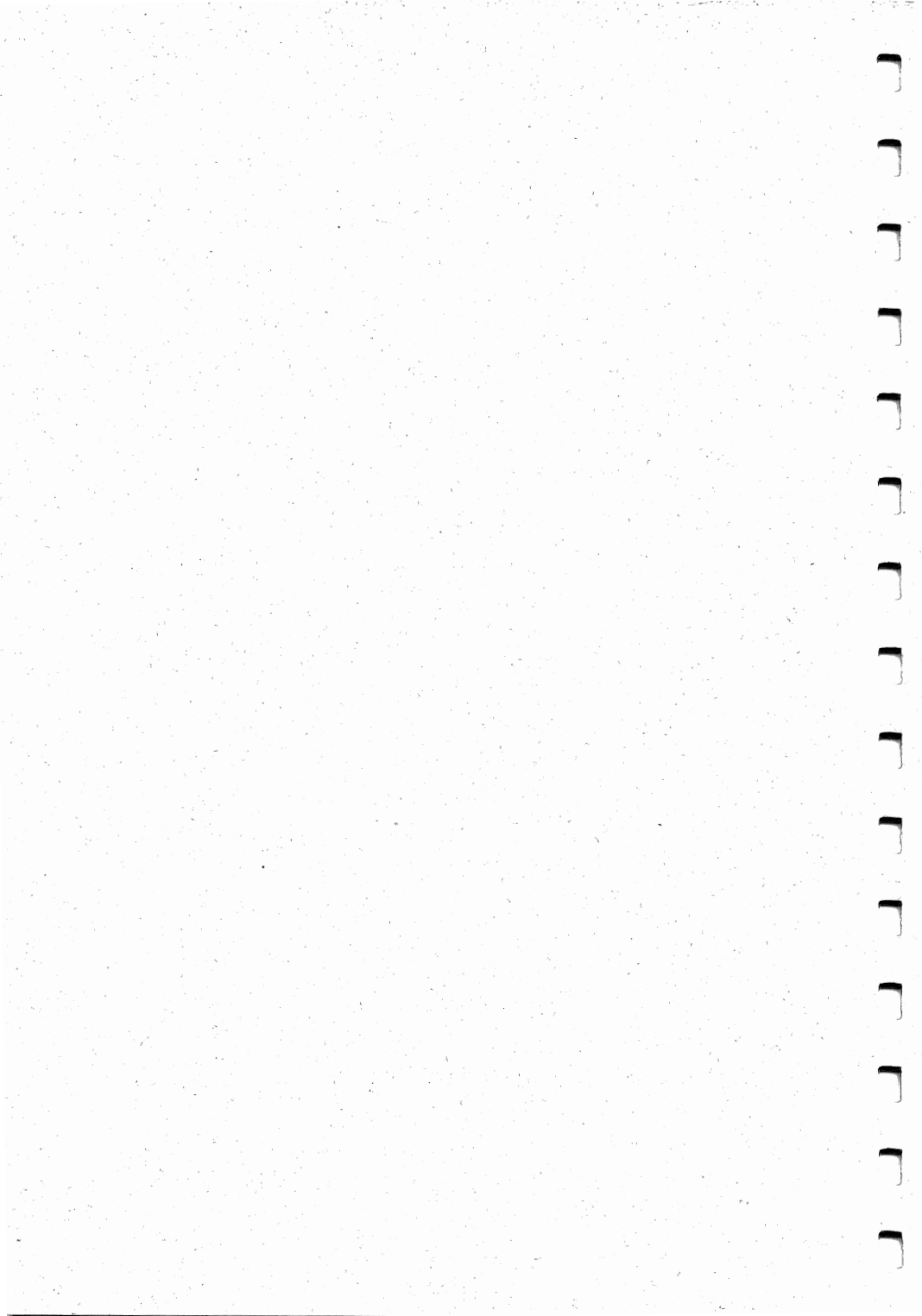


# **The One-Hour Writing Session**

**Volume Six**

**Satsvarūpa dāsa Gowami**





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**Satsvarūpa dāsa Gowami  
GN Press, Inc.**

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## September 8

12:14 A.M.

Strange dream: Kṛṣṇa gave me strength not to reveal my secret thoughts even when Godbrothers were prying. I was freed from the desire to be "#1"—the best disciple—which disease seemed to plague others. Anyway, it is a troublesome disease, to compete and not be a humble devotee. Could I do something wonderful for His Divine Grace? We'd all like to. But it can't be done by fighting one another. Going alone, I write honestly and gain certain powers. What am I afraid of aside from mice and rats and terrorists? Kṛṣṇa can give you any strength required to overcome your fears.

Secret hideout.

Write to practice, to improve.

You are in for cold weather, mate. So dress warm and don't complain. The Irish people live with it.

This will be a time of many practice attempts. Success is when you can write in Kṛṣṇa consciousness more naturally. One step is to get away from the problems of others and face the problems of all—I mean the answer to all problems is to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, spiritual, and not attached to women, fame, worries, etc. Face death and beyond that face Lord Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual world.

You mean to say? By coming alone and hearing, then you repeat what you hear. The experience you gain. Sadāputa said the nine cantos give us under-

standing of reality, so when we hear of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the Tenth Canto, we don't mistake Him as ordinary. Get the picture? Bhāgavata Purāṇa is going to Vṛndāvana for five years to join the twenty-four hour *kīrtana*. He can sustain and deepen his taste for *harer nāma*. He said he's going because he sees devotees burn out in ISKCON and leave. He wants the deep attachment to the holy name which he doesn't find is often given by daily temple routine. I think his plan is good and I wish him well. He may also learn to love Vṛndāvana in all seasons.

I am finding Vṛndāvana in these hidden places like now in a farm house in Kenmare. It's off from the main road. An old house and not properly heat-able. We'll have to see how we manage here. Get lots of wood for the kitchen stove, the only source of heat. May it rise up here to my room.

Kentucky gardens not directly, books and heart-beats. M. in van runs out for purchases of food at night after long drive to get here. What do you need more? Not much, I need the inner drive and *bhakti* now.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality to Godhead. Send out your messages to the world. You are doing okay. Yes, I'm okay.

Write words like furnace, blast, Madame, underwear. You, Ajāmila, saw a couple embracing in a Kenmare public street, her arms thrown over his shoulders. She was blonde, he wore Wellington boots, the town's people could see . . . two lovers. After looking at them kiss again and again and

stare into each other's faces (as the monkeys described in "Forest of Material Enjoyment"), it seemed that all the other activities on the town were unsensational by comparison. The young man alone across the street seemed unnerved. The book store seemed beside the point. A red-faced old man didn't know that a young man and woman were kissing two blocks away. Poets and other secular madmen praise lovers. Some see it as a nuisance, show-off and those who know the people involved know that it won't be along lived romance. It's *māyā*, *mahā-māyā*, that's for sure. So don't let me get disturbed.

Skin worn away on third finger, from rubbing *japa* beads there. I will proceed.

Envious of parked estates. Gradually the images of yesterday's travel will fade. Disorderly farm yards here. The Nature view is great! Hills, hills with Killarney. Green land, forests, and we are off by ourselves. The landlord is a friendly man who lives alone with his father. This is an old house. It has a small, blue light downstairs where the people used to keep a perpetual vigil under a picture of the Sacred Heart. I have to put up some pictures.

I keep wanting to say write not for any audience but do directed to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, devotional service.

Yeah, one of these days you will have to leave and that's a fact. All your books, James Tate, James Wright poems left behind. "Into the void," said a Japanese poet, when I walk out into the mist each morning. Or this morning

this morning I too. I plan to pray with *Bhagavad-gītā*. Hear the words of Lord Kṛṣṇa as He speaks directly to each of us. He says, "I will teach you, Arjuna, the sacred science because you are My *bhakta* and friend; the science is lost, I revive it now with you and no one else can know the mystery." I'll cue myself to prayer with it. May my ankle hold up for the walk. Off you go and chant rounds too. Make the best use of your time.

I am not writing to produce books. I've got enough for the year. But I will, I do, I am, I . . . if something usable comes automatically that's fine. You select sections of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Pub and grub. The little world. B & B. The rickety roads. The gorse, the rocky \_\_\_\_\_ hills remind you of the land near the old ISKCON Farm at Glenngariff. In the old days, Pṛthu would drive me, the visiting figure-head guru, in his Range-rover. Days gone. Look to oneself. I have more time to write, and as my dream indicated, I am not in the subtle or un-subtle contest for supremacy. But I do want to render recognizable service to Prabhupāda.

Hey, mister, are you gonna beat us up? Thelbert Bumbis bullies of the bully. Jean Shepherd stories. And other fictive writers.

Don't clam up on us. Keep the sails and the wheels turning.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is the indwelling guide and He is Time. You can sense His presence in those ways.



Also when you read, He's revealed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It won't be long now.

You are doing a practice writing session.

Improvises from a cluster exercise on the word "practice."

Practice—Coltrane blows his horn. Sonny Rollands practices his sax from the Williamsburg Bridge. Or you go into a wood-shed where the pieces of wood are stacked and you tot-too your horn there. You can practice prayer too or write a poem on a retreat.

"Practice makes perfect"—in what? Breakfast oatmeal.

By practice, you get better. Then you can perform one day just Audrey Hepburn. What's it for? To play a better Kṛṣṇa conscious game. You make some epic, you gain strength, you show prowess. You simply get better by practice.

Jimminy cricket! "This is unnerving!" he exclaimed. My Kṛṣṇa conscious art is developing by practice at least in small ways.

The main thing is to have belief in the process.

You go forward in the process of writing the mind out. Face yourself, "Hello there, what are your *anarthas*? Can you drop some?"

Watch your dream life. Put some of it in writing. Writing time to help yourself.

I do believe there is time . . . take your time now.

You believe this process of tapping into your mind will help you and it's the basis of other writing. Self on page like a sandwich.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness sustained by our simple practices of chanting and reading—and writing too is a way.

It seems to me . . . better not make dialogue with the inner critic. Give him his usual time but it would be nice to learn your lesson of not involving him so much. Don't honor him with major attention.

Not enough hours in the day to do all I'd like to do. You can write fizzle potatoes in a bag. Water in pipe. Drink your whole water, it's not beer.

Unchained melody. I'm not there anymore in the barber chair or ferry ride, I'm not this body and therefore I'm not the son of Mr. and Mrs. Guarino. I am not a creature like that. Oh yes, in one sense I am, but the eternal spirit soul is something different. Here goes arbutes and claim alive. I am getting free. The Curtis basketball team can beat Port Richmond? That's the question. The Tops can't win, simply can't win.

The flowers on curtain. I write with gloves on. Didn't get a good writing desk this time. Maybe better to bring a new one, or you can adjust your legs with this one at least. Oh, don't complain, but learn to live with it. Pad the edge of the table where your legs go up against it.

Lord Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world. Talk spirit now, don't force yourself to go the hour. And then

if I read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, I'll get the direct *darśana*. This is for me to look at later. Private. And the practice may produce. Untense your muscles. You're at the start of a month long retreat and it's up to you . . . but Lord Kṛṣṇa is the controller and your life is His. So let's see if simple acts like this *jīva* writing practice can be channeled as service to the Supreme. That is your desire and you can leave behind false notions and worthless practices. Just do real writing.

Yes, without direct books and the study of *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, this would be like our van careening through the countryside, an external movement, a rattling and expending of engine power, an expertly handled vehicle to get us somewhere, but in itself a material act lost in time as you go around the turns past tourists at the Yarn and Sweater shop and the Lady view of Killarney, leprechaun crossing, tourists, and I already told you what I saw in Kenmare and all will die.

Monks and free loose to find God. God is Lord Kṛṣṇa and I pray to receive Him now in reading *darśana*.

(50 minutes, Kenmare)

## September 10

12:10 A. M.

Dreamt I was Prabhupāda's servant and I was carrying him. It continued for awhile and he preferred being carried because he was tired and it was outdoors . . . ex-wife phoned while I was carrying him. I said, "I can't talk now. I'm taking care of Prabhupāda's needs." (Don't trust her).

Now awake, what do you have to match that? (Hot water bottle in bed I had my arms around). Oh well, I have service in separation. I have a schedule I follow and writing. I am alive. When I die, I pray I may go to him and be worthy. Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda . . .

I thought if M. starts our meetings where we speak on Śrīla Prabhupāda's letters to me, I'll be willing to do it because my present work isn't as Prabhupāda-centered as that. But I also seek to improve what I am doing gradually. Seeking to improve. There is nothing as good as that.

Words do come through. Read about writing practice so you can improve it. Supposed to be cutting through and writing things that aren't easy to say. NG says in writing, her best is when her heart is breaking. You even cry, but keep writing and come out sighing. I don't know that experience.

See you in Māyāpur, I tell them. And if Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya allow, I will go there. The great devotees of Prabhupāda are fulfilling his desires that a temple and a FDIC planetarium be built

there. I am writing and will write about that too. Will help to produce a pictorial biography of His Divine Grace. They can decide on the format.

Publish. The book I was supposed to do was *Why Things Fail* and I'm coming out with it although it's a little one. Maybe some people will buy it. We live in an insular world of ISKCON, me too, even when I go on a retreat. Yet ISKCON interfaces with the whole material world. Furthermore, ISKCON can connect you to the infinite spiritual world of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Goloka. In that sense, ISKCON isn't a small cult with insular experience, but it's open to the variety of the perfect world. By comparison, the whole material world is rotten and shrunk up and full of suffering.

Can't manage yet to tell any story except what goes on in the retreat and my attempts to tell a story. Maybe you can open to the infinite worlds, eh? But my motto is nothing artificial. If I actually start experiencing that expanding consciousness, then I can tell the story of what it is like.

What it is like.

The red pen, the yellow pages of the phone book and of the legal pad.

Bewits. Words you had better avoid, too sexual, scars and horror. In any case, one could chant the name of Kṛṣṇa. That is always possible. Your bare minimum sixteen is all you can do. The day is packed with Kṛṣṇa conscious projects. Can't get my reading up yet beyond one and a half hours. But I'll

work at it. More and more. If my health permits.  
*Gitā* walks, *Gitā* talks.

There is a way to cooperate  
elsters be smelders,  
this is  
freer land where  
you shoot from the hip to lip

I want to pray and to prepare sections for a seminar. You can do it, you know. You can do it. Mark the sections with notes in your *Bhagavad-gītā*. But are you willing to read aloud and induce a class into some "trance?" I don't think so. You'll freeze up and not be able to do it; it seems too unorthodox. Keep trying it yourself, however, if you can; you are an easier, more willing subject than sixty people in a room. And if you learn something, you'll find a way to turn it into something you can present in a class. You present at least the result of your prayer and study. First do it, man, do something for your own prayer life, and from that, some kind of class presentation may be possible. Ask students to write realizations or answer questions every day.

Now I know about the whereabouts of the barking dog so it doesn't concern me much. You get away from the football crowd out here. Less noisy. Preachers at Soho Street sacrifice peace and fresh air in order to directly serve Radha-Londonīśvara or to directly approach people with Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. They make a great sacrifice. So on this quiet outpost I may be free to think clearly and develop something. Be a *brāhmaṇa* who can speak on

*Bhagavad-gītā*. Present it in your own way, the selections that seem most pertinent. That's all you are doing and you are not so "original"—it doesn't have to be. I'm approaching them in a prayer method, that's my private business.

You have a yen  
to read any book that holds  
your attention and hope you can  
use it also in your own  
writing and life.

Read Śrīla Prabhupāda's books many times but they remain the most trustworthy. So we return to them and seek to appreciate always and more.

I thank your dream-self for producing that one of me carrying Śrīla Prabhupāda. It was nice to do. He wasn't especially soft or indebted to me for that service, but he did prefer and allow it. At one point, I put him down and worried whether I did it too abruptly. He began to walk and his first steps were not so steady. Carry him every night in dreams if he will let you. Tell the world you do it? Don't speak some things which are private. If something works for you, then it is already important even if you don't publish it. You publish and that is generous of you, but don't ruin experiences by doing it.

How did my Godbrother Sudāmā pass away? I heard it was good, rising to the occasion and making the most of his personal association with Śrīla Prabhupāda. How will you find out? Dhanurdhara Swami knows. Ask for brief account when you are

able to. This is the mystery of the the disciplic succession.

The sussed out cat replied he had no money, "Please don't rob me or poke me away in a barrel. Please let me live."

Writing pads do work and serve.

A devotee works and reports in his diary, we planted ten acres today, we distributed a hundred books, preached in a college . . . well that's all right. What did you do to please your spiritual master? We read such and such section of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, how to do the ritual Diti performed. How to begin the Seventh Canto on behalf of your spiritual master and we lived in a farm house and practiced virtues in quiet and had plenty of time to stretch and not by hot-house method of growing a seminar. We waited and wrote, hoping for a conclusion by direct methods.

*Avatāra*, God is called when He directly descends. I am not a physicist. I am a guitar player. Who cares?

Be a simple adherent who can sling in a line of prose, "I need your love, God, speed your love to me." So he sings, guy aching for his girlfriend. Better to be who you are old Sats, the carnical clown, when Bhurijana laughs at me with some love mixed with satirical put-down of this fellow's checkered career. Well, it is laughable. We all are and you could cry also your blunders.



Lord Kṛṣṇa descends once in a day of Brahmā. I said we can observe the Appearance Day of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī by readings and singing *bhajan*as. It will be a nice thing to do, three of us, simple. She's the Mother of *bhakti*. Let it be that way. She has Her many direct devotees. Read *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali*. Get it from the van.

"O Rādhā, may I serve You directly with Rūpa-mañjarī," said Raghunātha Gosvāmī in his *sādhaka* form. You learn these wondrous new things. You can; they are there in Lord Caitanya's teachings. But who deserves to relish there? You have to be a perfect soul. Gadghara Pran set the example of rushing ahead. Be over-intelligent and leave Śrīla Prabhupāda behind—at your great risk. Let's prefer to do as he taught us; remember the *gopī-bhāva* club, it wasn't so long ago.

And nature spoils the magic.

He preferred preachers who dedicate their body, mind, and words to spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness and students who studied his books srutinizingly. I'm going through *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, at least reading it all and leaving a trail.

O microscopic plant, O destiny of the fallen, my words pop out like branches. Find a serious river; don't write on automatic pilot but with heart and thoughts.

There was once a river that flowed, there was a land with one king, there was a hole where you could enter and never come out, there was a machine that moved forward with razor sharp-wheels and there was Nārada speaking in riddles to the

Haryaāvas who were very intelligent and understood all he said. They replied, "If material life is so binding and illusory, what's the use of it?" And they decided to live renounced lives without family encumbrances. That's the story in the Sixth Canto. And you know about Dakṣa's response.

Angels of mercy, how the time flies by. You have been here forty minutes. Afraid you haven't said so much. Let it flow, hope to improve, accept who you are right now. These are the thoughts of a September 10. In Paris I am in a night club? No. I'm in a farm house isolated. No one need know we are here. Phone and tell them you don't know where I am calling from. Please take the writing I've sent and edit and return to me for last look. The people who are producing my books . . . world of supportive agents so we can preach in this one-man way, author of Vaiṣṇava works. You are in charge of the publishing house but want it to be humble to write as medium condrite or else it is useless.

This is the way of custard pies. I saw maybe five or ten seconds of the Tom and Jerry cartoons they were showing on the ferry. Someone was hit in the face with a pie. Every moment a sadistic gage. Ha ha. The animals suffer. You laugh it off, light entertainment for kids. Better when they can watch *kṛṣṇa-līlā* and believe it. Free of the images T.V. and video games, football players, just like life . . . Dilenger. I saw it with His Divine Grace.

Consecrate. Dedicate the day to serving him. May you please him. Enter the words of his books. This

is a discipline where you write. I wish to be a devotee. I remember now twenty years ago; have a party in my honor but I won't attend, am roaming in the world somewhere. Don't need a party cake or maybe some warm *halavā* wherever I am. Seven year old Haridāsa was meditating on his birthday which was two weeks away. I could see . . . he was serially self-centered, wanted attention, was shy that I had entered the house, was eating with them at their table. Little kid . . . my old man said I am only the tail wagging in the family . . . don't try to be center big shot, you don't even bring the money home, you are the most minor character. He said it well, but it hurt even to this day. A kid doesn't know how to deal with life very well, doesn't have defenses or recourse to his own remarks. And no bodily strength. When he gets older, watch out.

The way of the discipline's sparks and effete worn out pillows, other words, "pop art" from New York City to San Francisco what's in between, Śrīla Prabhupāda flew over the ground. "Just write like this," Ueland said. "Go from peak to peak in what interests you" . . . I'm going and will be gone; writing takes on its own life.

It sure is strange how you have allowed yourself to write this way. That surly boy, that shy boy, Haridāsa, his mother is very worried that he is so enthusiastic for football and gets no Kṛṣṇa conscious attachment as their daughter had growing up in the temples. But they can't give him so much because they live outside the temple now. Father laughed and said, "He's wild, but he's okay. He's a

boy." Not so much deep love between us because they voiced so many doubts about our relationship and whether it's actually guru-disciple. They prefer to go directly to Prabhupāda. They use their head and not so much heart. But she said, "The head has to be satisfied too." I said, "How can you ascertain the size of Mahā-Viṣṇu with your brain? Accept it in faith and strength of *śāstra*."

You may stop this session. It's friendly talk somewhere in America or ISKCON space I write. Don't complain. Whatever comes here has some value, all life is like that, a little at a time.

You would write the exam is almost over. The Maruts are not puppets. It's real, although much of it is different from your empirical experience. The consistent view of *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Three more minutes. Then fight with straw-men against the theory of the origin of the *jīva*. Okay, he fell down due to misuse of free-will, but does it mean we fell from Goloka—from where no one ever falls? Take it as a not important question. That's what Śrīla Prabhupāda said.

Last slashes. Good-bye. I saw you at the metro. Good-bye. The time is over, song is song. Time to sign off. In a pond they fished. He wants to capture America's soul. I am not claiming to know ISKCON's soul or even my own but write after notes and pen safe on it. Close out, over and out, friend, I don't want to fight, I want to peacefully produce—but do fight sleep and lust.

(1 hour, Kenmare)

## September 11

12:08 A.M.

There is a reason to get up early and write. It is connected to Kṛṣṇa. We're all connected to Him, but this is a way to connect in devotional service. I offer myself as like a lotus—I mean a *tulasī* leaf at the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu—I mean, may Śrīla Prabhupāda place me there. It's hard to get the metaphor straight so early in the morning. I make mistakes. People laugh at you if you say, "Here is a *tulasī* garland worn by Rādhārāṇī. Only Kṛṣṇa wears them, or maybe He gave it to Her and She wore it. Someone gave it to me" . . . we are mixed with devotional service . . .

