in the evening, recalling our Swami.

He accepted the name Prabhupāda and his Godbrothers objected. But he deserves the name and they should accept him. Never mind that Abhay

Charan De was a *grhastha* in those early days. He was always thinking of his spiritual master even when he did business. And in 1940's he was writing *Back to Godhead* and preaching, waiting for a chance to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So he was always a Kṛṣṇa conscious person and it took some time to fully manifest.

I say
Mandrake
you lowly plant,

I am here in the city and so much you could say.
Compared to you, Mandrake, growing and producing
your waxy flower which nobody wants to wear on
their lapel or give to their girlfriend to put on their
prom gown—

You lowly green plant
please preserve us.
And let us all pray to Tulasī-devī
the Lord's dearmost,
that our *kurtās* don't get ripped
before the bombs drop.
May she, my spiritual daughter,
find peace
may I be true
may the Lord deliver us
Amen.

(Fifteen minutes, Queens morning, May 8)

Writing session #8

4.46 P.M.

This is the way to go back to Godhead, not to hell. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Thought to say tonight—this *ūrtha* is spiritual reality for me. I may not know Kṛṣṇa but I know I came here and met Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1966, thirty years ago. Once meeting him I stopped all—no, it sounds too much like boasting of my good fortune. Then say—I hesitate to speak because it may sound like boasting and I have that tendency. But I do mean to say I know this place is where it began and

What if I don't like outer forms of ISKCON now? Still the river began of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. What he taught was pure. Whether it is pure now or changed, you can decide and time will decide. But what he taught was never lost. Caught some of it in *Planting the Seed*. Happy days.

Kṛṣṇa and Swamiji

we don't do things over. He was hinting that he liked Vol. 1 of *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* so much but he thought I should redo Vol. 2.

May is over after one week. This is rare time. I am missing it. What to say.

Time can't be stopped. Winter is followed by spring. Bhaktipāda awaiting his prison sentence for mail fraud. May get twenty years. He speaks of God's will in all things and says he'll be content with his fate wherever he is. Do you believe he really thinks that way? If so, he is a saint, saintly person. I don't know. I keep away from him.

I don't have much deep inner peace. I speak gibberish. Or to a reporter I'd say more what Śrīla Prabhupāda taught us. I am helpless to do that and not something else. Sorry I am not a realized person.

That's what I thought of saying in intro. remarks tonight. I am not realized but I know even as history or empirical fact that Swamiji came and he was without any mean or selfish motive. He wanted to distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the chanting. And teach we are all eternal servants of Lord Kṛṣṇa. He was teaching what his spiritual master, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī taught him. Unique among disciples of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to come out of India and do it.

My master pulled me out of material life. He was no ordinary spiritual master.

Yes, I said the May apple has a waxy flower. You may introduce your talk that way. Then speak on