Saw the owl on telephone wire. Knew it was an owl because of the round head. He just sat there big and dangerous. If I had a gun . . .

Who is this roving mentality? Let us surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa and be done with it. Actually engage in His service. We speak the philosophy and we try to live it also. A month to go here. Only three days gone . . . I wish to write something but don't have what it takes to make it some kind of structured novel or collection of essays. *Wild Garden* shows there are other forms of writing for Vaiṣṇavas. If people like books like that, I can produce more. But probably not every year. In 1994 I have enough material for *Churning the Milk Ocean*. After that, we will have to see. "At the fullness of his power," they write of James Tate. Then you wane. Do they

say, "At the dwindling of his powers," and then, "He is dead"? No one says, "He has gone on to take another body." No one knows about that. Swami Prabhupāda goes back to Godhead. That was a newspaper headline in India, an obituary notice. It wasn't front page headline as in the case of, "Indira Gandhi Shot Down By Security Guard." Live by the sword . . .

Soul goes to the next body.

Soul of the child, Abhaya dāsa. Souls of the soul rising up. Going down. It depends on the modes of nature. Better grow up and take the adult view of the world

Well, that's all right

he tried to avoid the operation.

I am reading about it. Interesting story about Spalding Gray and problem in his left eye. What do you do to make a living? I write books. I grind down sandalwood paste. Śrīla Prabhupāda said in 1974 Bombay lecture there are no poor people in America. At least compared to poverty in India . . . you rise early to write. How to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness? If I were managing a temple, I'd ask myself how we could "make" more devotees and keep the ones we have happy. How to get more donations and how to distribute more books so our GBC man would be satisfied. And so many practical considerations. You'd consider if you wanted to continue the service and if not, how to get out of it. I am free of such worries. I said to the two men here last night, "Thank you for helping me be alone here" (or something like that). The retreat is

going well and it's all wide open in the inner life. I mean I'm not disrupted by other thoughts and I'm able to go throughout the day from one project to another. The projects are not all calculated to show the world I am prolific to make another book, etc. These are some of the private thoughts of *śravaṇaṁ-kīrtanaṁ*. I said if someone wants to know how I'm serving by going alone, it is happening. Whatever gains I make here, I share the good.

It takes considerable time to grow something (like with the *Gītā* verses and a seminar). I practice it first myself. I said the most needed commodity in ISKCON is geniune-ness.

So I am trying for that.

You need to assure yourself. Okay, the poems gather. Some of them will last. They are good to look at later. Make a collection.

Go on a walk. Pin your hopes on Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. Try to curb down bad habits. BP offered the landlord a biscuit and asked, "Do you have a sweet tooth?" He said he eats neither sugar or salt, it's not good for your health. But he eats meat and drinks liquor.

Oh well, everyone wants to live. Some kill others "to live" and karma exacts its tolls. Fools don't believe there is a law of karma. That's our heritage in the West, and India also now follows the West, and for the most part, rejects her own culture. It's a big, long history, as Śrīla Prabhupāda would say.

The time rushes on. The pen takes in a new re-fill; I give it. Now it writes in black ink. God in the heart allows His creatures to do their own thing. He sanctions. If we are intelligent, we ask the Sanction Giver, "What would You like me to do?" He says, "Surrender to Me and be happy in your eternal constitutional nature." We need training from the spiritual master. I have been getting it. Tomorrow is the anniversary of the day I was initiated. That seems to be more important than my physical birthday. Everyone is born by a mother or father, but in human life, a lucky person accepts second birth from the spiritual master. I received Hare Kṛṣṇa *dīkṣā* on Rādhāṣṭamī in 1966, celebrated by the observance of Rādhāṣṭamī. You are included. You are therefore a servant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. This is the best thing I ever did; to get my connection with Śrīla Prabhupda. Now it's up to each of us to keep that connection valid by first of all keeping the vows, four rules and sixteen rounds. Then *guru-dakṣiṇā*—you repay the gift of knowledge your spiritual master gives you by distributing the knowledge to others. I'm trying to do that by writing books and by "being there" in good standing for those who look to me as their spiritual master. "I am not giving *dīkṣā* anymore," I tell them. Don't start it up again unless you want the burden of neophyte's problems in spiritual life. Be a teacher, set an example without that karmic burden. What do you expect them to do? They can take initiation from someone else. I don't know the answer. It's not easy to figure out. Am I supposed to



figure it all out neatly? We could talk about it, M. and I, as to what they will do. Am I responsible?

Angels of mercy I sigh and keep writing and keep eating. On a LSD trip sitting in Great Kills Graveyard, I thought of all the meals I'd eaten at home, all the mashed potatoes, and it seemed disgusting to the spirit. The spirit doesn't live by such eating. But the body is kept up by it. Now to eat to live to serve the Lord is okay. People commit suicide. Others, "Live lives of quiet desperation." I want to do the best thing. Life of spirit means to hear of Lord Kṛṣṇa and chant His glories and render pure service—without expectation of reward—to Him and His pure devotees.

Am I am I doing it right?

How to do it better?

Dhironhatta sang cowboy rock lyrics, Maybe it's about time I surrendered a kind of blues but knowing him, you figure it wasn't the time yet. The song expresses what we all know, that part of us would like to surrender, but we are not about to do it just yet. Waiting for a sign, singing in a band, the year goes by.

Another year. What will you tell the disciples at Gītā-nāgari when they gather to be with you? I say I need to go alone to seek some sustenance in spirit so when I do meet with them, I have practices of *sādhana* to rely on. Something hopeful to suggest to them about their progress. Some *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* references at least.

And what have they done to rain?

What will I be able to tell them this time, the U.S.-faced devotees? You can say I have wandered around the world and taken retreats and walks and I have this to say . . . First let me do the *Gītā* course and then I can think of GN disciples' meetings. You could do some more *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* excerpts, ones that touched me. It's like a series of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* lecture reflections, good for at least a couple of classes. But you do about ten classes including three *kīrtanas* and *bhajanās* at night. Talk of the weather, talk of the Deity, of the beauty of a life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Of our spiritual master, His Divine Grace. Read excerpts from "Among Friends," issues 1-35 that I saved and have stashed in a file. Carry that file.

This one runs on. After this, the somewhat sticky chapter how Lord Viṣṇu should not be seen as partial. He awards like the judge in court. Mode of goodness rises so the demigods get good results of their association with that mode. Demons in *raja-guṇa* get the result of that mode by the force of time. The Lord is impartial. Even when He kills a demon, He bestows benefits. He benefits His devotees especially. *Ye yathā mām prapadyante*.

I'll read the section without trying to boil it down to some points as if I have to give a lecture. Ma-thureśa recently published an essay on that subject.

O the \_\_\_\_ of Satsvarūpa  
is keeping him on the road,  
keeping him in the retreat house

and gives tissues for his nose.  
He's a rambler and a gambler,  
writes with a Sheaffer pen.  
He's accountable,  
yes, he's accountable and  
they trust him anyhow.

May he not misuse their bucks,  
may he not bite the dust of  
the fallen devotees. May he  
serve our spiritual master and  
help others to do so.

You don't think I've got good things coming to me, and I deserve to be well treated? No. It's God's mercy on you. Even if it is your karma? You better do something, better than just spending up your past karma. That only means it's running out and when it's gone you can become the worm in stool.

Better serve and worship Lord Viṣṇu  
play that song,  
make that the first,  
serve Lord Viṣṇu favorably  
with devoted acts.

(No karma and *jñāna*). Serve Him with love in His original form of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā in Vṛndāvana.

Just to say the Divine pair, etc. doesn't make you a pure devotee. Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't speak in that gushy way. He combatted the enemies of Kṛṣṇa and established pure devotional service. We want to serve the Lord who's in our hearts. He will

always help the sincere devotee. Get in line; do it right.

I tear at a piece of cuticle. Doesn't do any good.

Think of Gopāla-Kṛṣṇa in Delhi. Other connections. You are going to do your best. Baladeva a *grhastha* now, driving in his truck to make money to pay off his debts. Not that he's pouring money into GNP.

Who is . . . ? We're getting enough to get by. The river flows, the creek, the waterfalls, God's creation is everywhere. Speak on verse 6.30, one who sees Me everywhere. Ask them to write a response. How do they see Lord Kṛṣṇa everywhere? Can you do it? Yes, I can. Make a seminar writing session.

Do some writing sessions at the disciples' meetings too. Yeah, I could get into it. They write (I write with them) and later I read them and select some responses and just read them out loud. Then we choose another tape and write it.

After a *kīrtana* at Inis Rath they wrote, "I feel safe here," "I lost attention then gained it," "I cried tears, it was great" . . . the swelling *kīrtana*. Get one tape of it. How it sounded.

Hare Kṛṣṇa *kīrtana*, especially the one singing along with Prabhupāda. How the chorus swelled so loud and strong and awesome beyond the little group at 26 Second Avenue. You can't have everything at once.

Grant to the devotee what he wants.

Stain from flower garland on your *kūrta*.

Spring gone, summer gone, in Ireland they don't have much of an autumn but it's not winter yet. You walk and pray, "Dear Lord, You have spoken in *Gītā* and I wish to hear it. You are the Supreme God and well-wisher of devotees. I want to actually feel this and enter it. Not just select it because it looks good. I mean, can I feel Your presence? That's what I'm after in my tiny way. A little at a time without pretending or being presumptuous—"

To know God  
your friend  
by His words He speaks.  
That's what the *Gītā* is for.  
(1 hour, Kenmare)

## September 13

12:09 A.M.

Admitting to M. I'm afraid of getting caught by ISKCON authority for taking so many retreats. We agreed even if they asked me to "cool it," there wouldn't be any punishment because I'm actually not doing anything wrong. So as long as we can, keep going for it. On my own, with my conscience, I ask permission of ISKCON, Śrila Prabhupāda, and Lord Kṛṣṇa, and seem to get the answer, "Yes, you may continue to do it." I'm producing good seminars and books this way. M. said maybe sometime a retreat might concentrate on reading or on *japa*. I replied that a retreat "is what it is." I said they tend to shape themselves. Lately here is usually storytelling and poem writing. These involve looking at nondevotee books and attempts to use the art (fiction or modern poems) for Kṛṣṇa's service—as I develop my own art in expression. And when I prepare a seminar, that's done facing the world of devotees, making something I can communicate. So the retreat is not the romantic conception of going all alone to call out to God, "Please direct me," solely by chanting or hearing. The retreats are service oriented and it just happens that my services find solitude very useful.

But it is possible that some retreats might be more stark, lonely, trying to just face myself. But that too can be production oriented or "passionate" if you were trying too much to get some results.

This retreat with its multi-purposes, all in Kṛṣṇa conscious service, seems healthy and I keep saying, "My feet are on the ground, I'm nonpretentious, realistic. God sees me. He will reveal Himself to me how to do better, cut away art or story-writing in favor of something He wants, etc."

Work it out best you can. WS serves to discuss these things and so is a direct tool for me even in a life of prayer. I was reading a book on a Christian *lectio divina* and it leads to the state they call contemplation. Maybe it's analogous to *smaraṇam*. Anyway, it occurred to me that I use writing to express myself to God in the classical dialogue of prayer, by the writing medium. This is also why I'm enlivened to be preparing writing exercises based on śāstric verses for the devotees to do in class. I figure if it works for me, why not see if can work for them? It's taking a small amount of *śāstra*, then explaining its universal meaning first. Then I form a question meant to bring them to face their personal relationship to the verse and they write it out. It may involve an intellectual "meditation" on the verse, or something personal about their own lives (in response to what Lord Kṛṣṇa is saying in the verse) or a prayer.

As I'm doing it for *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, it might also be done for *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Writing exercises. Uses up class time too. AND I can do them myself along with the class.

You is a ruttin' tottin' man.  
God gives you any power or talent

you may display. You face on your face and act a coward many times and that's your own trip. Pride too. But when something is making me a little brave or well done, take it Kṛṣṇa is working through you. It's His glory, not your own. Prabhupāda calls it borrowed plums and don't forget it.

We ask Him permission for whatever we do. Don't think lecturing is egotistical, "Oh, they don't want to hear my voice." Once when lecturing in front of Śrīla Prabhupāda in the Dallas temple, I began to call on the devotee audience to give responses. I think I was explaining the ten offenses to classes. Śrīla Prabhupāda interrupted and said, "You talk." He wanted me to go ahead and give the straight lecture, not call on others. But there is also a time and use for the workshop method where we use writing. It's something you do all the time, it doesn't replace lecturing. So you've got to lecture also and prepare topics for that.

I do ask for direction from Lord Kṛṣṇa in the heart. I do need to be alone and more alone. It is possible that my seminar and story and poetry are a diversion from a need I am avoiding—and I ought to concentrate on *śāstra* and *harer nāma*, not for the purpose of producing any seminar product or book publishing. Inevitably, I use such things anyway. I mean if I concentrate on reading, it turns into an-



other kind of "reading diary," or if I go to *japa*, it's a "*japa* diary" and *japa* poems. It's a question of emphasis. Maybe I could increase the "purity" or quantity or focus more. Mahārāja Parikṣit was not planning to write a book on what Śukadeva Gosvāmī told him. But I am an active preacher. I'm "only" fifty-five years old and want to "do something" with my studies. That's the preaching spirit. Cannot artificially give it up. I like the story and poem.

Now if you can make them more directly Kṛṣṇa conscious, less influenced by others, do so. The *Gītā* seminar prep is a great engagement, don't doubt it. It's experimenting, as Prabhupāda says, to find novel ways to inject Kṛṣṇa consciousness into dull brains. It's educational material prepared by an instructor. Good stuff for one who is a preacher to devotees. Keep going until you get thirty verses prepared. Then maybe keep going to prepare more writing assignments for another kind of "retreat seminar." Try to lead devotees into their Kṛṣṇa conscious lives by a series of writing assignments. The *Gītā* is just that. But for the disciples' meetings, we could use writing also. Say you make a lecture on your relationship with devotees—guru-disciple as I did last year. So I throw in a writing assignment, fifteen minutes based on a cue you can give them and this way you get a response. It's okay, I think. Śrīla Prabhupāda would like it. It's a way to engage their minds and intensify our exchanges. So I have to make a series of *Gītā-nāgarī* disciple meeting talks.

One might say, "Well, this pleasant place is so remote. Why don't you use it for naked and remote inner work?" I reply, "It is what it is"—preparing materials for teaching and writing a story and of course, these writing sessions and then some reading time. But I'm open to evolution within this retreat. The story-time could go to something else. It could do so even in the context of your private "book," *The Story of a Retreat*. Or that could end in favor of a different approach. I think we ought to let it stretch out for now and let it go at those twice daily little bursts at the typewriter. But yeah, it is maybe a little closed mouthed. I mean it's selective. It could be more out-pouring. What do you want to say? Yesterday you said little, although it was a big occasion. Well, sometimes words fail, right? Words aren't all. Okay.

Mister, can you spare a buck for a Vietnam vet and help a victim of the Holocaust? Can you give money for Rwanda? Don't be so other worldly or hard-hearted. Don't think only of your religious sect.

Yeah, well, Śrīla Prabhupāda says not to be trapped by humanitarian causes. Best use of that spirit is to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Hanging around in Vṛndāvana, *sādhus*. Śrīla Prabhupāda calls it loitering, in a good sense sometimes—their only purpose is to think of Lord Kṛṣṇa, save their souls and go back to Godhead. But sometimes he criticizes it as "doing nothing." He

left Vṛndāvana to spread the message. He wrote that a devotee doesn't like to leave Vṛndāvana, but he does so to spread Lord Kṛṣṇa's message. For the purpose or work of Lord Kṛṣṇa, he may leave Vṛndāvana. But it is the spiritual world and some devotees stay there all the time.

I ain't initiating anymore. See you later. Talk with M. on these topics. What to do for Stephens, Alexes, Arns, people like that. Maybe you can initiate some. But then who gets omitted once you start? And when you do it, even the most sweet seeming of them can turn out to be burdensome with their material problems. You've got enough already. Hang in there with your resolution. It hasn't even been a year. Don't cave in. Some of them may turn to other gurus, thus proving it is changeable and that you don't have to do it. Then later you could make some exceptions. I'm already doing that.

Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa. This time is nigh. You've got your retreat and your projects. You've explained it to yourself, what you are doing here and why you are doing it. Now ask the Lord if He is pleased with you or what He wants from you. I think He approves your using this time as you do. He will call you when He has a different assignment. Christians say in the advanced stage of contemplation, they reach an aridity, "night of the soul," where they seem to be doing nothing. Anyway, that's not our process exactly.

We keep active for Śrīla Prabhupāda. That I'm doing in writing practices and retreat modes. This seems healthy—the preacher in solitude making products for his preaching. His free expression in jolly story, confession . . . I've expressed in this morning's writing session that I feel I'm doing okay, but realize I'm not the last word. I'm not the controller of my own spiritual life. I should be ready, sensitive and open to receive direction from the Lord in the heart.

"Direct me." Ask Him. But I'm not complaining. He's already keeping me busy a lecturer and writer. What more do I want?

Well, wouldn't you like to become lover of Kṛṣṇa? Yeah, but what does that mean in practical terms? As lover, I'm preacher-servant, trying to advance the cause of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Read *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam* more and better. It's good stuff, approaching now the chapters on Prah-lāda's teachings. The story of Seventh Canto. I read thirty-five minutes in early morning and then stop, get tired.

This WS has run its course. Anything else? Whew. You ate yesterday, huh? Sweets and all. Kept eating a feast.

And you wrote your little American idiom poems. You . . .

Kṛṣṇa is in Vṛndāvana. Lord Kṛṣṇa is in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. You are pushing yourself to do

more and to improve. Your dreams indicate that also, always something to strive for, to struggle against. Just to cope. Swimming in water over your head. You have to work.

You are no better than a worm in stool—Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja said of himself. He is infinitely better than me yet much humbler. I'm at a very low stage of attraction in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, no *bhāva*. The Lord is barely a reality in my life, and yet I don't have that heart-breaking humility in inner life. Not ready for it, you could say.

Strips of pleasure. The material world is a fearful place. You want to cultivate devotional sentiments and acts, but the demons and sense gratifiers disturb the peace. Devotees fight them on behalf of Kṛṣṇa. Devotees are thinking how to advance His cause in the world. The revolution of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The Muslims and Christians and women's rights and blacks and so many groups are also fighting to gain influence, and many of them have far more influence than ISKCON at present could hope to have.

It's going on, ISKCON is expanding to meet challenges and the temples themselves are often drained of money and man power.

I am responding to challenges also on a personal level. Spiritual director. Did you ask for those Merton books? Yes I did. And poems by Lewis Simpson.

You are developing your art. Don't take yourself too seriously. You are just a young student. You

suffer boredom and tediousness and the sense of repetition when you study Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. That is a superficial response. When you go deeper, it's all new, all unachieved by you. You are always finding yourself at the beginning, either as a private reader or as a preacher. All work remains to be done.

My task is in the area of study like a *brāhmaṇa*, work with self, honesty, art, etc. These are ways open to me since I am not a Sanskrit scholar.

I don't want to open an institute. I want to help people, however, in seminars. Make them interesting and challenging for yourself as well as for those who attend.

This session is near its end. Maybe on this page.

O doo dad, O bloke of errors, you go to break up molds that have been used enough and you go forward. There's no guarantee. You cannot keep using the same mold. One Ballyferriter book isn't the same as what you write here, September 19, 1994.

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.*

Be careful.

Don't be too careful.

Let go. Śyāmasundara dāsa, my disciple, wants to know and I want to know how to find *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the answer to our artistic tendency, and writing can be done in the service of guru in this way.

Popeye the sailor man. Burfi, the bull, the temple guest, a funny story, a mime or a pun on words.

The clown in me. The sacrificing worker who helps other people, gives his time for them. He teaches anyone who comes to his seminar or who reads his books. It's going on. It's going on. It could be better. They could sell more books and I could write better books. "The devotees will love it." Got more to say? Well, this retreat is more for seminar preparation and art that could come in the future in some books. Books are a way to preach and spread a word.

Read now, pal. It's the best way to take care of yourself. I'll get up and do a Surya *nāmaskara* and neck exercise and then get back here.

(57 minutes, Kenmare)

## September 13

11 A.M.

Were you ready for this? Beware of rigor mortis while alive. Writing blocks ahead. Better to keep going. Gremlin hasn't made frontal attacks much. The story is becoming self-conscious that it has no theme and is about writing. Better to simply write of your day, facts, and musings, and not, "What am I writing?" or, "It's embarrassing there's so little to say." Just write, or if you don't want . . .

M. is looking at his papers in the van. I don't know exactly what papers he is referring to. I think he means in recent weeks he's hasn't done much secretarial work of studying any notes I have might given him, so he's looking into that, and maybe correspondence, details of our financial records, travel, and so on. Eventually he might consider preparing Śrīla Prabhupāda's letters for us to discuss again. And what am I doing? That you know. After awhile, I get restless and question the repetitive, simple nature of my daily poems about the morning walk and my seminar prep. In other words, the novelty has worn off. The basic duties remain valid, but to report of them as a "story" or daily poems is questionable. Same for my *The Story of a Retreat*. This is what I am facing. So what do I usually do?

Either you see that there is an inherent freshness even in reporting these little daily events, or you



admit it's not enlivening—and then? You could turn the writing more to the imagination.

Or you could not write so much and use the time for more *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* reading and taking notes on the texts as you read. Different ways to go with it. Don't dread it. There is, however, little excitement or adventure here. More chance to study, think of the *śāstra*, etc. Oh well . . .

That is the important life of the spirit. Travel diary chronicles the chancy events of the road in van and overnight at P-stops, etc. Your thoughts then are not so peaceful but often charged with some emotion, like anticipation of a retreat or something like that, transition of lifestyle from retreat to temple visit, going to India, re-evaluating your position and duty in ISKCON. For now, you are more settled and that's okay, but it doesn't make for such exciting writing. That's my point.

Poets turn to imagination. Life is a bitch. Life is this and that. Where is money? Where is sex, where is palatable food? Work hard all day in insurance (workman's compensation) office as Kafka did and lamented the strain of all his creative powers. I have the advantage of free time. Maybe you should read more. The reporting daily may not be the best use of time. Sure, two WS per day. But you are not up to two hours of story a day and two poem sessions.

Is it worth keeping up? Could that energy be transferred, or are you not able to do it, more *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* hours? If so, you have to quiet

down and accept the life of the spirit in reading and writing notes only.

Sort this out. Not abruptly, but let it take its course. Guided by inner urges and desire to please Lord Hari. *Saṁsiddhir hari-toṣaṇam*. (Ekādaśī coming up.).

No running water in the house right now. Save your time, no noon shower. I already passed stool. Try to stay awake. After this session I could prepare more *Gītā* verses for the seminar. That's necessary. You could even speed that up and do more of it so you'll have your thirty verses with your writing cues and assignments. Then you are free to go on to prepare a disciples' meeting seminar. But no rush. There's another retreat planned for when you can do that.

How to best arrange and use your time? It's not defeat or restlessness to change one thing for another. Rather, it's an ecstasy (*bhāva*) meditation, "What is the best use of time in Kṛṣṇa consciousness?" Charlie Chaplin . . . I'll have to write a pictorial biography. I can do it when the assignment comes clearer from the BBT organizers of the project.

The hill looks brownish

I've been writing only seventeen minutes. Seems like more. Haul along. You have nowhere you have to be and nothing you have to do except write along out of control.

He said, Ha ha, he he. I wrote this on my own. For future generations. The gold pen scratches and the cartridge gets used up. Put in a jet-black refill.

In Wicklow, I was startled after two weeks of three hours daily WS to read in *Bones* that we have to make an entire effort when we write and not just put in our time. I felt I was on the verge of doing or already doing it. So I stopped the WS and took to a "timed book," *Progresso*, which went okay, using more techniques to get through an hour, clustering, typing, and not worrying about the page count.

Writing is painful when you feel you have nothing say. Read your own pieces and you find that.

"Self-absorbed," Christians say, "is a kind of sin. Turn to Christ and his Father." I turn to the teachings of sages and Śrīla Prabhupāda in his purports. If you bring that into your life, it's not self-absorption or neurosis, but is . . . linking of self (spirit soul) the worshipable Lord. Self is instrument to serve Him.

Don't tire of hearing the topics  
of Govinda in all Cantos.  
Hear of His great devotees  
like Prahlāda. Serve Him  
with all your hours and days.  
That's what we all want,  
we servants of Śrīla Prabhupāda—to  
become useful and  
satisfied workers.

Diddle away. This hurts, but keep going. Don't fear failure. You are free to flop. You are a flop. You got discharged from the Navy in 1964. You are not so important. Kṛṣṇa consciousness was in your future all along. Two years going down the drain, all youth and hopes, but you didn't know it . . . you cried all night alone on LSD, was that self-pity?

Jayadeva heard it and said it probably did me good. But could you cry for your lack of surrender? Regret you are not risking more and doing more for Śrīla Prabhupāda? Ah, what is that "more?" I don't think it's a return to active preaching in the old sense of meeting people, lecturing as is done nowadays, traveling with a rock band or taking up duties on a farm, counseling householders and disciples. No.

Then? More, how? More rounds? More *rasika*? More seminars? A more "useful" kind of writing as GBC might require? No . . . got to keep my integrity.

How about, "No more outside reading or stories and you just . . . write but mainly read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and just make notes." That and increasing *japa* may be the way. But as Astharatha said, there has to be a sign from Kṛṣṇa for this. You can't just increase quotas of pure *śravaṇam-kīrtanam* if you don't have enthusiasm for it.

I think I am prepared to give up the afternoon story-writing and go do the interview with M. if he's ready for it. It's direct memory of Śrīla Prabhupāda and it's preaching so . . . Why not write him a

note about it so he's already thinking of it for to-night? Okay, but let me not stop this WS to do so.

How to use one's time? *Gītā* verse, Lord Kṛṣṇa is directly speaking to us. When preparing to come here, I thought I might make a rendezvous with Lord Kṛṣṇa through His verses. Now it's more like exciting, educational material. I don't mean to put down my mood. Rather, I look forward to group writing. With the students I will learn too. I'll face myself to take in writing sessions—open ourselves, nakedness of emotion and spirit in privacy of the writing page. Is it a betrayal of privacy? No, it's not.

If someone doesn't want to read what they write, they may say so.

Oh heavens . . .

So the prayer with *Bhagavad-gītā* didn't take place so much on the retreat. I don't have gumption for any kind of "prayer" per se. I can read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. I can write something creative. But any one of these activities can tire me out. One can push ahead like a bulldozer. But at some point, you see it's not so profitable.

Read mail, read stories, where does it lead? Your little chapters. I think I could do with only one per day . . . O spirit

muse, guide me. Feel out what you really want to do, make best use of time.

The writing session is good for that.

This morning from 12-1 was not at all probing like this one. So you can't know in advance. You have to do your bit. If repeatedly one kind of prac-

tice doesn't seem to satisfy you, then consider what the next step is.

Dear Lord, guide me.

I use my intelligence to try to figure out how to serve You. But only You can rightly direct me. I need to be able to let go to Your influence in my life.

Bulldog-faced devotee may not like me, I don't know. He was in the temple when I was there. All glories to Prabhupāda. I don't know what he wants.

I tried to serve the devotees but I've got my faults, of course.

Don't report yourself in to a Godbrother for a complete overhaul. TKG would be presumptuous to do it for you if you really wanted it. He'd trust his own intelligence to analyze your case and set you straight. I saw an '88 diary, shocking to me now, how I allowed Amala-bhakti to influence me so much. It was a passing friendship of no more than a year at most. He didn't like my writings, saw it as pride and unnecessary. I believed him for six months and didn't write. But even then I wrote in my own diary and spoke *Entering a Life of Prayer*. Then I pushed through and asserted myself that I did want to write and publish.

So I don't want to turn myself in to an ISKCON shrink or any shrink. Just someone to help me with pain control. They get at your psyche roots if they can. Headaches usually come once a week and you lose schedule that day. Then you re-group.

The end of first week assessment is coming. Don't let it depress you or overwhelm you or depress you.

Gorgeous George, a wrestler from the 1950s.

Read and be.

"The mystery of the science can be told by Me to you," said Lord Kṛṣṇa, "because you are My devotee and friend."

This one is stiff and calls for an end. I will stop now at forty-six minutes, but I don't have a nine page quota. If only I had a free-write book at arm's length. Here's my commentary on *Alligators*.

Hard. Sit down. No water. Don't complain. No bath at noon. I can do without it. The ritual of the *vaidhi-bhakta*. I used to take a noon bath no matter how cold. Then bundled up again.

Be grateful you don't have a headache. Popcorn. Stran Theater.

Coins jiggling in the soda machine, carbonated drink—the machine didn't mix it properly. It was harsh and not nice tasting. Old fashion days. Oh girls and their names, Erna, Diana, Carol, all untouchable to me. Dagny, big-timers, and me a little-timer. Kathleen, more a buddy to John Young and me. Kathleen Swanson. All the girls. The rotten. Gone like quicksand now and glad of it. Some scars and impressions. But you leave it. It's better to know it and let it go. No shrink can guide in this. You may know some of what they do just so you are not naive if someone tries to put that trip on

you. But the unpeeling of many layers, past and present, sub-persons, etc., even if you know it all, it still leaves you with who you are, covered over.

Seven minutes left. A branch you sit on. The quest for morals. A stiff neck. Yet another trip to the Caribbean. Irish farmer-talking men come to the house, will they put in a new water tank at the owner's expense? Get his house in shape so he can properly rent it. The leaky tank, why didn't he get it fixed before we came? Did no one live here?

Kṛṣṇa, each word is a cry to You. Please save me. I can't go on my own. These poor lines . . .

Sum up. I'm tired now. I do recall saying that I'm open to any revision of my work on this retreat, such as not doing stories. I said I'd be willing to stop the evening story session and do the daily interview with M. I said this peaceful life brings a routine which may not be worthy for frequent poems and story chapters on "What I'm doing." But it seems that I'm not convinced that I should

1) Stop writing creative stuff (poems and stories)  
or

2) Write all reading notes.

3) Increase reading and *japa* quotas.

4) Stop the writing.

These are possible directions, however. I see the possible end of a first week block, and I want to not lose too much time on it. Take it in stride and pray to Kṛṣṇa to guide you so you can serve Him.

These are some basic points in this WS. There is also the idea that one should just plow ahead and not think one's work is coming to nothing.



Okay, mate  
One-hour up  
I dig you  
you nice and smooth  
I feed you and put you to rest.  
Do *Gītā* if you've got strength.  
(1 hour, Kenmare)

## September 14

10:47 A. M.

You are not so eager to embark on a full hour WS. But the last one was worthy. I don't remember what I wrote, but it was directed toward best use of time on this retreat. After one week, I am frankly assessing the separate projects and deeming whether to continue each. It's "Go" on *Bhagavad-gītā* seminar prep and "as usual" for two WS per day (despite reluctance that comes and goes). For *The Story of a Retreat*, I'm closing down one of two sessions daily. We'll start a daily interview with Śrīla Prabhupāda's letters. Did no poems today. More conscientious about building up the reading in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books to two hours, with some reading notes. So it's the end of the week assessment time. The policies I decided on today favor straight Kṛṣṇa conscious *śravaṇam-kīrtanam* and little less on artistic creations of my own literature-making. You go through cycles on this, so it's time to go in a straight Kṛṣṇa conscious hearing direction, and that is okay too.

The jabber walk. You don't have to be consistent. Keep trying for the truth. Heavens to Betsy. Stay awake. "Preservation is the first law of nature," Śrīla Prabhupāda quotes. May he accept me. All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda. When, oh when, will that day be mine?

I didn't get to see a Vyāsa-pūjā book yet for 1994. Where will you be on your own birthday this year?

December 13. Maybe in Wicklow. Could you possibly be in India? Maybe a retreat will develop there, one we can't foresee now, by someone's invitation. But that's not so likely. Still, it might happen.

But what do you do on a retreat? Oh, I can write these WS and surrender to Kṛṣṇa in this attempt. I can prepare a seminar. I can read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* for two hours a day. That sort of thing wherever I am. Wicklow is a comfortable place to do it. You can get a lot of work done.

The retreat has a crying out to God, as fasting or intense contrition, etc. Seems out of reach for me and I don't naturally aspire to it. When I go alone, my juices flow to do reading and writing. I want to make myself fit in reading. You calm down and read a little each day.

Wicklow is good also because you have a guaranteed walk alone and that can be used for some project like "Prabhupāda Recall," which I did last year.

Look forward to living one month in Śrīdhāma Māyāpur, then return to the West. One month is "enough" in India?

Do you accomplish something in the West in your hideouts and reading and writing? Yes. Do you accomplish something by printing several books each year? Yes. Do you doubt it? Yes.

You are not so addicted to the messages of Godhead, but there are some good signs too. Be careful and go forward under guidance of Śrīla Prabhupāda. I am wary to come under anyone's influence except his, neither one of my Godbrothers, or one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Godbrothers or other Gauḍīya

Vaiṣṇavas or saints and followers of other religions, like Christians, or the mundane authors, shrinks, poets, etc. That seems a virtue worth protecting—keep chaste like a wife. Don't think I will broaden myself by deep immersion in some other books and teachings.

What about my own writings? Are they diversions? They certainly could become so. If you got passionately involved and attached to your *oeuvre* and its developing, the art of Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami, his fiction, his poems, his experiments, his attempts whole life onto page—it could become passionate and self-centered, a diversion. I need a substantial amount of simple and direct *bhajana* as a Prabhupāda follower. I'm evolving to that on this retreat.

Sixty tapes un-printed. I don't worry about that either. Produce more. Move them along the line. You do write-out, print-out your own flotsom and jetsam as it streams from you. This thought, this happening. I looked and felt like this as I struggled up the hill in the morning rain. Romance of self. Self-love. Narcissus with no teeth and thinning face. No one knows what each person goes through, although we have some idea of the suffering. If you could live in the detached state of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the material world would not disturb you or enchant you. Give him a gold or wooden medal. Under whose direction shall you read *Caitanya-bhāgavata* or *Jaiva Dharma*? Are you willing to go directly to the previous *ācāryas*? Or to

Prabhupāda and say, "I'm sure you will teach me all I need to know." Other persons in ISKCON can tell us of *līlās* Prabhupāda didn't write about. I will not be so interested in that. I can save my soul by reading Śrīla Prabhupāda.

That's true, but it needs to be done in love, not in a repressed way. Not in a frustrated way or trying to prove yourself better than the rest. If your sincere conclusions are to read only Śrīla Prabhupāda, then live it out but grow in it, do it truly. It requires work.

The winding path down from this house. Batteries weakening in the flashlight beam. I need it or will walk off the road in darkness. We chant about life.

You have nothing urgent to say but to keep awake you wrote here. It's an ordeal. The water bottle isn't so near. You could change your sitting position, but all amounts to the same thing, the crunch of writing.

He has lost his eyes, voice, teeth, and throat and there goes the body in sixteen elements and the soul and all is under the direction of the Supreme Being. Whether you know it or not, you will be carried from this body to the next. Scientists and Profs. know many things but not how they change and how they die. Even a devotee may not know or recall the actual experience of being carried from one body to another, but he has faith that it happens under Kṛṣṇa's direction. *Māyā dakṣeṇa* . . .

"Under My direction, the universe is moving and the souls are put into new bodies after giving up old ones," Śrī Kṛṣṇa says.

Keep on flying or crawling. You lean back and pilot this one-man note pad rap.

Was raining on you, you walked in dark. This afternoon prepare three more *Gītā* verses for assignments for devotees to write their responses.

Then you generate your "whatever come" jazz or blues which is actually a student's notes, a groping by a fellow.

And you mean you'll do that again and again in full-time retreats arranged so you can do as much of it as possible.

I don't say that I grow *only* in a WS. Direction may come while I'm in the shower, asleep, and so on. And what am I after? I'm not searching to write a novel or short story or even a poem.

I pray, but even that . . . alert, you say, be aware what Kṛṣṇa may ask of me. But I am not so fanatical on WS. I do them, however, and see them worthy, even when it's often just a survival test to stay awake. (That's how I feel right now.) You may read them later.

*Śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda.*

The calendar says fasting tomorrow morning, but I said I prefer not to. I'll eat some fruits in the morning and Ekādaśī lunch and nothing later in the day, not even herbal tea. Why not fast at breakfast? It just seems like too much strain. I'll do it two days later on Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's appearance.

We'll have no ceremonies or special *kṛṣṇa-kathā* on those days.

Our Rādhāṣṭamī was nice.

Dear Lord, if You like I can stop writing a poem, I can go home, etc.

How about typing awhile?

In front of the window shelf altar you sit and type. The picture of Prabhupāda is blue and red colors. The pictures of the *ācāryas* are small. I report what my senses say. Kirtanānanda is finished, it seems, in one way or another. Don't even try to consider what murky things he may do or the part of him that is a sincere person. It's beyond me. Have enough to do to take care of this fellow and his relation to ISKCON. Some Christians said to another, "Don't leave the church. Don't allow yourself to get kicked out." They may have differences, and but he was advising that it was *māyā* to allow yourself to get removed from the connection. I certainly feel that way about ISKCON. No way I am going to separated by my own antics or refusal to obey some hard decree which may come down on me. Neither will I allow anyone to say Satsvarūpa should be banished. I don't foresee any issue developing that would bring that about. Besides, ISKCON is loose enough that I can move within it. It has freedom to roam. And I am an honorable elder citizen. Besides, I get headaches and can produce my medical certificate why I should not be sent into the Fiji or Zulu jungle or become the resident punching bag in an American

temple or farm. I can beg off. I have a bad ankle, so don't send me into the streets. I get headaches, I can't meet people during the day. I have grown to a state where I just don't want to tolerate such things. I have better ways to use my time.

So he sings, you have to use your time . . . listen to Prabhupāda and read his books. But it requires a good state of submission or else the destructive, doubting voice within says, "Oh, it's too harsh, heavy and too basic, etc." Those voices are not to be trusted. It is against the principle of believing wholly in the spiritual master. Indians seem to be able to do it easier, but we Westerners have to learn also not to allow the mind to go where it wants especially to commit *guru-aparādha*. But what if it comes when you want to hear his lectures? Should you not hear at all? Sometimes perhaps you refrain and come back when you are in better condition.

Right now I don't feel the need for showy jazz art, etc. Work on direct improvement, like no *guru-aparādha*, and how to increase reading time. It is plain remedial work. It's like when M. fixes the van or BP cooks a basic meal of rice, *dāl*, and *capātis*, and one simple, nonextravagant sweetball for dessert. I am steering my retreat in that way. You don't need exotic, you need basic and pure, and pray to Kṛṣṇa to help you. Each day add to your projects and proceed in that way. We speak of the process method of writing. That means you trust that if you keep writing, things will come out for the best. In a similar way, there is a process of



practicing *bhakti-yoga*, right? Yes, there is. You trust that the reading, even though it's not producing some immediate ecstasy, is producing accumulated good. And the seminar and the *japa* even . . . Everything needs to be done, and that means you need to do some direct preaching also, not always in these retreat places. M. sends me here often, thinking (rightly) that it is what I want and that we ought to continue it as long as we can, until we are stopped by some person or force. Get it in while you can. Then later I won't resent it. Be jolly in this position or that. In the city temple, you can lecture at night, and there may not be as much time for writing. But I am learning a kind of lifestyle so that even when not in the retreat, I will always look for it, the early to bed, the midnight rise, the writing and reading. Learn to do it in the retreat and then when you are in the city, learn to preserve it. And hanker to return to a retreat even if they are not available as they are now. That's one thing I'm practicing now. Take it while you can, man.

Push on through this one hour. He broke the world's record. He tried to keep himself free of reading too many nonsense books. He's not interested now in fiction. He writes his own kind of story which is out of his life, the monologue and all that.

One monologue at a time. Sometimes when a book is too big, it is hard to read. A smaller book you can handle. The *Wild Garden* is a big one and sometimes we want that too. Vary them.

What did he say? He said, "I'm not interested in fiction now." You go through phases. I'm in plain phase for straight reading in Śrīla Prabhupāda.

He said, "I'm taking retreats while I can, so if a time comes when I can't have them, I'll incorporate their features into my daily life—find solitude and private time wherever I go." Don't get caught up in socializing or politics or pressures. If they come, find a way to get out of them as soon as possible. Pay whatever the price may be or be whily enough to figure out an escape.

I get it.

How about a cluster on the word "self"? Why? I think it may contain an idea . . . To bring out whether it's selfish and how it can be improved. Okay, I'd also like to learn how to increase the lively and even playful sensibility in reading. It shouldn't ever be dull or repressing yourself that, "I don't like this. It's the same old thing, but I want to be loyal. No *gopī-bhāva*." That should come in a positive way, or when that sort of doubt comes, fight it.

Cluster on the word "self":

You smirk, there is the smily stickman face. Face me. Face the judge, the jail sentence, the rape, the death. Face trouble.

The self is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. That's the objective view according to *Bhagavad-gītā*, 15.7. Subjectively, you are who you are. Your self seeks comforts. Some people sacrifice the self, like saints who live for God. Then there are self-rights, self-

made persons, self-sufficient, self-proof, and so on. The self is trapped in the selfish ego and there's no way out except when the self loves Kṛṣṇa and chants Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Bee-bop self, he dresses in the best clothes, makes the pose and the image, goes for sex and so on. It's a rose on his lapel and more. That's the bee-bop self.

And so he can be narcissistic. At times like that you laugh at yourself and be gentle. But ugh, you want to escape that kind of self. Be true to yourself, love yourself in the right way as servant to God. Shed the foolishness.

So this hour is used up. It was good to get out of the physical sedentary position and type two pages and then do a cluster. You broke out of a trapped monotone. And feel more refreshed and light like, "I just did something nice."

Good will.

Can little men release sperm and waves feathers? No. He is a spirit, not that kind of discharge. He is a monk in line but each is his own life undeniably.

May Kṛṣṇa be praised.

He slayed Pūtānā,

He rescued the *gopīs* from grief.

May Kṛṣṇa be praised, the noble son of Nanda Mahārāja.

Only learned and sincere devotees can know Him to some extent to all others He remains the unknown, Adhokṣaja.

**And the beasts can't know Him  
at all except as material  
illusion and death and rebirth.  
May we always be  
protected by  
wonderful Kṛṣṇa.**

**(1 hour, Kenmare)**

## September 15

12:07 A.M.

I wake, but my surroundings seem unfamiliar. Bhurijana was in my dream and still he lingers here. His son was in the dream, a very young boy.

I've nothing to do with . . . what? I wanted to take rest and not attend some formal group meeting which a Hindu man was holding to "honor" the devotees. Was my nonattendance a virtue or a lack of surrender? In any case, the dream and the late night meeting dragged on and I couldn't go home to take rest. Such things happen. So it goes.

The truth of the matter is . . . What happened . . . Spalding Gray's conclusion is . . . Madhu thinks . . . the Supreme Lord decides . . . Bhurijana's opinion of what we should do is . . .

"I have no idea what that means."

Yesterday at one point I felt an uprise of happiness (was it before lunch?) and thought maybe it was coming as part of a new wave—what I could expect if I'd persist in my increase of reading habits. Well, such waves come and go, in any case. Lord Kṛṣṇa is above the modes of nature. The routine of the retreat is established, and last night I spoke a little lightly in the kitchen, mainly to assure BP that his assignment at this outpost was not something strange. It's natural. Our life is simple, just preparing food, cleaning up, chanting and hearing. They may not know my inner life and all

the projects I'm working on one after another. But those projects are mostly private, or they may be for sharing, but they are not big projects in terms of ISKCON participation. One is a seminar to which 30-40 people will attend. I don't rate things numerically. It's important that I do something nice, that's all. Write a nice WS even if no one (except me and typists) reads it. You do it for the Supreme Lord and Śrīla Prabhupāda, although they may not read it either.

What? Time to get up already? I stared at my watch almost in disbelief. Those extended narratives of detail used by fiction writers—they suck you in, tap you to keep reading, it's simulates reality. But in the end, with all their wiles and earnest attempts at art and discipline, all they give you is some "realistic," raunchy tale about life, mundane life, as lived in the grips of the illusory energy.

Do you know the truth? Do you live by the truth? I am reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and that is the truth. I accept it. Śrīla Prabhupāda chastises the nonbelievers, supports the Vedic sages. I struggle to improve my own integrity. Do I bring a self to read and pay attention? Is he naive to accept *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*? No, he's faithful and intelligent. Is he that?

Reminiscing again, re-begin with M. last night, discussing the days with Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1970 when he was publishing volume two of *Kṛṣṇa* book. M. said I have so many experiences. Whatever I can remember of them is worth it. I

hold a 1974 *Kṛṣṇa* book on my lap, three hundred thousand published. That was the height of book distribution. Now will you read it again and distribute them again?

The word goes far and wide. Often books are not read, thrown away or stored. But many have been read and people have benefited. The demons become aroused by *Kṛṣṇa* book in a bad way. (Did devotees ever see Bill Clinton in an airport? Does he have a bad impression? What does it matter?) The devotees are nourished in *bhakti* by the direct narration of *Kṛṣṇa* Tenth Canto pastimes. I hope . . . I will deliver . . . he puts on his socks . . . the narration in poem and essay and letter and prayer-reflection, all are included one after another. This is the process school of writing where you work out problems in the writing. The author of a book on creativity spoke of process writing as free-writing and then revising again and again and again. I don't use it that way. I write once, not again and again, not as a revision. I keep writing new pieces, not trying to improve or rewrite the original line. Oh, I do it somewhat in poems, but that is largely a question of how much to omit or accept. Edit in that way. Or my editor may move the words around but not much, not like JS does in *BTG*. He tightens and improves everything by his logical, objective standards. Takes out whatever he thinks the audience won't understand. Write to suit his editorial policies.

Some day it will be over, my participation in *BTG* magazine and all my gimmicks and works and

dissertations. Me and my loyal assistants. I mean only that my life contribution has to end. That's soon. Then the current universe goes on. And I quickly recycle into it, like a flying insect that goes away and returns. I hope I don't return *as* an insect. In a book I wished to be a deer or a "peacock messenger" in Vraja. I said it, but how could I dare actually "wish" it? I don't wish it now. Please learn to say only things you mean, which are unchanging truths. That would be nice. A man of honor, a man of his word, like tough cowboys in the movies.

I make mistakes in print too. My writing is not the highest. "Not for everyone" in ISKCON to read. Śrīla Prabhupāda's books are *śāstra* and *paramparā* commentary. Mine are creative, "independent," but a serious commitment to record the full experience of the *sādhaka*. Yesterday I wrote no poems. But part of me thinks, shouldn't I be making a total act of recording an aspiring *sādhaka's* efforts and experiences? Why let the day slip by without attempting? Out of an attempt, some good may come and you can retrieve it and share it later. I see you have done this (and your editor has done it) in your *Wild Garden*. Give them more to work with. The oak tree produces many acorns so that at least a few will survive. Poems of this one and that one. The devotees' statements are important. ISKCON books are worthy of using the trees as paper to print them.



Lord Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā, at Kurukṣetra, we're interested as long as He is involved. We are not concerned with any battlefield, but Kurukṣetra is important when Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke *Bhagavad-gītā* to Arjuna. It is that *Gītā* I turn to now, selecting verses and making writing assignments on each one, to bring out the devotees' personal response to Kṛṣṇa talking to us. He speaks and we listen. Learn to listen to Him, not as "book" or "teachings," but as personal words of Supreme God and best friend of all. Listen and then respond. The writing is for that.

Make it a good seminar. I want them to write nakedly. Better not immediately read them out loud in the class, but the next day I can do it at the beginning and anonymously so . . . Mainly they should write for their own benefit as I do, not to "publish," but to help themselves in their Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I want them to do it and keep their writings. Get into it, man, no matter if only a relatively few devotees attend the classes. Writing assignments, it seems juicy and challenging to me.

A dog barks down by the landlord's house. He's a sign that we live in the material world, still connected to its dangers and work. Is he barking at humans or animals in the forest at night? At least he doesn't impede my walk, although he barks when I walk past that house in the morning. I go out and chant. Dear God, let me hear with attention and learn to look for the right thing in my stage of chanting.

I don't chant for spiritual sense gratification, but do I chant in service mood? How does Lord Kṛṣṇa

want me to chant? I mean, why does He like it and regard it as important service that we chant His names? Because He wants you to turn to Him, to return to your position as His servant—and chanting is the easiest and most effective way. So He is pleased when a *jīva* does this *yuga-dharma* and thus makes real progress.

You could teach any subject in Kṛṣṇa consciousness from Śrīla Prabhupāda's point of view, such as *japa*, etc. Nice dovetailing of my needs and the need to come up with seminar topics. I need to write about my response to Lord Kṛṣṇa speaking in *Bhagavad-gītā*. I wanted to do it as prayer. I'm not so much able to do it on my own account—sustain a praying response. But by coming up with the writing assignments, I help myself and create a course for others.

Say you could print your own assignments. Yes, I could do that and their responses too. But better I just do it and not think about it. Or you could present it as a writing course. Teach it from time to time, do it with various sections of *sāstras*. In 1996, I could do a course on Śrīla Prabhupāda's life and teachings and then . . . give them writing assignments where they express their personal appreciation of His Divine Grace. In this way, gradually I can introduce writing as a teaching tool in my classes. I simply have to be willing to read their papers afterwards. I'm willing to do it for fifty, but a hundred is too much.

Colder gradually. Good hot water bottle as my baby during the night to keep me warm. And even now leaning against my tummy. The colon burps and gurgles down the meal of yesterday. Little spark of spirit drives the body. Everyone is taking birth life after life. You can't see it. You see so little. It's in the *sāstra*. Keep preparing yourself. Try to improve, a better seminar, better *japa*. This way, please, to the internal kingdom. I am teaching the devotees of ISKCON, as a *brāhmaṇa* should. Share what you love with them so they can be enthusiastic in *vaidhī-bhakti*.

I was saying do persistent writing down what comes to you, it's the best way to pan for gold, to be out there as often as possible, experimenting, learning. So what if a certain batch isn't much different than the rest and isn't worth publishing? Still you are keeping your hand in practice. Main thing is to retain the spirit of the act as a service for Lord Kṛṣṇa. Make it a prayer and conscious (or unconscious) endeavor to further Lord Caitanya's *saṅ-kīrtana*.

Yes, I like the sound of that. Workman attitude and we will try to execute the pre-breakfast poem for you. Surely there's something to say. I find descriptions of the world, scenery and moods when experienced tangibly, as especially worthy to hold the interest of readers. The more you go to inner feelings, they have validity, undeniably, for others. This is the life for the servant of the Lord, Vaiṣṇava, whose service happens to be writing.

Some devotees cook, some serve in another way. Mādhava went to Boston and cooked feasts on Jan-māṣṭamī and Vyāsa-pūjā. His spiritual home. I was in Belfast. It was a nice time, thank you. I stayed at Michael apartments. I do love to be with devotees, or maybe I love to *have been devotees*. Michener says one doesn't love being a writer, but to have been one. I know his point. But I want to love actually doing it, not just reaping the reward. You can't have one without the other. Sacrifice yourself to writing as a form a *saṅkīrtana yajña*; that's when you feel most fulfilled. Time has sped by on this WS. It's already 12:59, so just about seven minutes left. Start to psych yourself for entry into *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, how Hirāṇyākṣipu terrorized the universe. I have my note pads to go with that. I like to do it better than sitting in Yankee Stadium watching a ball game or at any concert hall or restaurant, and I don't want to be "in love" with any girl. I want no honor but those in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Connect now with *bhakti* practices and not with *māyā* external illusion.

Oh, bury me not  
on the lone prairie.

May I serve by these methods which I have  
picked, or is it accurate to say they have picked me?  
I go on with it.

Greet the day. Homage from heart-felt, sincere  
feelings—to the Lord and His devotees. Homage  
and boots to the heads of the *mūḍhas*. May the Lord  
grant intelligence so I can come up with some good

writing assignments to give devotees in a *Bhagavad-gītā* course.

Oh, please let us be happy in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I can tell it will be nice if we write about the Lord and our attempt to serve Him.

Now time is up. 1:05 becomes 1:06 and you have been at it an hour. It is all right. Turn to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

(59 minutes, Kenmare)

## September 17

12:11 A.M.

Dreamt all imaginary stuff about the new temple president in Boston and life there. I was there at night, and when I had to leave, there was no ride for me. It was getting late and no sleep. Also in the dream I had a big zippered folder that Nirañjana Swami wanted. I took it into to him in the Boston temple. I wanted to give it to him personally to see him happy and to get the mercy. Girirāja Swami went with me. Nirañjana Swami was delighted to get the folder. Girirāja sat inside the folder to get even more mercy . . .

Dog here barking woke me at 10:30 P.M., couldn't get back to sleep. We will probably complain to the landlord. Why does he have to keep a dog chained in "our" backyard?

Thinking also about this retreat and whether it could be directed more to prayer purposes. I spoke some with M. last night on it. I think my present activities are good, but maybe I can add a half-hour of reciting *Bhagavad-gītā śloka*s on my walk. That, however, doesn't seem like much of a prayer retreat. I think I pray when I write a WS, although it may not be the usual, recognizable form of prayer.

I admit I don't really know what prayer is. I chant my rounds, but that I know I do mechanically. I don't seem to think I can do anything to improve it, including praying to Kṛṣṇa to help me. Also I don't seem to want to arouse any contrition or

unhappiness about this. Is this a complacency? Look at 1980 diaries. Prayer . . .

So the topic has at least been raised and I am thinking about it. M. pointed out how rare my time is here in this remote place where there are no demands on me at all for morning temple program, etc. Yes, this is the time for individual consideration. For what, though? Surely reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is a best means of prayer, *śravaṇam*. And the WS is also important for me in all respects of self-development. At the present, it seems an increase of quantity of *japa* would not help. But can quantity lead to quality? See *Japa Reform Notebook* on this.

I'm aware that any attempt I might make would be temporary and I would slip down to "normal" once I stopped it. That is also preventing me. I also have limited health.

What about my *The Story of a Retreat*. I give it as much as one-hour, forty-five minutes—it is writing, poem, expression, etc. Should I stop it and use that time for "prayer," increased *japa*, or whatever I might conceive as improvement in prayer? No. You could just start writing the "story" more in terms of a need for prayer.

Revision, best use of time.

Even that Merton book, however, says to not worry or agitate yourself that "it" is not happening in prayer or solitude. Prayer is already with us if we just open up to it and not with a feverish schedule. They pray with a section of the Bible like the

Psalms. I have that Saint John's gospel. But I can pray with *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*

Again, what is prayer? My thirty-five minute session of reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the A.M. is probably as good as anything I could possibly do in the name of prayer.

On the walk, I've been preparing writing assignments to give devotees and I will take them myself in a seminar, *Bhagavad-gītā*, writing course. I invite the devotees to make a personal response to what Lord Kṛṣṇa is saying in selected *Gītā* verses. But it seems I can't do that myself. I don't know . . . Can't be bothered. Can't pay attention. Am I afraid of it? Can't believe. Can't pray for more belief?

I get so hung-up still on what my brothers and institution might think of my activities. I don't practice inner solitude. One could say even the writing doesn't further it. I stay with myself and not alone with God? I'm just throwing these ideas out this morning. It's okay to see if I can do something more than I'm doing.

Not enough time in the day.

One could say the WS isn't directed enough. You should write for prayer only, etc.

But I get a little sick of saying prayer, prayer, prayer, as if it is some specialized thing I'm not doing now. Who is this in me demanding I get down and pray?



Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa.

You call out somehow to God, Kṛṣṇa, and to previous *ācāryas*. You somehow face them and praise them and ask for strength and direction, "Your will, not mine." You persist in this and you don't give up. You cry tears—or I hear that people do.

Uh . . . what else? You manage to turn your face to His direction. "Please help me," you say.

You develop that discipline of mind. I can't control it at present.

I told M., "If prayer means a silent meditation, then I can't do it."

Right away you think of Christian books or of meditation, centering, etc., but why investigate disciplines that don't come down from Śrīla Prabhupāda? My whole, "conversion" of 1993 was to return to Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and his way of seeing things. Make yourself his *śiṣya* with no other gurus. Then isn't reading his books the best life of prayer and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa? Why think more is needed or why think this is not the life of prayer?

Talking to God seems presumptuous.

O God, please help me to improve my chanting.

Do you take time in *japa* and interject a prayer? Is that it?

Maybe I'm so out of it, so dry, I have to start something like that without any feeling, but an intuition that I lack a life of prayer.

I do hesitate to revise my present time commitments. I seem to be making good hay.

Also you could fast, but that seems unnecessary. It would just disturb the mind. I don't even see the

connection between that and what I say I need in the life of prayer.

Gauḍiṃa Vaiṣṇava prayers are in *bhajan*as. I don't sing much, though.

If anything, it might be in an increase of *japa* quota. For that, something else would have to be sacrificed.

Maybe the half-hour walk as I'm doing in the morning continues—I mean hearing the *Gītā* verses. That seems auspicious. Start tomorrow (today I can finish the writing seminar topics).

But what goes out of my schedule if *japa* is increased?

The talks based on Śrīla Prabhupāda's letters to me with Madhu. It too good to stop, and it's just started up again.

I write two separate one-hour writing sessions, and then on my *The Story of a Retreat*, I give it forty-five minutes twice. That's three and a half hours. Sure, all that time could go to *japa* and you would have no time at all for writing. But I don't feel that I should stop writing. I'm not writing to sell or become famous or even to publish. Even this discussion of prayer or *japa* increase is coming because of WS giving it expression.

Oh, what to do,

he asked him in his woodshed of prayer.

You in your dream brought a zippered folder to Nirañjana Swami and he was happy to get it.

Cluster on the word "prayer":

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is praying when you read it.

*Japa* is prayer. There's also a stereotype of prayer, Saint Francis on his knees, tears, crying, "O God!" I mean it's not a stereotype when Saint Francis does it, but we may think like that if we try to apply it to ourselves.

People ask for boons when they pray. Boon boon, Boone, coone. Hiranyakasipu asked to become immortal.

What am I doing now in prayer? Almost nothing?

And then you think of the Christians. Prayer. To-tem. *The Way of the Pilgrim*.

I'm thinking about prayer.

#### A Proposal For *Japa* Quota Increase

##### Pros

- 1) It is an authorized remedy for offensive chanting.
- 2) It's the *dharma* of the age.
- 3) Śrīla Prabhupāda recommends it in the Eighth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, practice chanting for the time of death.
- 4) Although you have to sacrifice writing time, you'll have something more to write about in your *The Story of a Retreat*.
- 5) Even if you go up in quota and then come down later, it's a gain.

##### Cons

- 1) Time would be taken from my 3 1/2 hours of writing.
- 2) I think, "Nothing will happen. I'll go up in numbers, but then when it's over, I'll come down and nothing will have been achieved."

It's not good to be cynical thinking that no good will come of a *japa* increase. Otherwise, there is danger of thinking that no good can come of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and it's not important.

Yeah, but it seems to be doomed in my case to be a mechanical act.

No, don't think like that. If there's any right way to go to concentrate on prayer, this is it, to increase the *japa*, and as you do so, try to be aware of it, aware of the fact that you are chanting. And the reason you will be increasing is to combat inattentive chanting. I say, pal, it will give you interesting subject matter for your story of a retreat.

You write as a kind of professional . . . but maybe you don't need now to think of that. You don't need a lot of reading in mundane authors or even Christian authors. Merton won't inspire you to chant the holy name, because he didn't do the Jesus prayer himself, He even recommended someone not to try it.

Hare Kṛṣṇa. Tell your story. Find a story, chant your own Jesus prayer. *Haribol*. All glories to Prabhupāda.

I'm serious about this increase for a retreat. Even NG says you can vary your schedule of commitment to writing. Deepen your need to write by not following the schedule for awhile and then return to it. I could return to writing in Māyāpur? No, Māyāpur is for being with devotees.

I just looked at NG and got some conformation that writing is so deep you can be with it, committed to it, even if you don't write every day.

She speaks about the possibility that you could be putting in your time in a mechanical way and not giving your whole life to it, "If you find that this is your basic attitude, then stop writing. Stay away from it for a week or a year. Wait until you are hungry to say something, until there is an aching in you to speak. Then come back. Don't worry. You won't have lost time. Your energy will be more directed and less wasted. . . . you'll have made a deeper commitment and come back more fully choosing to engage."

You don't have to rigid. You can quit your schedule for two weeks. Then get back to it. You'll come back with more to say. How can you regret time spent on increased *japa*?

"Sometimes you have to hang something else in your life in order to go further. Writing alone is not enough."

If you think that *japa* is a waste of time, then there's something wrong with that mentality. Find out more what the resistance is.

Just give some time to it. You take retreats to be away from people and pressures. You write. Writing also is a chore, a surrender.

So why not give some of this rare, costly, precious time of the retreat to something as worthy as *japa*? You say, "Oh, I don't wanna be a *bābāji*." Well, you already are a writing *bābāji*. Why not become—it for some time—a *japa bābāji*?

**You don't have taste for *japa* and it is, so to speak, scandalous. Why not be a good Joe and take of the task?**

**I think you don't have any other time you could give up except from the writing sessions and story. Work it out on a separate sheet of paper, your schedule for *japa*.**

**(55 minutes, Kenmare)**

## September 18

5:34 P.M.

Here, here in rainy, misty autumn. M. and BP downstairs. They made a Sunday feast and we all enjoyed. We read of Haridāsa Ṭhākura's disappearance and the feast and the feast Lord Caitanya conducted afterwards. Eat up to the neck. Now drink water. I read in my WS at Castlegregory, an entry where I thought out loud and assured myself of going alone . . . Now I'm writing with no immediate reflections. At least I did the thirty-two rounds today. When you set your mind to it, and you can clear away other duties, then it is easy. Easy.

Headache was there in right eye around noon but it subdued when I bathed with hot and cold water. Thankful for that. Enjoyed lunch, and at 4 P.M. I spoke with M. reminiscing on 1970 and letters Śrīla Prabhupāda sent. Now here to carry out the duty of a writer. A devotee who serves by writing.

I compare it to *japa*. My *japa* isn't controlled and centered on Kṛṣṇa in a prayerful way, and also the WS is not controlled. Similar in that way. But Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra is always the repetition of the Divine names. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says it's the outer form only when you don't say the names in devotion. Maybe sometimes the writing has an outer form which is not Kṛṣṇa words, but its intention is to serve and surrender. Write in devotional service.

I shall render a life for the Lord. I shall render a wife for the Bored.

I shall play the fool with words and birds and look into the mist, pissed and went to bed, mortal man with toes and eye mask and knit hat and ear plug in sleeping bag, world of dreams and hours sliding by. Sure we are under the jurisdiction of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, but in a general way. I don't fully respond yet. Don't fully surrender.

Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, face yourself. Oh no, what lacking. Then turn from that and face Lord Kṛṣṇa. Say, "I can't, don't know how." Chant His names quiet heart break. "O my Lord, out of kindness You enable us to easily approach You by Your holy names, but I am so unfortunate that I have no attraction for them."

O Lord, please engage me in Your service. I don't want to be a Māyāvādī. Next life . . . you don't know where you go.

A scholar looked at his papers after he died. Note how he talks about death. Note. Five Note, half note. Note to his self.

Vancouver, Rādhā-Madana-mohana. Big men with masculine arms washing dishes, doing carpentry work. Young women with fair, shapely arms with silver bracelets clanging on their wrists and virginal smiles . . . Beware. The all-attractive Lord Kṛṣṇa is like a magnet drawing the piece of iron. Prahlāda said to his teachers, "O *brāhmaṇas*, as iron attracted by a magnet stone moves



automatically toward the magnet, my consciousness, having been changed by His will, is attracted by Lord Viṣṇu, who carries a disc in His hand. Thus I have no independence" (*Bhāg.* 7.5.14). Ah, that disc, *sudarśana-cakra*, will kill the demons.

Sudarśana dāsi, Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, unhappy married couple, want material life and spiritual life in an alien, tough world. Who can make it successfully? Fortunate is one who is free of hassle for making money to support a *grha* and to work on a successful man-woman relationship. Happy he should be, the man free of it.

May Lord Kṛṣṇa be kind to us.

I remember 1970 days. Why? Why preserve that history? Who cares? Oh, someone, some people. It will be valuable.

The engine roars. Noise of water in sink and devotee washing pots and plates. They made plain biscuits today which they will distribute to people such as the man who will come to repair the washing machine.

I write as duty and to get into the groove. From here you see hills. It's quiet. I am quiet. I am quietly praying to the Lord in reciting *mahā-mantras* and reading *śāstra* and I hope to accomplish the same attempt in this free-writing.

Aside from oneself, there is the universe. There is the polar star and Svetadvīpa where Lord Viṣṇu lies, the spiritual planet of Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. He is lying on a serpent bed in the ocean of milk. In

His *mādhurya* form, He jokes with the *gopīs* and sometimes they insult Him. Rūpa-mañjarī tells Him He cannot enter, there is no order from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī saying He can enter Her *kuñja*. He stays outside obediently and begs favor from Her *sakhīs*. He serves Her in the place of Sevā-kuñja and gradually Her *māna* subsides. What about all that? It's still there.

The truth is petulant pillows. As long as you are in this world with desires for sex enjoyment, you cannot hear rightly of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental "karma" with the beautiful *gopīs* in the groves of Vṛndāvana. No Rādhā-kuṇḍa entrance for you at mid-day or at any time. But one who hears of the *rāsa* dance can be cured of lust.

I'm just writing things as day ends; it's after 6 P.M., I said my *gāyatrī*, I am sorry but not sorry enough. I have accomplished something and ready for tomorrow. Can't write this with white life. Maybe it will look better. Please Lord, accept me and let me hear You speak. I beg to have attention for the words You speak to Arjuna and to all of us.

You say, "I am in the taste of water, I can only be reached by devotional service, whoever thinks of Me alone at the end of his life, he comes to Me." You say the devotee will cross over all difficulties and attain to Kṛṣṇa. If you can't do this (spontaneous love for Kṛṣṇa), then do this (follow rules and regulations).

Puente. Ben Johnson. Learning bitterly before you came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Do I have to go through it all again without the solace of my master's words and guidance? Please when, I die, let me soon know again of my master.

The ugly beast within—distaste for spiritual practices and for the association of devotees. He just wants to \_\_\_\_\_. Eat and drink and sleep and do *something*; be a monk but be free. Free of sex, free of heavy duties. But man, you have to work for spiritual achievement; there are specific practices .

There are specific practices.

Memories. Now you run out of gas and say, "Gulp. There is nothing to say."

A filament in the brain  
a lump in the artery, the worst  
to come I'd rather not think  
but this day-end must is not like a macabre scene  
on the fort's ramparts in Macbeth and witches  
bubble bubble toil and trouble . . .

Wow, what a scene . . . No. It's the mist of Ireland and the quiet of the country. I wanted this. Just regret I'm not a lover

like those in Vṛndāvana. I mean spiritual original Vṛndāvana where all are attracted to Kṛṣṇa. He's the magnet. I wish to go to Him. I chant His holy names. Wish it could happen more. Maybe it will. I don't give up hope.

You could get better. Everyone has some illness. Who will survive?

Drink water and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Tomorrow starts the month long milk fast. You like to mix hot sweet milk with hot porridge. Can't do it now. Wait a month, But it's sense gratification anyway. You should find the Lord's names unsatiably sweet. But you can't fake it. Honest fellow. Waits. Does feel some attraction or why does he get up so early and write and read and chant? Surely this is not material energy. Can you write out an hour?

I want to be a better devotee, and so does Rukma-vatī and her husband and the soul in the body of their child and all souls . . . But we are estranged. Get yourself fixed by chanting and then you can help others. But it's up to the independent Lord. "I am never manifest to the foolish and unintelligent. For them I am covered by My internal potency, and therefore they do not know that I am unborn and infallible" (Bg. 7.25). Devotees pray to the Lord to please remove the curtain "that impedes my seeing Your *sac-cid-ānanda vigraha*, Your eternal form of bliss and knowledge."

Only if He likes will He reveal Himself. It seems far away to me. But the chanting is the best practice for reviving our God consciousness. Therefore I'm on this retreat and chanting extra now; making best use of my time.

Here's a photo of Benapol. Is it in Bangladesh? It's where Haridāsa chanted 300,000 names a day. A broken down building. Sunlight pouring on it, and shade. No human in sight. Hard to see the significance of it.

He constructed a cottage at Benapol and placed the *tulasī* there and chanted day and night. O Haridāsa Ṭhākura, this weak voice can hardly raise itself to make exclamation. O Haridāsa, the words at least. And I am underway with my increased quota. This WS shows I can do both, write, and chant, and also read in one day.

Word loose. Free loose. No need to merely play with words. Rather pay with words. They say—I am not a jealous, fearless devotee. They say—steady as she goes, I think you are doing well and encourage you to continue your program. They say—we can't say deeper, more devotional, because we are not deeper. We can only swim this way, paddling like a dog, head out of water, going forward. Or we are gratefully in a corner of the boat being carried, chanting on our beads. Afraid I may be called on to do a more surrendered task than I am prepared to do.

You know why I am alone. I don't want to be dragged down by the troubles of others. I can't help them. I can best help them in this way.

Help comes from the transcendental plane down into this world. I seek that connection. If I gain it, I can assure others to see life from the transcendental perspective. Balarāma told Rukmiṇī to see life in that way. Don't be attached to your brother and considerations of the bodily life. See soul and Supreme; see devotional service to Govinda.

Now I have only four minutes left in this session. Back is stiff. You can "get ready" for our four hours of rest. Calm heart, he wants to be a devotee the quiet way and hopes . . . Oh well. He's doing the right practices, at least in part. Faces up to his limits, in past. Is loyal in a sense. "Could do better." Good-bye Michael man, hello Mādhava boy, welcome to *gurukula*. Take care, aging fellow, and write what you can as your constitutional duty—sugar's *dharma* is sweet and mine is to write. *Yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi . . .* "Do it for Me," says Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and I say write these and steer them to Lord Kṛṣṇa. You will live forever in any case. Just go to Him as soon as you can. Chant. That's the right way.

(1 hour, Kenmare)

## September 19

11:58 A.M.

Wrote note to M. that now I think I'd like to come back here in December because of its remoteness. I am not afraid of ISKCON police catching me and saying, "Where have you been? Why so much time in retreats?" First of all, they don't have a police. And if someone does criticize or demand I not go to such places, well *then* I can consider not doing it. On the lam I am. Jesse James Hideout. No, don't say that. It's maybe analogous to *bhajana kuṭir*. Goes there and then comes and with good presentations for seminar and disciples' meetings.

But can you use a remote place and solitude? So far, yes. What do you do? I read and write, I take a walk and hear each day the *Gītā* verses spoken by Lord Kṛṣṇa.

I see.

And I do these WS. And sometimes another kind of project comes, a "story" or a book for devotees like *JWJT*, (?) or the seminar preps. Or just WS and sometimes they are "better" than at other times. Kṛṣṇa gives intelligence how to come to Him. Now I'm doing thirty-two rounds daily. Maybe that could continue. (Each year Prahlāda dāsa adds a round to his daily quota. He chants very fast). I chant slow but am capable of going faster. Just did eight rounds in about one hour fifty minutes. But at least they weren't complete drowse

outs. I kept going and a tiny chink of light was there in the darkness of mechanical chanting. In that tiny space of attentiveness I called out, "Please, just pay attention to the mantras; put aside these other thoughts . . . what's-her-name. Fitzgerald, the popular black lady jazz singer of the 1940s, can't recall." I said, "Don't try to recall, let it go . . . to that tiny light. Hear." Śrīla Prabhupāda's motto, "Just hear." And I read that from concentration on the name will come awareness of the Lord's form, etc. Concentrate, pay attention to *japa*.

I recently thought this wasn't possible, but now I'm doing it, by His grace. That is, in one day you are showing time for thirty-two rounds, two one-hour WS, plus time for reading if you can do it, and a session with Madhu recalling Śrīla Prabhupāda's letters to me . . . It's not a big rush, I can do it all.

Sheep sitting, blue stained.

So this is the kind of thing you could do if you came back here in December, how to use solitude. Now the quality of these combined *sādhana* acts is not deep in feeling. At least I am aware of that. This is where I could improve and maybe, just maybe, you could experience considerable improvement.

Green meadows and some russet color in there on the hills, but it doesn't say, "autumn" as a hillside would in Pennsylvania.

Anyway, dear soul, dear homework, you can uncork your free-writing if you think it will help you.



"*Haribol*," Lord Caitanya cried at the time the devotees gathered to honor a feast for the passing away of Haridāsa Ṭhākura. *Haribol*.

Canvass. The Lord sent Uddhava to canvass the *gopīs* on His account. That's what Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī thought. That's how Śrīla Prabhupāda said it. One word and thought comes after another. No time to group them in the right sentence order.

Why do you write this way?

Oh gulp, oh ache, I'm sorry

I can't explain it.

Maybe it's like a bad habit.

I can't slow down to make organized sense. O Lord of the universe. The light is on.

Birds. Sparrows flit and zip by my vision. Under black wall. The sheep, I said, the sheep. "Pilgrim" happy when he can find some little hut to live in and recite the Jesus Prayer or read *Philokalia*. Happy, successful mystic who lives in that prayer in the heart and always seeks to advance further in it. His starets comes to him in a dream and instructs him how to read *Philokalia*.

I am dreaming sometimes of Prabhupāda. I don't take them as objective visits or *darśanas* of His Divine Grace. They are odd, enigmatic scenes and fragments of exchanges. I think they come from my own thinking of him and I produce the dream fiction. But it is Prabhupāda, my spiritual master, and I think they are the best kind of dreams. I can't figure out what they mean and can't take them as

literal directives for what I should do. A kind of solace and general confirmation of our on-going relationship.

The other night in a dream he was sarcastic to me and yet accepted me in his entourage. Last night I left the city where he was touring with many followers. I went off, after being with him and his followers, and with a small group I went back to my regular duties in separation—duties like these I'm following now, reading and chanting. But the sense of the writer wasn't manifest in that dream. I was strongly advocating the service to which I was attracted as a pure, offer-able service to Prabhupāda. I thought he will know, via a transcendental system, of my service, and if he wants to change it, he will inform me.

Please, placenta, plethana, police, pul-eeze. I am here too. The walk isn't in a daze of *bhāva* or any fervent direction or for literary production either. But you walk in grace, you listen to the tape. Only snatches of His words stay in your attention, filtering as the tape recorder plays them. You try to comprehend that here is the Supreme Person speaking. But it only occurs in slight flashes. Lord Kṛṣṇa is speaking. He says this . . . listen with faith. On a surface level I hear it. Don't know what else to do, so I am not complaining or lamenting. I do this retreat *sādhana* and take it as it is.

Please take season into account. Christian calendar moves toward anticipation of Christmas. Vaiṣ-

nava calendar moves to Govardhana-pūjā and before that *Dashera*. Govardhana. Kārttika. Kārttika. "Dāmodara month." The Disappearance Day of Śrīla Prabhupāda . . . Then looms up the Prabhupāda book distribution marathon.

You . . . are going to Māyāpur if all goes well. You will be able to live awhile in your spiritual master's grand campus there. You have a right to be there, and you can contribute by your lecturing, humble behavior and maybe write something too. Māyāpur *audharya*. Holy name may descend on you. Lord Caitanya and His agents direct you in the heart and intelligence, right here in Ireland as you think of Them and then when you go there.

WS coasts, like me, looking around. Does the day's duties. Sometimes you are constipated and sometimes not; sometimes a headache begins and sometimes not. You stick to your schedule. You say, "It doesn't go so deep, but I'm not complaining." Count numbers—hours and minutes of daily reading, number of rounds and how long it takes to chant them, number of pages, numbers of days left on the wander and why the mail will come in and so on. Count, move. You get up from sitting position slowly so you don't feel dizzy. Move . . . Hum on Hare Kṛṣṇa tune.

On the walk when I hear Lord Kṛṣṇa's direct words, it's a good opportunity to switch attention from myself to Him. That's right . . . And see yourself in relation to Him. "The true *yogī* observes

Me in all beings and sees all beings in Me. The self realized soul sees Me everywhere."

The Lord says approach a spiritual master who has seen the truth. When you inquire submissively from him and serve him, the result is you will see that all living beings are parts and parcels of the Supreme Lord. In other words, "They are Mine." So pay attention to Him. When you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa you do that. So it's hard for the self-centered ego to switch from yourself to Him. But myself-thinking is usually mixed with material energy, old days' memories of me in pitiful *māyā* . . . Then you tell the mind, *Ella Fitzgerald, that's her name*. You tell your mind, "Look, drop it. Ella, okay. Now are you satisfied? Go back to hearing the Lord's holy name, will you, and not a review of pop female vocalists of 40s and 50s. There's no profit in it, though it will draw a smile from your audience. Is that what you want, to please a crowd even more than to please Lord Kṛṣṇa and be absorbed in His names?"

Try to be useful in WS, and honest. Hot off hot on . . . Cows in distance. What do you think? I am hoping no headache comes, that's the main thing. Lunch will be ordinary today and you can get sustenance and then take rest. Each day you get through as best you can. That ordinary essence—Taoists and others say *that* is it. Be ordinary mind, that's the liberated state. I don't know if that is applicable to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You could say ordinary means natural or constitutional nature as servant of Kṛṣṇa. But we want to focus on Him. They

think Kṛṣṇa is a myth or like Māyāvādīs think, that Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes are ultimately a manifestation of this temporary illusion. I don't know exactly what "they" think and neither is it important. Follow what your spiritual master thinks and other Vaiṣṇavas. Follow the *mahājanas* of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

NG says use loneliness. You ache in your isolation. You write in it without escaping it, but then you start to address yourself to someone—you reach out and connect with the world. Tell them how it is for you. Describe where you are as an art of *being* lonely but also reaching out. It creates urgency to reconnect. "Take that aching and use it to propel you deeper into your need for expression—to speak, to say who you are and how you care about light and rooms and lullabies."

Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Consciousness of Kṛṣṇa. I am trying to write this neat enough so the typist can read it, but I need to go fast also. Hope it's clear enough.

Ache alone. Ache for superficial state of your Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Ache that you can't go deeper or find taste (*ruci*). Follow the path of Prabhupāda and don't be greedy in demanding service, "I want ecstasy!" Greedy in a nice sense, never satiated. Be hopeful. M said last night, "I can report to you a cold victory." (He did his thirty-two round quota). I replied, yes, well (if we stick with it), we may be able to attain a heart victory.

A heart victory. *Japa*. The victory of Kṛṣṇa over us and our Maya-victory of *Harer nāma*. *Vijayate śrī-*

*kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana*—over our false ego and the billions of shifts of mind. Victory, I say. "Just hear." Satan be gone. Dullness be gone. Or stay, but I will not give up, not admit defeat or hopelessness. Victory of the heart.

When Lord Kṛṣṇa reaches to me, I want to take the rope lowered into my well. Get out and preach. Meet people. Or do as you must, learn to chant and hear . . .

Learn to write a WS which helps you, liberates you and transfers attention from striated false ego self to the Supreme Lord and His devotees.

Prahlāda told his father, "The best thing I learned is to practice the ninefold path of *bhakti* wholeheartedly. One can practice any one of the nine forms of *bhakti* and get the result of following all of them." Connect in loving service to Kṛṣṇa.

Now this session is almost over. Say *gāyatrī* and go down to bathroom. It's going to be okay. Don't despair. You can quit at the bottom of this page or keep going.

Travel plans means you depend on the future. What about right now?

Yes, I depend on this day and the duties I have remaining for the afternoon. Lunch and rest and more *japa*. I see it flowing by. I am practicing the very essence and not diverted. But I don't know if that is the most pleasing I can do.

I say, yes, let me chant  
I chose this path  
of solitude and *bhajana*  
and bringing it back to

devotees. I love it, so make the best use of it. Don't doubt. Give more to it. Trust Kṛṣṇa is guiding you. Stay with authorized forms.

Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra,  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and  
your free-write grope to stay in truth . . . Now I did  
an hour.

(1 hour, Kenmare)

## September 21

12:06 A.M.

Up and down. Can we stay so long away from an ISKCON temple? Is it wrong? What would Prabhupāda say? What kind of an example is it? What do you do when you go alone like that? I do this: I write and read more and tend to the roots of my devotional creeper.

Are you able to listen to Kṛṣṇa in your heart better? Is it such an individual creeper you have that you do what so few do? I get nourishment from it. I feel stronger in basic Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And I write these notes, more time for them than when my time is stolen . . .

"We would all like to take such a vacation."

No, you wouldn't. You would panic when you are alone and think you are in *māyā* unless you are busy. I am able to be Kṛṣṇa conscious alone without the structure of the temple schedule. I follow a tight schedule of my own. Prabhupāda is guiding me. I want to move and do better at those retreats. I am not boasting. But I am defending it. I'm not in *māyā*. It's like being in the world and testing whether you really want to be Kṛṣṇa conscious. It seems contradictory; seems I am fleeing the world, but by leaving the external shelter and rule of the temple, I go into the world, now in a remote old farm house where there is no impaired schedule or imposed association of devotees, preaching program, etc. But I create the atmosphere of Kṛṣṇa con-



sciousness here, by Prabhupāda's basic instructions to read and chant. By writing I do my own service and hope to share Kṛṣṇa consciousness with others.

Some would approve if only I wrote in a more outward way. But this is what I do . . . And from time to time leave the WS open arms for something with more structure.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa

### The Prayer of the Heart.

How seriously do you take a down mood when you think you're not doing the right thing by this way of life?

I'd say that if the down mood and negative estimation comes frequently, that's a sign. Mostly it doesn't come. I feel good and progressive. See the books I write; I like what comes out. "Please," they say, "print more of them."

All right, rider, proceed.

We must.

"The force that drives the green rod drives my desire" (or something like that), Dylan Thomas said. And what do I say?

I say Thoreau said I said Han Shen said. If you are going to quote, quote your spiritual master and Prahāda Mahārāja. Know them by heart.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa. It is still withheld from me. The nectar of *harer nāma*. One says, "I tried the scientific experiment of chanting and it didn't work." But this science is hard. Easy to do externally, but to persist and get the results is not easy. You have to go on doing it.

Therefore I want to congratulate you and encourage you in your *japa* increase. It's not a negligible thing. Keep it up. Be aware it's good and now please be more aware and *hear the mahāmantra*.

Take care of yourself in this way. Make statements of Affirmation. Build up.

Abstract of headache coming almost every day preventing me from using all the hours at my disposal. But I am persisting and getting the good quality while I can. This is not directed writing but taking important shots.

When I stated thirty-two rounds, I began a new notebook labeled "Retreat Journal." But I saw I was molding it to create a reality. I would write in it to give the impression that my main thoughts were on chanting and reading steering for the gentle direction of the Supreme Lord. After a few pages I stopped that format. It seemed too confining; not real and true to my experience.

I want the retreat experience but thought it should not be a literary creation. Writing can't always lead in that way. Sometimes it's better that it reflect what is happening.

In the WS, the writing can sometimes lead the life and sometimes follow it. It's not as presentable to the world, I know. But neither did I want to turn the retreat into a book-writing.

But don't you admit you do want to write any good experience? Didn't the Starets recommend that when he told the pilgrim not to hoard his inner life but record it, write it down?

Yes, but what is the truest writing down? I contend that for now the catch-all nature of the WS is a truer retreat journal than one that starts out announcing itself as such and which thus excludes themes that don't seem to fit the notion of "A Retreat Journal." I don't want the mystique of my retreat, but the actual retreat.

Doubts whether I should even be here, fears that ISKCON authority may not approve . . . these are part of it. Editor can find a Retreat Journal in these Writing Sessions near Kenmare.

Roam as you will. Be serious. Be cowed not. Don't be afraid of criticisms you imagine. Don't let that gremlin spoil your fun. Proceed on that path of reading and chanting.

I give myself more time and a good quality of time, to read and listen to what I read. To chant more and with *hope that the most valuable change in my life may appear, increased attraction for chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.*

Oh, if you can attain this, than there's no further proof needed for the efficacy of a retreat. The old farm house becomes a best temple, becomes mental Vṛndāvana. The walk is a *parikrama* for increasing your Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The inner terrain is a thriving reality. In the temple, even in the *dhāma*, the inner life may shrink up. Here it flourishes. The scenario of this place is not what I've come for. But it is restful, doesn't commit me to it. And so I am free to pay attention to inner movements. If

they don't occur right away, I shouldn't become impatient.

It is entirely my own business. Śrīla Prabhupāda says Kṛṣṇa consciousness is like that. No one can tell you if you're Kṛṣṇa conscious or give you a certificate. You have to know it the way you know when you eat that your hunger is subsiding and satisfaction is attained. Don't be superficial.

When you give yourself full time to chant and hear, at first you find you don't love it so much. This is honesty. Now go forward. You *do* want to practice it more. No one is forcing you. You want to find the taste. You want to fully conduct the experiment. You feel when you are pre-occupied with "duties," you can't fully conduct the experiment. I want to love the chanting and hearing and do it for considerable periods of time each day.

I want the writing to tell of success in this and leave that record. But the record of the striving and not giving up is valuable.

Oh, Hare Kṛṣṇa. It will be nice to exclude mundane thoughts. I think it is possible if *harer nāma* drops a drop of mercy on me in reward for sincere endeavors.

Do I dare? Do I dare go beyond the normal behavior and take time to chant?

Do I dare? Take a retreat journal out of all this. Tell the editor, "Find something here." I can't stop to make a selection. I can't write to make it come out like a predator's journal.

It's a wild garden, well said.

The affirmative mood is my direction. Give yourself the chance. Expose yourself to the radioactive waves of the mantra and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. You will become contaminated. It takes time and exposure.

Wrote a letter to M. saying this is my vocation, this life where I take a lot of time to be alone. Make a tape of it. So you don't forget. This is the life . . . Don't forget. You came here and promised to continue to give yourself the chance to thrive in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Don't compare yourself to a Keśava Bharati or even to Prabhupāda. You are following him but you are a different person. You are not the empowered *ācārya*. Not yet. Become so! He said that.

So if I don't yet have taste for *harer nāma*. I am trying to overcome my offenses. Being honest of that and taking it as very important—to improve *Give it time*.

You don't chant the mantras with attention but at least give the process your attention.

Wake up and appreciate the retreat

Also it is a great challenge for me to continue re-reading Prabhupāda's books and not others. The mind rebels and says it's too strict, it's too basic, etc. But the fact is it is infinite in quality, *however you need to read in a top state of spiritual receptivity*. This in itself is a certain capacity. It takes times and place to build it.

Friend, I am your friend.

I should not be your enemy.

Make an affirmation with your writing and one with your voice also.

Say, "It is good to take time to do these activities. Do them repeatedly; keep doing them as long as you feel the need and willingness. It is the best achievement of your life. It's the heart of authority."

Thank you for writing this session. You can go on without ever appreciating what you are doing. It's a good thing.

Sure there are ups and downs wherever you go. This pattern, however, is good. Dare to do it. Continue it. You need constant support, it seems, to keep assured in this path. I will give it.

I pray to Lord Hari to give it.

I pray for more time—I know it's limited—This is the stage of life I am in and should not neglect the will.

I want to *spea*k this now and so will leave this page to make a tape.

(40 minutes, Kenmare)

## September 22

10:55 A.M.

Back to writing and dictating; you can cluster if you want. Read your own handwriting. Keep track of what you are saying and what pleases you. The all-out approach to free-write practice. O ermphn font Toby tie and giggle kids at eight years old naughty hidden world of giggler. *Tobias and the Mermaids*, name of a book. Toby-tie, if you are interested, dear reader, I'll tell you some day what it means and you may giggle with me.

Spotted faces, birth mark and freckle and his eggs, His sky and Manly Hopkins Girade. Sentences come out backward with the first name last, because that's how I write-think.

Think tank, slippers, nighties and panties. Oh on the clothesline. How naughty does he get when he grows older. Then after puberty it's no innocent joke. Even when he was eight year old it was nasty and not God conscious and with puberty the contamination flowered and down came the walls of innocence. How much it harmed his way. Every conditioned soul is shackled in that way. The respectable thing is to get married. And Prahlāda Mahārāja spells out how that is *māyā* and binds you and wastes your life. You must get out of sex life—itching of two hands—and that's only the beginning.

You, you, I'm in love with you, then You, ewe, the doggone thing don't work.

Rose! She's throwing it at me!

Rose Campeesi and their daughter Louise, our landlords on 76th Street and Atlantic Avenue, Ozone Park, Queens.

Oh, you think that's worth putting down in the book of records? Let's have everyone's childhood address and names of parents and landlords and teachers, go ahead. Mrs. Patterson, Mrs. Williams, Miss Rene Sklair, Miss Sicil Eagen, the crippled homeroom teacher—see her now giving you your report card, your wanting to get good grades *and* be accepted by Ned Thinly and company. Okay, stop here.

Back I go to Kṛṣṇa conscious expression. Mine that. Hare Kṛṣṇa. I read in *Forgetting the Audience*. I did it, like it. He says he'll write what he pleases. He says "I try to bring the mind back to the mantra when I chant; sometimes it's sleepy and sometimes not."

These books are my companions, I said, like pens and paper. More dear even. Don't love yourself. But it may give key and clue to how to improve. No one else knows me. Those books, especially some of them, are okay. They contain a whole experience. The selections of WS over a longer period time are different. Also good and useful. And let's see what *Progresso*, a ten day book, looks like.

Do you like a cluster? Yeah, a little later. M. has gone to Tralee. BP washing pots ready to begin lunch. He's okay and me too. Landlord Dennis may come by with a guy to fix the washing machine. All



things can be strung together—or not—by editor. Write truly detached.

Danny Thomas. No, I never liked him. But the other guy, maybe a Danny, can't think of his name, like a pied-piper guy, actor. Anyway, they are all phony. It's a lie to be an actor, like fiction is a lie. Marilyn Brando and Sophia Loren sitting around a table with Charlie Chaplan in his old age, he's directing a film called "Hong Kong something." All make-believe movie stars.

Real people are *sādhus* and those aspiring for that. Movies are illusion. All make-believe. Writers? Fiction as make-belive.

You write here in pen. I want to improve myself. Read, gotta make a second attempt today and do thirty minutes in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

So this morning I wrote and decided more or less (until further notice) to come back here for a post-India retreat. Don't be afraid of getting caught at outpost; it's not sin. And don't run away from the challenge of solitude. You won't be pestered. You'll do thirty-two rounds and read and write and whole day goes by in that—so how can it be wrong? Quiet life in essentials of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When you come out of it you'll be in a better position to tell devotees reading and chanting are most the important practices of *bhakti*. They should find a little time to do the minimum and I'll have practical suggestions how taste may be found.

If you want to tell them, you can. Where there's a will, there's a way. They'll get fresh hope from me, because without telling them about it, I have

spent extra time on these practices. It comes from my gut or something.

*Sathsāra-dāvā* summer salt. In the morning, that's my Prabhupāda. That's as good as in a temple of ISKCON. Temple of the mind, *mandira-mārjanāda* . . . yeah, I do like to go to the ISKCON rooms as long as I live; they are the most special places in the world. I'm not worthy to approach the presence of the Deity, but I love it, revere it. Just don't like it when people get around me and expect me to do something. Just leave a man alone to stand quietly before the Deity. He doesn't know (Paramgati Swami) that by his welcome I felt unwelcome and less inclined to return to such an official greeting.

Okay, Sats, we know you like the honest stuff. Yeah, well . . . so do you, right? Don't get on my case.

Emeralds. Hills of green. The midst of moon pre-dawn, I told them what it was like. These are interior landscapes, special times to be alone. Share it and I don't know when it can be printed in the book, but sooner or later.

The president. Got time to write. So he said, "I can quietly observe myself." Ask God something. Time of prayer to Him.

Theophan the Recluse says prayer is standing before God and praying—like expressing yourself in words or feelings—or praise, supplication, regret, etc. Talking with the Supreme Lord.

He speaks in *śāstra* and you read it carefully. Then you pause and think what the *śloka* and purports say. Then you try to make a response. Go for that thoughtful reading. I've got a notebook for it while I read. Thinking of it now because it's more directly Kṛṣṇa conscious than this WS. This one is a wandering about, a fellow on horseback surveying his land, an excuse to get out and ride about.

I've got that backyard to nature and "desert." Go and sit on a rock and say something that goes on a special tape, "Walks near Kenmare." Okay. Then what is the province of these sessions?

A cluster on the word "yimed Sessions":

They're by the clock, you are a slave to that clock. You write backwards, like they do in an index. Clusters are like indexes. Look under clock, under cock

...

Clock goes tick-tock.

It's funny how you put two clocks by your bed and the alarms go off one after another. You're like the rabbit in *Alice in Wonderland*. It's a new way. Tick-tock.

Clock and on your wrist a watch by Seiko. Remember the *Watch Tower*, Jehovah Witnesses in Brooklyn? Brooklyn is where the temple is, and where they shoot bullets at policemen. Where you lost your passport, where Satya dāśī was the head *pūjārī* and was trying to decide...

"Time I am," says Kṛṣṇa. He is hidden, it is bitten. I didn't realize that. "Kṛṣṇa is time." Kṛṣṇa is time—see God in 12 o'clock, bathe in five minutes, eat in ten, sleep in one hour, get up grouchy, thirty-two rounds now, much time, lost a minute . . . got a minute? Wasted.

As for the timed writing sessions, they free you. You can be Kṛṣṇa conscious. I like to write. Maybe they're foolish. But I produce products in time. "Time is money," we say. So I'm into using my time in the writing session. I stop when I'm over, I use a stop-watch. I surrender in time. The writing sessions are impure but they are for Him.

Impertinent. I can write the pictorial biography when they ask me. It's not a hack assignment, but it's devotion to Prabhupāda which I like to do. Do it nicely. BBT project, big time for me. Cāṇakya śloka. He wasn't a devotee. But Śrīla Prabhupāda used his maxims. Express what Śrīla Prabhupāda said and bring out your desire to preach what Prabhupāda writes. That's the point. It's NBS type purport writing for me. You could do one a day like you did those NBS and MMS.

Hey man, the crease in the pants is gone. The acid fizzed out. Battery ran down. Hairs fall off. Bones bend? Guy slouches, moves along, move along in the changing bodies from left to right. Got to change in your old one for an even older one. Ouch, my aching head, my stubbed toe; can my flexible mind stand the headaches, "Go away," or do we go away when it comes? "That's possible," he

said. Pay \$400 and stay somewhere a month to find out.

The tip of tipperary. The end of the silence. Now I don't know what to do after this but maybe I can sneak in five minutes of attention in reading *Nām-āmrta*. That would be a use of time. In each of the three big practices you meet obstacles. In writing sessions, I think, "This isn't Kṛṣṇa conscious, I ought to quit and do something more direct." But I push on in the one hour I assign myself. In the reading, the obstacle is I don't taste it, cannot mentally focus on it; I go back and try again; it's hard, mental work; sometimes a head twinge comes. Basically doubts, distaste, etc. Bored, upset with myself because of that.

The obstacle in *japa* is inattention—but I plow ahead and don't let that stop me. Continue imperfect practices.

Smile, man, while we photograph  
you lookin' sweet that you have  
*ḍṛdha vrata* despite low results.

Tell us an interview, How do you do it?  
Also what happened to your poem  
practice?

Oh regarding poems, I thought I was just putting in my time and was not inspired enough. Thought that's not a good habit. Also tired of them not being more Kṛṣṇa conscious. Whereas when I chant or read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, at least I connect with the Absolute Truth right away. But maybe I'll revive in

a better way, the practice of poems. Also I thought I wasn't getting much from reading the non-Vaiṣṇava poets.

Maybe different, not in divided lines. The latest idea is to write at night, freely, poems and otherwise, on themes in connection to "Notes while reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books."

How am I *dr̥dha vrata*? Because I can't waste time in this house and fall into *māyā*. Follow the "temple" or "retreat" schedule. Be always busy and Śrīla Prabhupāda will be pleased with you. These are responses to oncoming death. With whatever faith I have, I act in a way to promote a better next life. And that's limited faith and courage and capacity. Of a certain taste, take in the ninefold process, *śravaṇaḥ-kīrtanaḥ*.

Keep going, click click the dentures, beep beep your horn, and keep dat hand movin'. You like a drum player who can't let up 'cause the guys are playin'. Bear it and go on. Everyone has to do like that. People can't just stop. They have to force themselves. Or the modes force us. It's surrender.

Dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, this monk's dance  
is to hobble with left ankle ache  
and climb over fence to enter  
muddy pasture.

Like clock work, pain comes  
but I get out some words before  
it closes in.

You do a tape per day. House makes sounds but I don't see mice. Get a heater. See you later, generator. Operator.

Hormones. Smyth's ointment for corns and athlete's foot. Hepatitis, no joke. Whole body can lose verve or go afire, purke and break. Often happens in India. Big leaders even get sick. Part-time basis.

He said, "I can't show up at the designated time, I'm sick from moles and boils and candida and miserable-idis and you know . . ."

The mind, the eye.

The rufferford.

Kṛṣṇa in the temple. Jagannātha Deities. I stand. Madhu in the back. After a half-hour I go. We work as a team. I've learned what I want to do and can do it without him. But don't want to think of that. As long as we can, work together. Whole life is like that. Keep it in mind—as long as you can, work at the mine of best *bhajana*. You—Mahārāja Parikṣit had seven days. You don't know what you have. So work at it. Work at it.

About eight more minutes. Now you'll have to dictate this again. A little labor. They have to type it. So the least you can do is dictate. (Dear typist, I apologize for raunchy expressions that I've used from time to time. There's no real excuse for them, but I'm following the code of writing what comes and hope that I'll be purified and rid of them forever, and may Kṛṣṇa protect you also as you type.)

Trinidad, Guyana, airplanes. Write wherever you can. And chant and read. Write about that. Vary the three from one to other. Don't tell your full secret but give some best results of your hidden practice—they don't have to know where you were and for how long or what your first draft was and how much you paid for it. Give them something good like a lunch well made.

Har sigh. *Haribol*. Lord Caitanya blessed this age that one could chant (relatively easy) and get highest results of love of Kṛṣṇa, not attainable by other processes. *Kaler doṣa-nidhe rājan*. It's an ocean of vice, Kali, but one good thing, *kīrtana*. Which can save you. Mittle, morsel, crawl over the finish line. I liked the cluster, so another.

#### Cluster on "writing sessions":

You get out a big piece of paper and you write a cluster. Be true to God and yourself. Remember the Boy Scout's code, "Be prepared" and the Cubs, "Do your best." Bluebird.

A writing session is to help yourself. Help! You help by freedom. You pass through falsity. Bypass heart operation—of course, you have to die, suddenly you will. Your neighbor too. Soon. Help yourself, think it out, problems, art, tangents, quick, play, obscene words . . .

Writing sessions can be too self-centered. They should be God-centered. Śrīla Prabhupāda. Yeah, but not merely official. Writing sessions cut



through, NG taught. You practice them and Kṛṣṇa conscious as reality will come.

Zazan sitting practice. They just sit there and whatever comes they endure it. That's a session too. Storm and then peace. Sit, the shit flies. Sit through it. Write it down.

So a writing session is for Kṛṣṇa purposes. What does He want? He says think of Him, bow to Him, save others. "Is Kṛṣṇa on a trip?" No, He's God. *You* are on a trip. You better make it Kṛṣṇa conscious.

"Write your realizations." That's a writing session. Serve guru by it. Stop being a rascal.

Long live writing sessions, *ki jaya*.

(59 3/4 minutes, Kenmare)

## September 23

10:54 A. M.

Nineteen months ago in Castlegregory, March 7, I woke up at midnight afraid that I was on a retreat and might get criticized for it and that it might be wrong to do. So I took "cool courage" and reasoned out why it was okay to be on a retreat. I just read it today. It's not the least bit out of date. Funny, I can't answer the doubts once and for all but they keep recurring. At least my answers are also recurring.

Stretch out. Make room. Scribble along a line at a time. The porch wind collapsed on tents. Write what comes, look at it later.

Time falls behind like wake of ship. They laugh downstairs. Making something extra for lunch? Simple life duties I defend with my solemnity even as I eat two (taste good) India pills.

I don't have to tell you, dear readerji, everything. I don't owe you anything and you owe me for my poems. (Machado said and I repeat for myself.)

Heavens

Boats go to sea

Cows go to slaughter.

When we write, class, I want to see you heaving and hoeing with heads bent and arms moving. Write through your blocks and painful admissions. First admission: I don't want to write and not think of anything to say. Keep going.

I am not an author or scribe that has a duty. You could copy figures or letters like they did in Russia and England—characters in novels by Gogol and Dickens. In India, civil servants did it also. Story of “Fair copy” scribe who reproduced even a dead, squashed fly on his copy to make it exactly like the original.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness isn’t imitation like that. “No, there was a fly on the original . . . Śrīla Prabhupāda has hair growing out his ears so me too.”

Puh-leeze pilot, let us down safely.

Oak trees, none here, no panoply or canopy of fall foliage, yellows and old marbles and oats and birches, those familiar shapes on the ground and clinging to branches. The sound of dead leaves as you walk through them. Take a leaf home and put it on your desk. Big autumn leaves. Chestnuts, acorns . . . corn fields, pumpkins . . . Halloween, ugh.

There is no more small farm American harvest, only here and there. Amish.

Gītā-nāgarī, wind-swept plane and fear of the mortgage unpaid each month and another winter outdoors for the ox and retired cows . . . Frozen ruts.

Hey man,

come over here and look at this text.

(A pretext to get my attention.)

He wants to say (puts his arm around me),  
“Donja think you ought to write something more

constructive and direct? I mean now that we are out here in Writing Land?"

"Like what? A story like Jean Shepherd does? A report like ISKCON Communications workers write? An irate but let's-love-each-other letter to "Priti-lakṣanam? A BTG essay! Oh..."

"Look friend..."

"Look friend, the cold frost mist over the land. Black birds. The beard on the ex-devotee who is still a devotee. That's the whole problem, how to accommodate the different folks who profess to be 'Vaiṣṇavas.'"

"The ankle brace works okay?"

"I think he is trying to get on my good side to pump me for information or manipulate me. Otherwise, why does he ask me about my ankle?"

Oh, the ankle is okay. I go in back valley and sit on a rock and like clockwork, a pain behind right eye.

"You know we might be able to fix that by hypnosis."

The drain...

The drain. Tank on roof. A hose comes down from it and into the ground but it's unburied. Raw construction in no-frills Ireland.

Pillow against your shins but still you feel it. You are like the princess who felt a pea under thirteen mattresses, so sensitive. Weakling Indian girl catches a cold and wants to stay home.

Listen, I think a good shot of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* would do you good. Did you read this morning? Yes, about the soul and Supersoul. Soul rules the body and Supersoul rules the whole universe. But souls are eternal and individual. The *jīva* gets covered and forgets himself and his relation to the Supreme. Human life is to uncover this ignorance. It's difficult on your own. But if you hear from a bona fide spiritual master, it is easy.

Sheepy beepy

I always care how I look.

Don't like to go toothless or in long underwear only. And why not, I mean, a man should be presentable not laughable.

Hoary han shawn doesn't give a

damn, *bābājis* too, no pajamas

or dentures, just smile and go on chanting

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa and gums can chomp  
down a *capātī* and *kitri* if he's lucky

from the *dharmasala*. Sit down on most sacred earth in the world, keep off dogs and hogs and monkeys and eat a free meal. He's a *sādhū*. Laugh at him because he doesn't have a clean cloth or preaching program. Laugh at everybody and cry and laugh at yo' self.

Down the chute

minerals. Geologists find gold; learned one finds soul in body.

"Please, please," he said. "I want to talk with you about your writing." But I was too busy writing and

knew he wanted to rap about how I could be harnessed to do something he thought was Vaiṣṇava writing. "It's a shame," he said to a friend, "that he spends his time that way, but Kṛṣṇa will award their karma."

So why stop to talk with him? You will only be swayed for awhile and hack out a corny essay with your heart not in it.

Bold words from one out on a limb. Watch out.

Poem by who, Ryokan? Somebody said they say my poems are not poems but do they know with their adherence to grammar and no life in lines? I write as I please, etc.

Write as I have to, punctuated by big exhalations. Sigh, puffed cheeks and expire breath audibly. Oh my. Keep this up and you'll get an eye twinge.

So Prahlāda is teaching. In the morning we read *Caitanya-caritamṛta*. I told about it on my tape, "Walks near Kenmare."

Same thing each day.

Just looked at *Bones*. NG suggested a small prop to put you in different consciousness. So I have come outside to write sitting on stiff chair with sunshine on page and birds singing in the air. Where is familiar autumn? Not here. But it's nice, mild, cool. So what if you have no desk and have to bend over to write? At least you are alive.

Mister, could you tell us a Kṛṣṇa conscious story? Are you a preacher? Why are you here in the coun-

try? Could you take off your coat, or are you thin-blooded?

I'm in the country—I'll tell you in a quick way befitting an outsider—besides, we preachers need to go alone sometimes and rejuvenate ourselves by attention to the basics of spiritual life. I mean we have to practice what we preach. We tell people if they chant Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra it will relieve them of all misery and they will experience the happiness of God consciousness. So we preachers need to feel that in order to say it, right? The same goes for our recommendation that people should read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

"I see. Does it work for you here near Kenmare?"

"Yes, it does, thank you. I wish I knew the name of that little black and white bird. He looks a little like a tern you might see on the beach, I mean his colors."

"When you do go to preach, where do you go and what are your activities? How many people do you convert? Who is your boss? How do you get money? I heard you were a writer . . ."

"Hold on, you're asking so many questions all at once. I preach in Mexico and New Mexico, in colleges and people's homes. I'm a very famous author and my books sell well, especially in the New Age sections of book stores. I don't convert people because . . . I do convert people because . . . Take your pick and fill out the blanks. I don't feel much like answerin' your inquiries."

"Is a writing session like this satisfying to you? What do you think of the small sheep? One black-faced horned fellow seems to be looking at you."

Came outdoors, sunlight, beautiful days, you could call it autumn. Fly and wasp buzz by me. "Bug off," I say, "leave me alone." Water drops, cling to lowly grass patches same as in Italy, or Cozzili, Dingle . . .

Look around. Your innards are fleshy tubes, can't be mistreated much and ski millimeters thin surface. Where you end and where the world begins—the border is your skin.

Saw a piece of bone on earth.

Big, expansive, clear land after I walked passed tree enclosed area. Reminds me of . . . some other place. Get confused entering any room—it's the opposite of *deja-vu*. *Deja-vu* is when you are struck, "All this happened before. Haunting familiar duplication." This is other feeling is, "Where is this? Where am I, who am I? Can't make heads or tails."

All surface writing.

Student of *Vedas*.

Eater of vittles with a mouth and spoon or use your right hand to put into the mouth.

You paid for this?

We pay for this?

I paid thinking the Travel Fund would send you to Poland, pay some gas money and you'd be lecturing every day. Yeah, I figured you'd stop sometimes and write for "Among Friends" about a P-stop en route to New Māyāpur or a book like *From Imper-*



fection. But I did not think my money would go into idle thoughts.

What time is it?

I'm not cynical. I'm trying to do my best work in free-write.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is as good—even better—than Vyāsadeva? Impressed by that remark? I heard it from Mahārāja. Still impressed? Don't ask me about *that*—why I don't go to Mathurā, why I do go to Māyāpur and what I expect.

But I say something Kṛṣṇa conscious and it is a parrot's repeating. We say, "That's good. You didn't make it up. We don't so much care about the excruciating attempt you make for integrity and freedom of your words. We want the result, Kṛṣṇa conscious truths."

Yeah, but I care.

I need to be more than a parrot.

Squawk, squawk.

(Can't even spell it, you're writing so fast, squawk.)

You mean squaw, the wife of the native American Indian?

Yeah, just add a "K" as in Kṛṣṇa. Squawk. I left out the "U" again. Leave out "You" and the most important thing is missing in the word. Church. C-h—ch. What's missing? You are.

Sheep take a walk.

"I need to write me own way," he said. Vegetarian stand and sell to passersby. This guy is carping and making fun of others much of the time.

This is me, Timex me with cheap watch-band and no hippie headband. I'm a colossal. A fellow . . . hold, stop those ob-seen words. They are not obscene as you would have it. The body and those organs are just like organs which pass stool (as you Hare Kṛṣṇas say for taking a shit).

Well, I don't want to dwell on the bodily platform.

Ten more minutes. I am trying to be a devotee in a retreat. Feel it will help to write what comes. Learn honesty.

See the lack of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in yourself.

When left to your own device.

See *neṭi neṭi*—Prahlāda also taught that. See by *neṭi neṭi* that different parts of body are not spiritual soul.

Similarly when I write what comes I see this is not Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and not this.

Look in heart and spleen and jar and education, not there, not this.

It's a way to eliminate all avenues and then surrender to Vasudeva.

Also Kṛṣṇa consciousness is in all books for me. It should be in ready feelings. Expose it for better or worse. Maybe *some claim* that whatever I write is also Kṛṣṇa consciousness, it is His energy.

Lord Kṛṣṇa told *gopīs* at Kurukṣetra, "I am in everything, and one who sees this is never apart from Me." One who fails to see this is in *māyā*.

Whatever I write is not topmost Kṛṣṇa consciousness but it is . . .

I write to find out this sort of thing. This is a serious exercise.

Also Round-a-bout is the name of  
my approach. Seek out  
ask  
knock  
plead  
abjure, avoid, call  
Kṛṣṇa, please help,  
dear mind, please cooperate,  
world,  
tiny bit of world,  
as I die . . .

The walls, the place incriminates, accuses me, you waste your time, we can throw out your writing like toilet paper or save it as literature—it doesn't do you ultimate good.

Unless you sincerely offered  
again,  
a neat (unneat) package at the altar. Here's a crazy love letter Lord.

I come to a retreat and this is what I wrote. Some sessions are more sensible than this one. But some need to be like this.

Please bless us with coherent bliss.

My sponsored "retreat" to Gītā-nāgarī Institute in winter. I plan to be there with my writing course. Until then, keep on offering these prose things.

In two minutes, say "I love you, I write for you."  
I want to be alone and can use it well. Now in time  
remaining today main thing is more rounds and  
more reading and talk with M.

Lunch is just an interlude and sleep may be  
needed.

Okay, I don't put you down, don't call you  
chump or loser. I'm not a maco bully—not to my-  
self. I pleased with forces to help us.

Write like this and from it, good will come.  
Okay, sign off humbly, you ain't the greatest.

(1 hour, Kenmare)

## September 24

12:06 A. M.

Worry. Stool and trouble. Read something nice. Don't tell. Typists must be confidential. I must develop thinking on my own. Doctor A. said she thought as a writer I could go, "all the way" but worried that I had no message of my own, seemed to only speak what was impressed on me by others. I am impressionable. Maybe it's in my genes or my father squelched it. *Think for yourself*. That's the point M. raised yesterday. He said even he should not be too influential in my decisions. He thought these writing sessions were a crucial way for me to think on my own and arrive at decisions. I suddenly go to the image of myself as one who needs time and space—more than others may need it—to arrive at core decisions regarding self and what to do. Okay, if I need to, if I go slower than others and have to therefore get up earlier to think *who am I, what do I actually want?* then I'll do that.

Bernie Atkinson and Walter Sthozenthlaer. THE 1948 baseball champs. My hidden "message." Purple sweaters buttoned up the front. Bernie's was purple with a few white stripes around the arm and Walter's was white with a few purple stripes. I bought a white one with purple stripes. Someone said it was a girl's sweater and I said no.

Prahlāda, what good fortune it is to hear your teachings now through my spiritual master.

I like the idea of a strict winter retreat, frugal in menu and also in the number of books we can keep. I will stay in the one main room downstairs to keep warm by the kitchen range. Drop logs in there. Read under the one florescent bulb. If I can bring only a few books I thought right away of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and *Nectar of Devotion* and *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*. How happy to be stranded in winter privacy with those vintage books, so full of writing voice. I like the idea. I am "warming" up to it.

This present retreat still has good time in it, so let's not forget to live in the present.

M. said if I feel guilty on a retreat (how am I serving devotees in ISKCON, etc.), another thing I can do is actively think of what I may share with them from the work I'm doing. But I don't worry about this. Surely any good, any gain will be naturally transferable to others. Preaching works in that way.

Don't spend too much money on it—another worry. What's money for in the travel fund except for this? Go to study, to chant extra, any opportunity you get. Show up on a campus a stronger man. Someone does this and looks tanned and muscular, I do it by extra chanting and reading in my spiritual master's books.

And writing goes on always. It gets shared; it will get shared by the editing and printing process. It's already happening that way.

So belch on, man,

live on, a nefarious life Do No Evil. Reading the ripened words given in *paramparā*, the teachings of Lord Caitanya chosen and given by our spiritual master, the *ācārya* chosen by Lord Kṛṣṇa for his special qualities and courage and humility. Our dearest Prabhupāda whose centennial anniversary is lovingly celebrated by his followers. At least they want to focus on him, so why should I complain? What do I want instead, that they should celebrate the Satsvarūpa in their midst?

Low and behold, the portsmouth piped. The reading ethic split into an old, over-used iron stove. We had a fire on our hands. Everyone fears terrorists and torturers because we have bodies that easily hurt and bring us great pain from cuticles, etc. So the answer is don't identify with the body. Learn this and teach it. By application of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Prahlāda is teaching that and he had attained it. The Lord protected him from death and pain. He taught that the soul is differently situated from the body. The soul is the real self. In illusion, we identify with the body. Is this the nectar for which we're anxious? Yes. You can interrupt it for *mādhurya*, *gopī-mañjarī-bhāva* if you are capable of that. Prahlāda said in the advanced stage, the devotee feels *anubhāva*, cries and doesn't care who sees him, thinks of Lord Kṛṣṇa and forgets his bodily needs. He becomes merged in that ecstasy even in this lifetime—so attracted to Kṛṣṇa that as soon as he hears His *līlās*, he cries and hairs stand on end (whereas

the nondevotee hears the *lilā* and thinks they are mythological).

Chuck it. Put it in a suitcase. Don't be overly attached to belongings. The vision of the winter was a positive state of mind toward winter depredation. A closing down, a shutting in, a reduction of choices. and things to do so all day you perform *bhajana* as befits a serious student. Please give me one more retreat time, give me yet another chance to come closer to my Lord in His holy names and the best books. Let me live I them, just as the pilgrim lived in his *Philokalia* and Bible and needed no other books. And give me writing tools, including written books. I will produce something to share—a person with taste for these things. And fixed in the knowledge. *Rati* for our guru's presentation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. *Ruci* for the holy names and the ability to chant them in gratitude for the gift he gave us.

There is no reason to feel guilty I'm not on book distribution or not always in a temple. I do belong. This is my own service. I am part of that same movement where devotees are building that magnificent temple in Māyāpur to please Prabhupāda, the movement in which they please him by distributing his books. I can contribute by reading and teaching those books. The cement and stone and steel edifice rests on existence of sincere and bona fide devotees who have a taste for hearing and chanting. And *this in my* life. Four more weeks of reading and chanting in December is the best ser-



vice I can do—and come away ready to share, happy to do so.

O mouse-like man, the star in heaven calls to you. You would be a follower of the *ācāryas* in this particular way; this is the hidden path to the interior of Kṛṣṇa consciousness—inner form of reality as your name suggests. This place is chosen for you by the *ācāryas*. They will be pleased by this particular service rendered by you. Just as they gave you typing to do, Kṛṣṇa book, etc., so now they allow you to read and chant and become a qualified preacher. They give you full protection.

Okay, run with it.

Don't forget to still ask yourself deeply if you are not running away, not doing a wrong thing, but when you get the affirmation then go with it and don't let others sway you. They didn't get this assignment, but you did. It is your own, your very own creation of offering to make. It is *your* love, your desired activity. And what is? Is it sinful or selfish? No, you want to be all alone to read and chant and write. Yes, it's a little reclusive. But you will come out of it. You need to take it to your full satisfaction and prove to yourself that it is unending, the discovery of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in his books. Prove it to yourself.

Make yourself confident in your own chosen activity. Don't be afraid of others' opinions or be over-dependent on their estimation of you. When you see them, don't cringe, not even inside. You can stand up to them, not in defiance, but as a sep-

arate person, a brother who has his own service. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "Everyone should be allowed to render service to the Lord to the best of his ability, and everyone should appreciate the service of others" (Bg. 5.12, purport).

I'm going to write that on an index card. It signifies to me that I can do my work and not be threatened in some way by someone else wanting me to do their work or a work they want me to do. But as I assert my right (to write and read and chant), I needn't be aggressive and put down other services, "Oh, those big-shots, those GBC men are just power-hungry managers. What do they know about Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the inner life?" Don't be such a fool. Look up to them. But don't let someone hit you with, "You were more surrendered when you were on the GBC. You are doing much less now."

I've got my assignment,  
don't need you to manipulate me  
line me up in your computer.  
Got a lot of work to do  
to get Śrī Kṛṣṇa's grace in  
hearing and chanting and speak  
to whomever I meet  
and to keep resolute on the path.  
I write twice a day  
these "pitiful" notes.

Keep nearby you that collection of your spiritual master's letters to you. Read them and gain courage. Yes, he challenges you also. But you are still a

little son (delicate) and need to be encouraged. So he does that. You are qualified to praise him. Teach others how to integrate their personality with Śrīla Prabhupāda so they're actually free to serve him.

While some distribute his books full-time, I read them and teach them. It is not incongruous. Yes, there is a lack of courage involved, a lack of capacity on my part to go out as they do and face strangers on the street and beg for money and convince them to take a book. That's the immediate austerity that catches Kṛṣṇa's attention. I can't do it personally or preach to troops to do it (how can I preach if I don't do it myself?).

But I can read and demonstrate the value of his books in that way.

Six more minutes here. Then we go to read. The body is dwindling. But the Lord in the heart is giving me intelligence. It's hard work and needs to be regularly practiced. You build up ability to concentrate your intelligence on the Bhaktivedanta purport. Soak it up and approach it. Never criticize it. Don't leave it. Stick to it. For this you need to pray. "Please let me read my spiritual master's books with taste."

"Yes," he said to Satsvarūpa. "Whenever you get time, read my books."

Dear spiritual master, I'm getting the time. I am, for certain periods, disengaging myself from all other duties to do this. I don't want to disturb others' mind by my "radical" action, but I will go

and take the time to read your books and chant and think alone on this page. *Haribol*.

Close out in three minutes. My eyes and head may carry me along a little longer. Prairie drive. Open stretch. Not stretcher yet. Humor him; give him a biscuit. Push on, toothless dog, to Miami and Caribbean on planes and rest and they don't understand what I need so don't expect it but do what you need to keep yourself free of headaches as much as possible and *do what you can do*, what you know you can do best, and not what someone else tells you is your service. Not now. I've come to the point—with not much lifetime left, where I know what I may do best.

And what is it? Is it some weird proposal? No. To be alone a lot to read and chant and write. And to make myself available, accessible at other times, to teach the message in a simple way.

(1 hour, Kenmare)

## September 24

10:50 A.M.

M. said I ought to actively think of what to share from writing at a retreat (WS, etc.) so that I won't feel it's not preaching. Right now I'm writing just for myself. That seems best and in the long run I may produce the best specific pieces to be shared. Even if not, integrity has to come first. I see in a book like Saroyan's *Obituaries* he attained an extreme degree of candidness and don't-give-a-damn-for appearance in writing. However, it was all directed as communication to readers. It's like, "This is where I'm at; this is what I have to say." But he wasn't talking to himself, William Saroyan, and asking, "What are you doing, man? Where are you going? etc." That *quality* I find valuable for oneself and for readers. It requires a delicate act of attitude.

Sometimes I write more directly, more aware that I'm attempting "literature." And when that happens naturally, that's fine. (*Progresso* was like that and the cut-short *The Story of a Retreat*). Sometimes it is more deliberately preaching to devotees as in *Japa Walks*, *Japa Talks*. That's fine indeed when it occurs naturally. Sometimes it's just me and the writing session.

That is now. Winter privacy ahead. I like the attitude of *Forgetting the Audience*, a big, roomy book for myself. Because I want to write, express yearnings, etc. . . . How does he keep it up?

Winter privacy. December alone. My brain can easily switch into creative gear for producing published pieces. So although M. said it—think actively what to share—and I agree in general principle, I don't think I need to do it now. Besides, the writing sessions produces that automatically. There are six books moving through production right now: *WIG*, *DN*, *MRWLK*, *JWJT*, *Radio Shows* . . . that's five. And *PM 5* is simmering and growing gradually. Oh yeah, *Churning the Milk Ocean*. So at least six. Don't need to worry, "what to produce that can be shared." I'm way ahead of the publishers and readers. Readers are still assimilating *Wild Garden* which doesn't go down so quickly. You are therefore free to use writing . . . to be, to be, to really beeee.

Be

I ain't. I am. I don't know what.

You report on five. What do you do? You chant and sit and look through empty panes and frames. I mean I can't fix mind on God with any feeling of, "Here is my Lord. This holy name is God. I desire to serve and be with God in chanting." No, just what round am I on, counting the increased quota. That's "all." But despite myself, there is something more than that happening. That's the Absolute Truth. Acknowledge it. Beyond my stumbling efforts, there is grace. Beyond my lack of heart, there is *heart*, my own and Lord Kṛṣṇa. So chant as best you can.

In December alone you could increase reading and not give yourself such a higher *japa* quota if you think that will help. Plan out what you will read.

Attack at different times in the day. Attack on drowsiness, inattention, causeless reluctance to hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Calculate best times and means of the attack.

Plan December. Coats and boots and where you sit at table, what height the chair is, etc. Who shall be in the house? Three maybe two months. Let it be M. and I and wind outdoors, not so much talking. Simple food to eat, get ready for that. In cold but you have a range.

Okay, but now this is a time for the thirty-two rounds and these two sessions. You do it.

(They're talking below and I'm trying to write. Give them a few more moments of it and then complain, "Madhu? This is my writing session. Please be quieter." This convinces me in favor of not having a third man, then there's no one to talk to for M. But also I should expect simpler, less palatable food with no one to help him cook. That's okay, daily *kitri*. I can do it, control my tongue and mind.)

Fix it on the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.

Wind blowing more today but in about ten minutes I plan to go outside and try writing there. Shake it up with a cluster? Yeah. What word? I seek God in lonely place. God. Scripture. The mind. The soul. Soul in body. Inaccessible soul. Soul way

in there and covered. You write in a surface way. Afraid to face yourself? Go, try the word soul.

Cluster on "soul":

You pray. But are you afraid to? Afraid of what? Please let me know the self.

Let's write about the soul, fast. Mole. Don't believe. I can't see it, can't believe it, doubting Thomas.

The sole. Black music and food. Only when you're alone, the bottom of your shoes.

Catholics.

My own soul. It's covered and I'm dead to it. So pray. The *śāstra* says you have a soul.

God, He's the Supreme Soul. He is *sac-cit-ānanda vigraha*. Both He and I. All souls. That's the theology.

Pray that's a good idea and repeat that request, "Pray it's a good idea." How do you pray? "Please let this soul serve You, Lord, in chanting and hearing and preaching in ISKCON. In the next life too." The soul is beyond my perception.

Pray, "Please let me know the self."

The soul is not this matter. As long as you're attached to the senses, you can't know the soul. The tongue and belly, etc. work against this soul-knowledge. But I can't cut down too much on sense gratification, I say.

You ought to become education about the soul. Know that you have a soul. *Bhagavad-gītā* second chapter tells us. But I need it as *vijñāna*.



Man, pray. Your soul is in your heart. Let me know myself as soul.

I am not imitating a past success, but like the feeling of *Forgetting the Audience* and going back to it. Write honest. You want to be

stop. Wall.

What's that wall?

It's me. It's now. Real or not,  
the wall of writing block.

The whole retreat is confined with walls and your life. You be alone to see about it. Can the walls dissolve? You burst through?

Convincing yourself it's okay to take retreats is necessary. You also said that topic is not a block. Okay, granted. But it is not the only subject to write about.

When you look at WCW and others, what happens? "No one" (almost) writes for themselves, which is what I aim to do. So when I read, I get influenced to do like them—write for the audience, for art, etc. Could you not read them? Better to put them aside? Put them back in the van, those books . . . in December especially you need to be alone . . .

Think of it. The writers write for audience. Besides that, they are not Kṛṣṇa conscious and they are not you. Write alone for now.

The wall, I was saying.

When I write for myself, that is for one person, a reader, me. Look at it later.

Asking God . . .

Śrila Prabhupāda wrote to Lord Kṛṣṇa on the Boston Pier September 18, 1965. He thought out, "How will I be able to convince them?" Then he prayed to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa answered in the words of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* saying how it would come about. That is an example of writing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness for yourself and address it to God.

See *The Beggar*.

This way. I say. Dear self horn of plenty and Hatterass. The jib, the man was profoundly influenced by jazz. Yuseef the poet. Okay, but does that mean *I* have to be influenced by jazz? You are so impressionable, looking for authenticity of self by looking at others and what makes *them* authentic. It's not the same for me.

Dear Prabhupāda, I need to follow you and find my honest response to your request that we be all-out preachers in ISKCON. That response requires a brain because ISKCON evolves. You also write that we shouldn't associate with all devotees; some may not be good in behavior. Or some may not be good for me to associate with. Many factors to consider. Want to go outside? Yeah, maybe.

I'm trying not to get a headache. Twenty minutes to go. See you outside in fresh blowy air. Hold down the page.

Outside. Small orange breasted brown bird, call him a robin, sitting on this wooden chair before I came out here. Spot behind right eye is more no-

ticeable. Wind-like surf sound. You write . . . Columbia College, Chicago, yearly poetry book. Man, whatever you take in, it's going to leave an impression on your mind and come out in prose.

Can a person be alone  
and lonely and quietly sort out  
who he is and not think like a Catholic  
monk is supposed to? He chants

Hare Kṛṣṇa like his Godbrothers, it's like no one ever chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra until I did? Some element of that. You do it and await results. You ask yourself, What is happening when I chant?" You are also willing to admit, "I cannot demand to know anything." Just chant when you are honest.

Your spiritual master wants you to be honest but seems to say there is a limit to self-investigation. But what do you do? Shut off yourself? Are you just like others? If you are an individual, what does that mean?

Data on myself.

Like to . . . but Kṛṣṇa is the main person. God, can't you grasp that and live for it? You're a tiny speck and have meaning only when connected to Him like a part in a machine.

O M., don't worry, I am *always* thinking how and what to share from what I write. The achievement will be when I can stop thinking of that for awhile.

Data on soul.

I am one, *śāstras* say. Accept them. Why? They are best authority. I am *śiṣya* of my guru. Fuck you to those who don't appreciate that relationship. Yes, STOP, go away.

Hills, misty gray day, wind up I said. That's world  
data sense impressions.

You are onto a thing when you say you  
write to improve and ask questions  
about self as soul  
and try to get untethered and free  
of inner voices and impressions. That's good. I  
felt some of that at Castlegregory.

Free of outside and you are free from showing  
off and just write.

Don't write to spell out words in nonsense. But  
be alert and ask yourself, where do we go, Lord?

How can I read and chant with my heart? I want  
my own kind of prayer.

No one can teach you.

Learn and practice.

The monk's cell will teach him how to pray. Of  
course, it's done by *japa* and reading. One could also  
say, "Go out to meet opposition and you'll learn to  
pray *fast!*" Please help me.

But here I am avoiding that. Want a quiet, gentle  
approach, not one hollowing to be helped. That's  
good too. I'm not such a warrior.

I will learn to pray on beads and in his books and  
this writing will help me to achieve those goals.

No end or final arrival to the goal. But note it's  
good and progressive.

Five minutes left. In this session I declared at the  
end what I just said—

Seek soul, be alone,

don't need to write for audience right now,

there is a block, maybe because of fear  
but I will keep facing that block when  
I write. Most writers do not write to themselves  
and to God in private. So they cannot help me. Just  
read what helps. Leave poets behind. Put their  
books back in the van. In and out.

Okay, mister. You got eight more rounds to go.  
Hammerin' man. When you chant them, try to  
here. Go to a place in your head—or bring it to  
heart—where you can hear the mantras. When the  
thoughts come, put them aside, say, "I don't need  
to think of that now. I will chant." Even if chanting  
seems sterile, no-thing, go on hearing and say a  
little prayer for help.

Keep trying to attain private communication.  
That's best. You have six books in production. You  
have time to do this. Write to reason out and feel  
who you are beyond the usual designations and  
usual writing pre-occupations. Seek soul as part of  
God, guided by *śāstra* but own voice as it comes.  
May my master accept me. Yes, I'm playing and  
having fun, but serious too.

(1 hour, Kenmare)

## September 26

10:50 A.M.

I am writing and downstairs he is grinding in the kitchen. They whisper. I'm coming out of the struggle-doubt whether it's okay to take retreats. But it's not a subject I can publish. Secrecy of my life in this way. But that's okay. It's my private life. While on a retreat, one may write a book like *Japa Walks*, *Japa Talks* or *My Relationship With Lord Kṛṣṇa* which does not tell of the struggle to balance solitude with preaching demands. That theme was in *Choṭa's Way*. DD Swami asked me at a public meeting, "Choṭa asked his guru, who solved the dilemma. What if the guru isn't present (physically, for direct question and answer)?" That's a pertinent question in my search for satisfaction and solitary *bhajana* and the duties of preaching in ISKCON.

So I continue to work it out. When I write, I find some gain or conclusion and put into a WS. Then it becomes an important piece of evidence for later. I can say, "See? I thought this out before and resolved it this way." A similar doubt came in May when I was reading Hari-śauri's *Diary*, volume two, and saw how Śrīla Prabhupāda stressed preaching. I sorted it out in my case and said according to time and place I am preaching by my present way of life. One could do better, do more, be braver, please Śrīla Prabhupāda more, etc.—but I have to face my limits, including a limit to how I may surrender. Also a limit as to whom I can trust

to tell me, "Do this," and I will follow. I was able to do it quite a bit when Śrīla Prabhupāda was here to say, "Do this." I could swallow or put aside my own plans and carry out his plans. Now it's harder but a more thorough search of self-surrender has to be conducted. I can't just follow a brother's, "Do this," but have to ask myself in inner depths (as far as I can go within), "What can you do? What will you do? What do you want to do in Kṛṣṇa consciousness? Who are you and how to improve? What is your contribution?"

It's an exciting life of challenge. You have to be alert and note whether you are misleading yourself. Also, don't get crippled by intimidation from inner and outer critics. Steady as she goes, staring into the night from the bridge of the ship and consulting all navigational apparatus as far as I can read them. These WSs are part of the navigating journal. Navigating . . . what's ahead? We try to chart the course for pleasing service to Prabhupāda, for a life of compassionate sharing of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, back to Godhead.

Sunshine now on lawn, last days of September. Rousing of some poems that came as a practice, in addition to WS.

You wrote one today saying you sorted a turn-around—from major attention on self to major attention on the dear-most, Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa remains a historical figure or the God of gods, but still the dear-most central motivator of this tiny life. I seek out my way for satisfaction of self, elimination of

guilt, attempts to please guru, to write and read and improve *japa*—but all these are done with me in center. It's I who am trying to surrender to Kṛṣṇa, I who must die and try to think of Him, I who am concerned for my well-being and who want to turn to Lord Nṛsiṁha for protection. But a pure devotee thinks first of the Lord. The Supreme Lord is reality for him and he is overwhelmed in loving service and in chanting and hearing the *nāma*, form, *līlā* of the Lord. Such a beautiful, surrendered life. Love—to care for the other person even more than you care or think of yourself. This you want in relation to the supreme, lovable person. And it comes by serving your spiritual master.

So I try. I read of Kṛṣṇa. Want to hear Him speak to me. As in Prahlāda's prayers or *Brahma-saṁhitā*. Record something and hear it. O Lord, You are great and the pure devotees love to hear of You. I want to do something like that, not for a seminar but to develop attraction. I have one *Bhagavad-gītā* tape. Let me make some others. You are disappointed that when you hear them, "it" doesn't happen. But accept that you are not yet entitled for "it." Still, you can hear about Kṛṣṇa on a tape as you walk along. Make such a tape today.

The Supreme Lord is the supreme friend. Hear His words and the words of his pure devotees as recorded in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Yes, yes. I will do that.

Hoping I won't run out of things to say here. Of course you won't. You won't. You can always write,



"Bee bop aroo." But better than that you can pause. Puff puff. The cold fingers.

You bet we plannin' our next retreat even while this runs along.

I'll look into *japa*. An eight minute round or less bodes well. You move like a caterpillar along the stem.

And writing? If I am to act as a preacher on a retreat, then sooner or later I ought to write something a preacher would write, yes? True. But maybe this present retreat is for more private working out. Accept it happily. There will be time for more directed and literary projects. They will come to you, the idea, and you'll start to execute it. Right now it doesn't seem necessary, you are so far ahead of publishing.

Yes sir, three bags full. They are reading the comic on the ferry and hearing the music and looking at the sea and newspapers. You wrote traveler's log. Traveler.

This is

I won't go outside if he's gonna be sawing. Well, he could stop for the twenty minutes you'll be out there sitting on your chair. I think you should go. Give you a little change of view. He'll just have to be quiet for twenty minutes; do secretarial work or something.

Smooth journey from morning to noon, over the pleasing simple hill of lunch *prasāda* and rest and then the plain of afternoon if God and *prakṛti* allow you to keep going. Eight rounds, walk in bog,

interview, and another half-hour of Straight reading.

If you want to increase your reading in December Alone, maybe come down to sixteen or twenty-five rounds. Give yourself time, budget it. I don't want to do less than these two hours of writing. Could listening to a tape of your voice from books be counted in your reading log as time spent reading his book? Yes, it's hearing as was done formerly when they had no books and *brahmacārīs* heard and retained by one time hearing from the guru. I will count it, if you make a tape of Prahlāda's prayers and then hear it. But in addition . . . ? See in December if it can be a retreat to read deeply . . . now the reading is like third to *japa* and writing time, but a close third to the writing. Be easy on yourself too and consider that listening to his tapes also counts—you do it over an hour a day at meals and bathroom.

No time for sesame oil massage.

Or thinking of girls or

politics and games. I worry away too much time.

Lord Kṛṣṇa. The green grass. The private card.

Time to dictate what you write,

to make a cluster on words like service, reading, balance, hip, care, Clinton, world, preach, reside, focus . . .

Yeah, I'm willing to do one. I don't want to write as space-filler. (Miller accused T. Wilk's book *Time In The River* as space-filler.) One writes just to fill up a book not out of vital need or explosion . . . well, to some degree I'm committed to pulling on as a

writer and that means notebooks have to be filled with often less than peak experiences. That's the practice school of writing.

**Cluster on the words "space-filler":**

**Space-filler—microscope.**

It's your duty to write one hour a day and so on. It's your identity to be a writer. Is that true or false? It can be true. So sometimes you just have to "write shit." Don't be afraid that you may fail. You face the writing task and feel empty and void. So it can't be just duty like in the military drill where they say, "Right face! Left face!"

Space-filler means less than great writing. Caps. Don't know what to say. But I have faith that there's always some good that can be reached.

It's like a belly filler. A pen filler, sometimes you go and sometimes you stop. I follow the process it takes beyond space-filling.

Space-filler means when you write for commercial reasons. Out of vanity. But when you write and feel poor and your heart breaks and you keep going and that's your pulse in life until death—that's okay.

You write with blind determination. You make a prayer to write good. You preach by writing. You serve Prabhupāda, you make nice poems. Flowers.

**Serve Kṛṣṇa.**

It comes from the unconscious, inspiration, but write without it or with it.

Clear sky cold air, sheep lowing in distance and cattle too, sad . . . caw of crow, buzz of wasp, the Irish outdoors. We are remote enough so no one comes by and we have a panoramic view of nearby pasture hills. The human photographer catches a little of it to show others.

They want me to chant and tell them how to improve their own. Give myself more to disciples in exchanges, as best I can. Writing may be the chief exchange, but it's not the only. Be affectionate and thoughtful—not in a put-on way—in letters of correspondence. And then three times a year disciples' meetings in selected locations and also some temple visits like I do in Gītā-nāgarī and Caribbean and also in India. Spend time where you can be with those who take their relationship with you as something important.

Prepare a nice seminar for them.

And finally, "prepare" by an honest life, obedient to the rules and regs and vows you promised—and we each promise to Prabhupāda. In my case, there cannot be falldown. So I pray to maintain myself against the force of the material energy. It can be done by adhering strictly to the rules given by the spiritual master and the very spirit of his instructions. Don't think you can ignore his order that we must preach and associate with devotees. All his orders are scientific and factual. You can maintain yourself in his protection by following obediently and lovingly. So I may come to retreats but it is in between active participation in ISKCON places, lecturing as befits someone older like me and willing

to meet with Godbrothers when it comes up in the normal course. They all move so much it's not unusual to not be long in one place with them. Also the relationships tend to be formal, so it's not unusual to have not so many words exchanged even while living in the same temple. They are each into their own work and me too. Got their disciples and field of work.

But be ready for jibes like, "We never get to see you anymore," "Your association is getting as rare as a flower in the sky," "You're like JD Salinger and other writer hermits," "You take a lot of retreats, huh? In Ireland?"

"How much of your time is in retreat and how much out of the temple?"

Many of these jibes or inquiries are not intended very seriously. You can fend them off in a polite and joshing manner. Don't be too "sensitive" just because you get a jibe or poke from a brother. You can spar with them and maybe throw a light jab back, "What about you? I never see you when I go to Vṛndāvana. Are you always on the road or what?"

Give and take. It don't hurt. Be like that.

Crow, don't tell my whereabouts. I'm on lease, on loan. Kṛṣṇa knows I'm here. He knows all. He's the center of my life.

One devotee is in a temple to serve and seek Kṛṣṇa in his life and another (me) is in the hills seeking Kṛṣṇa through self-examination and reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and looking into the mirror

of the mind (dirty) while chanting and hearing recited prayers. I am seeking to surrender in an easy way, suitable for Kali-yuga midget.

I will be singing to You,  
Lord, all year that's left to me,  
hope to change, to focus and  
swing, balance so You are  
the center and I think of You  
and embrace You  
and hanker like hell  
to read the books  
and chant—give me, chant, so I hunger for it.  
And go to preach like my master.

When will this Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura give up his own self comforts and spread the name under the divine command? When will I be humble enough and surrendered to do that?

Taste for it increasing,  
offenses ceasing, when in my heart  
will Your mercy shine?

Oh, that empty mechanical *japa*, how can it change to something better? Seems like it will take many lives going at the rate I'm going now.

Need more mercy.

Seek in this "easy" and logical way—to be alone to chant in peace.

Another way is to attract Lord Caitanya's attention by preaching work, direct as possible. That is favored.

I can't do it?

I can. I am. But I am also retired. Be careful you don't overdo retired mode.

You justify and rationalize your present behavior.

Hard to admit you allow yourself to do less than you should. Less than a fired-up preacher.

Honor those who are soldiers.

And try to be *utsaha* for the ways open to you now. Take the opportunity.

M. mentioned one little way (ah, the Little Way) such as going on *harināma* in cities.

Little Way, what I can do

rather than not do any preaching act, do one. Preaching in the broad and narrow sense. You do need to be a preacher. Can't get out of birth and death unless you are compassionate. So I ask, "How is this retreat preparing me for preaching? How is it fit activity for a preacher? How do I improve myself in that regard?"

(1 hour 4 minutes, Kenmare)

## September 27

12:05 A.M.

Compose yourself, put aside first thoughts/worst thoughts and commence an hour with thee—to Thee. To Kṛṣṇa who creates words and ability to use them, who gives us the free will to speak for Him or against Him or indifferent to Him, whose devotees in this world preach to convince us to serve His greatness, to know His sweetness.

On a walk, can you not hear Him in His direct words, *Bhagavad-gītā*? You told M., “I tried it and it doesn’t work for me.” Tried with prepared recordings. I will try again. It’s absurd to expect “it” to happen, elocutions from God to me, recipient of divine favor as I walk the road alone. Aye. But why not do it anyway? You may make me broken-hearted by not being present in Your words (although You are present to your sincere servitor).

Don’t I want to hear You, my sweet Lord? It takes a long, long time. So you will try something again, the *Gītā* selection. Maybe you have memorized a few and can read them and recite out loud and even record your prayer—your public record prayer. Microphone to lapel, “Dear Lord, here is Your prayer and here is my remorse.” You record as you walk. Make something of it to hear later and to do now. The man prays to God. Okay, I will give it a go. You could walk in the bog to do this or on the road. If a car came, you could quickly duck it away and no one would see . . .



Pray for mercy, walk for that occasion; might be better to try the bog, that wonderful opportunity to walk two miles fast on a road you get . . . So many opportunities I am grateful for and will try to speak to Thee, my word, Your words, Lord, Your words spoken to Arjuna long ago and living now in whomever wants to savor them.

And the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra is nothing less than that. Prabhupāda is chanting and you chant with Him. These are special opportunities of a retreat and you don't have to *argue* in favor of them but just do them while you can. Don't let a day slip by or even an hour without taking advantage of spiritual life.

(He called you to L.A. and in May 1970 you went there and enjoyed the spiritual atmosphere. A few months later he created the GBC and you among them. Those great favors and responsibilities. I don't avoid them. If I resigned, it's only to serve him better in an unstiffled way. I'd read the history of it in my diary, but I can't find the time yet.)

Oopala

The way you spoke direct on radio show or monologue, imagine, being able to speak alone to whom? Your mind? To God? To an audience? Somehow, I did that and could do it again. For now, I want to speak in a way my voice that can lead me further into communion with Kṛṣṇa and I can tell the results later. Or show the results by surrendered and blissful behavior.

He is a man who knows God. God can reveal Himself to you but He is not obliged.

And when you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, you will know. Choose a half-dozen verses. And write them on cards. Flashlight on them to read the words. 8.5 is probably one of them and 4.9? The promises of intimacy and protection, where He says the devotee is in Me and is Mine. Similar verses. I give the understanding by which they can come to Me.

Pray man, Praying mantis.

The Lord reveals Himself to His pure devotee. He doesn't talk to a nonsense. Tells the devotee, "You do this particular work for Me and I'll be pleased." He accepts our service and that is for our benefit. He doesn't talk to a nonsense. Although it says, "Repair My temple or preach My glories all over the world (although He is competent to do it Himself)," are you ready, lean, old, headache-prone horse, to respond if He reveals Himself to you? You can't say, "I am not ready to do anything special nor from my side in terms of effort, but I would like Him to reveal Himself and tell me what to do what to do to please Him."

But you want to purify your mind of material desires. You want to take fully to *śravaṇam-kīrtanam*. Want Him to certify your own program.

You should want to serve Him unconditionally, favorably, and pray for courage to do it. Then join with *saṅkīrtana* devotees in the effort to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Don't be left out. That doesn't mean North American and world-wide GBC meetings are the epicenter. It could also be you on your alone-walk. "I sacrificed everything to come and be with You."

I enjoy taking it easy but also want You. So many wrong attitudes no doubt; in whatever I attempt there is a flaw. But you should try.

Hear Kṛṣṇa talk right now.

"I envy no one nor am I partial to anyone but whoever serves me with love. To him I am friend and he is in Me, and I am his . . ."

You move on, you don't linger. Or if you linger, you lecture on the verse and that seems removed from the more intimate prayer. I don't so much want to expound or explain but enter it. He is my Lord and savior . . . His Divine Grace.

Apple of eye. Apple pie.

Just to assert his freedom. You speak in love a best poem of your heart and it will be useful for people wherever they are and any time. That's why we call it *bṛhat-mṛdaṅga*—goes everywhere. And if you can play it in a personal way, how nice it will be. Your thoughts, permeated with attempt to love and be in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, try to get rid of vestiges of material life and desire—all aversion and attraction for it casts off, and pure loving service and adoration for the Lord remains strong and central in a person's voice.

This language of here and now can express the transcendental, if Kṛṣṇa wants to speak through you. You want that and don't expect a further reward that you become very popular and get prizes for the best author. You may be an author but not a mere space filler.

Or clown,  
prostitute  
dancing on top of fire-hydrant  
to amaze and gain applause and  
Kṛṣṇa thinks, I won't tell that  
exhibitionist anything dear or he  
will spoil it and sell it to  
the public just to get  
wealth for himself,  
fame for himself.  
Besides, he doesn't even want Me,  
so give him a trifle to bewilder  
himself and some fools like  
him.

No, please I don't want to be like that.

Epers. Subconscious words poke out unasked for, like bulb of plant from earth or shoot of grass—but that is springtime and we are now going into winter. Trees huddle and gradually get ready to endure winter.

Even Dennis doesn't like the rain.

When you read, it's not your own thoughts but *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Now you can make a reading note how you feel about it. We don't practice *mauna*. That means Kṛṣṇa and Śrīla Prabhupāda invite you to speak and consider it a good thing when you do use your voice and talents.

This is broadcasting, is preaching when you write something in evidence of the authenticity of *bhakti*. Even to say, "O devotees," is hard. Such writing is

not just for yourself. I need to encourage this man to go on writing and purify himself in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Look to God,

I read what I published, like in Castlegregory, and say, "Gosh, I hope this isn't some egoistic artsy drivel. Will they see its value even though it is only implicit? Will they? Is it there in the words?" Sometimes you see it, sometimes you don't.

Dear Lord, retreat hours are special. These days You gave me to spend as I like. Well, I *like* to be Your servant and use them for Your glorification, to fashion myself fit and strong.

Yes, even these private notes can be shared. They will help me, so why not someone else too?

Kṛṣṇa lifted Govardhana Hill. He spoke to Śrutadeva and Bahulaśva in His Vāsudeva form and that is also Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda taught that He is always Kṛṣṇa, He is always God even in the lap of Mother Yaśodā and when killing Pūtānā. Even when joking with *gopīs*? Yes they are His *hlādinī* potencies and it's a spiritual exchange to be appreciated by pure devotees only, who are liberated from all material lust.

Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*, that's the topmost, but I don't reject even a drop of His pastimes. Read them all, savor. Dear Lord.

He may ask, "What more does this fellow want? I give them all."

What I want (I claim) is to not be so inattentive, cold, and hard-hearted. Would like to be aware it's You. You are all great, most dear. Why do I remain so unloving despite my attempts to chant Your names?

This world is full of danger. The house may collapse, the earth open, or an artery or heart-break and you're in pain too much and then you can't pray nicely. It is certainly rare to be in human life and relatively peaceful and capable of God consciousness. So in this state, if I fail to know You . . .

I claim, "Oh, if I knew Him, I would be a fired-up preacher." Well, blessed are they who preach just on the order of Śrīla Prabhupāda and don't demand, "I have to know Kṛṣṇa first." Blessed are they and they are sometimes rough too. But I should see their good qualities only as they expand the waves of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. That's what I'm trying to do in my own way.

But is it wrong to want it confirmed? To want to taste and know the Lord? Contaminated mentally and physically by atheism—I read that phrase in a purport—such people cannot know Him.

He puts a curtain between Himself and them. O Lord, I don't want that. Find a way to concentrate on Kṛṣṇa's own words.

I think I have written enough. It isn't an hour yet. Go at least six minute more. State your intentions. I can only go so far, Lord. I need Your *bala* at every step. Please . . . know Your servant and help him to serve You.

He may ask, "Do you want Me to carry you each step of the way? How will that be service on your part?"

He may see I'm not so pure yet. Let me keep struggling and trying. Okay, I won't give up. I hear His words. I do ask Him to allow me to savor them and believe in them and have capacity to preach them to others.

It's not so difficult to preach, the lecturer said. Anyone can do it.

Well . . .

You get tired. Pray awhile then take a break. From this writing too. I'm lagging now and need a little break so when I plunge into the reading I'm not sagged out but alert for more—and then for *japa* time I don't disappoint myself with more fatigue.

Early morning *bhajana*  
so sweet and desirable, I'll give up  
all honors and kingdoms just to  
have it, 5, 7 hours with Thee  
at interrupted stretch. Pray to  
Him to give you this and be grateful  
for what He allows even now  
to flow to you. Show gratitude  
in spoken and written way and  
right act  
and ask always His permission  
by intelligence, to do right.

A bug on the clock. A speckled moth.  
Thumb still works. We each die in "100 years"  
and get recycled with our poems. Kṛṣṇa is Kṛṣṇa

and His devotees want to please Him. It is with them only that He enacts the *saṅkīrtana* movement. Go to where he is, your spiritual master, if you are fit or you were fit in 1970, to do as he asks.

(56 minutes, counted as an hour, over 10 pages, Kenmare)



## September 27

10:45 A.M.

I start with an eye pinch. Maybe I won't write so *fast*. Maybe if I just notice it and say to it, "Cool man. Why don't you just subside when I bathe? Hey, I'm not breaking any rules. I'm getting your message. Don't take my whole day away. I'm not afraid of you . . ."

Read *Forgetting Audience*. Twelfth round of *japa* same as now. Big change in thought came this morning in a harmless way in bathroom: Water suddenly took up line of reason and feeling that after India I should not come back here for four weeks; it would be (I said) too much "retreat" during the marathon. Circus in U.S.A. after a week of JG's house hiding, then preach in temples etc. Later catch another retreat. Observe my December 13th birthday in a low-key way, rather be completely afraid of it or think we cannot keep it on low scale and avoid criticism by BBT managers. I just took up that completely different line of reasoning and made sense. I presented it in a message to M and we'll talk of it later today.

So Mr. Twinge, you are not so blearing and screaming like an ambulance siren, thanks. I do notice the stiff back neck and deal with it relaxing a little as I write and ask M. to massage back of neck when he returns from Kenmare. As he does, he can tell me the phone calls he made. I'll listen and relax and let it work out.

Mental excitement as I followed up thought-scenarios of returning to U.S.A. in December. It seemed even more interesting than Māyāpur November. Boston and New York temples, me lecturing what I've gained in his books. And probably hankering soon to return to retreat mode. Even a few days quiet in between engagements is a relief.

I also saw that retreat is austerity. It's a kicking back or shame. I bet many ISKCON devotees couldn't use a retreat like this. I mean, it's a virtue. I saw as effort, endurance. And partly my new December joint movement may be seeking escape from the quiet ordeal of the retreat. Funny. Funny, but true . . . And I thought, "Well, you should respect a retreat and what you put into and gain." And I glimpsed at some of the gain—time in *japa* and confidence in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* truths. They live for you. You don't just think, "Some day it would be nice if I could take some time and devote it to the basics of chanting and hearing." No, you actually do it on a retreat. You do what many readers ought to do—or at least it's good for you.

When they go to India, devotees sometimes think it will be a pilgrimage, but they get caught up in externals. I learned a secret in a private retreat in a place no one knows.

So while thinking not to come here in December—which means withdrawing from a retreat opportunity—I also appreciated the retreat. It's like I said to myself, "These two so closely together are little too much. I don't want to push my luck. Let me

show up in U.S.A. in December." And yet if you want to, you probably could get away with it . . .

Anyway, that's what I thought. I still can go back and forth in mind. Think it out. I was also looking a little ahead to 1995 . . . But, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

But proved it's here. You say, "Yes, I do appreciate and need retreats. So I will plan for some in the future but not right now." Yeah, but why not right now while you've got a very good remote house available? Such a place is not so easy to find. And also, the dodge, (alibi) from India to U.S.A. is a good time to disappear. Say you are going to South India . . . People won't be looking for you or expecting you but expecting you to come at end of year. You can make it three weeks and show up at end of Christmas rather than 1995.

So maybe my thought this morning was not all genius-stroke encouraged but a little quaking when I faced the fact that during the intense book distribution marathon I'll be off the map of ISKCON. It was a cautious idea. Then I moved into appreciation for being with people, trying to help devotees by my little presence. You shouldn't be cynical or negative about that. If it makes no difference at all whether I visit any place, then I might as well quit as a preacher. But no, a preacher does his bit and I have to do mine. You can't say how much or who it will help that you are personally present. But it does help some. It's not *everything*, but it's your little addition. Anyway, I've got to show up sooner or later in America, so I thought why not go in

December and get it over with during the prime time—and also get a mini-rest and alone time at JG's, even seven days and prepare a disciples' meeting format there. And relax in U.S.A. (?)

Can you be ready to leave U.S.A. by mid-January when the *Gitā-nāgarī* Institute is over and go either to Denver . . . and maybe then take a retreat (where?) or take one after Carib right back here in Kenmare and plan for it now, say February or March.

But you are passing up another retreat that you could have real soon and a remote one. Yeah, well you can't have them all. You've got to pay some social-on-the-scene ISKCON dues—it's like ensuring (gambling in a cool way) so that you can continue this game.

A WS is "supposedly" more thoughtful-spiritual than this, not planning your travel schedule. Or it may be zany and loose or go to memories of pre-Kṛṣṇa consciousness or other confessions and releases or quote *śāstra* and tell us of your reading program . . . But no harm. This was on your mind and it's as real as anything else. Got to deal with it.

I still have two weeks here, more. So use it as a retreat. This retreat is still running, and gains are possible.

Today on the walk I spoke in a prayerful way for three *Gitā* verses for twenty minutes. Try that again. The busy retreat schedule.

Mind you, this WS is with a flickering and a stiffish neck. You look out and see lawn and then hill. Hope I don't get sick.

Help people. Do your bit.

You say I'll make myself an inner devotee, contact *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and Kṛṣṇa and Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and then share it. I believe that. People are hungry for it. Whatever little I gain, I could plunge into giving them in lectures in two or three days and then feel broke again. "Here are my secrets that I learned"—I wouldn't say, "While on a retreat"—but I might indicate I am taking *śravaṇam-kīrtanam* as my priority and attention.

M. says, "When will you get another chance like this?" I tend to forget. Mostly I'm in a place where I can't take a morning walk. If you were in a temple, your reading time is all for preparing a lecture and not much time either. Although your policy is no meetings, yet somehow meetings do occur and morning as well as evening lectures. This sensitive, headache-prone complexity called Satsvarūpa dāsa finds it difficult enough to get through the day, even in a quiet retreat house. When pain comes in an ISKCON temple, there's the added pressure that you are disappointing people and they don't understand why you don't attend the program or give the lecture or meet with them. It's a pressure-filled scene. M. knows it, watching me wilt under the pressure, and so he prescribes retreat time.

Relax your neck, relax your time. We've been writing only half an hour and I don't think I'll go outside to finish this session because it's a kind of exertion and may not help. You can also stop if you like and do a relaxation tape. But I think I'll just move along in a regular way and count on the bathe therapy being helpful . . .

Harvest. Henry. Cluster.

Cluster on the word "secular." This was said about William Carlos Williams. And there's the book *Secular City*. Did he say that secular was good or bad in that book? There's no God in the secular city. You live for temporary values.

The government is secular. Prabhupāda said that's okay if it means no state religion. But "no religion," that's not okay. When the government has no religious values, it pushes abortions, condoms, and so on. Then it's Kali-yuga hell.

Prabhupāda's preaching was too heavy for them. I accept it. I will preach it in my writing (in my own way).

Srila Prabhupāda condemned it. He said the government is "demon-crazy." The Vedic mode is different. You follow the *Manu-saṁhitā*. Of course, it's heavy and there are things in it like censorship of civil liberties. It's hard to see how it's possible today. A God society? You think of fanatical Muslims. And the Hare Kṛṣṇas as a crazy, inept cult.

Let me write some poems in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Don't get contaminated by secular life. Yes, poems can be secular if you read too many secular poets. So write Kṛṣṇa conscious poems and beat the secular city.

"Oh, you make no progress when you chant." Not true. It's worth it. Stare out window. Chant with stop-watch and clock both. Time it so you don't drowse and space out in ten minutes, eleven, or even twelve minutes on one round. You can do better. You may excuse yourself since you push your body and can't do it like a young man. Okay, I do excuse myself. But I also know it's lack of *prema* and offenses to chanting. So you use the watch and clock, low as you are, laugh if you like, I've got to proceed from where I am.

Looking out window for sign of M. returning in the white van. He may not even be here until lunch or just after. Crick your neck. Heater at feet.

Twinge, I sees you. I saw also voice in Hyden Carrudh's poems and would like to have my own. It's preaching.

If you travel, does it promote good writing?

I have enough projects for now.

Six in the works with publisher. So then, use time to think in writing—and yes, do poems, lovely poems, or PM 5 work, seminar . . . Poems . . . live somewhere you can write on.

For example, you can write local color at Saraṇā-gaṭi because it's ISKCON and you can do the same

at Gītā-nagari. Stay two weeks there for doing poems of how it feels to feel to be there. Or even a calculated little tour of the Northeast with presence of mind and time in between so I could write the experience, series of poems in temple life. Prepare for it.

It's not a book per se, "December in America," but like that, a kind of coverage and you hand it over to the editor and she's got the material which for once is ISKCON related and can be published.

Good for you also to report on the ISKCON scene as you see it. Like *Lessons from the Road*? No, not so deliberate. That was, by present standards, almost "commercial" or stingy on the preaching, honesty writing. I'm freer now,

but yes, some of that, "I'm here in Boston and will try to write like a diary of these days."

And explore who I am when I  
am in ISKCON temples.

Honesty—what does it feel like?

What does it do to your system?

Make a writing adventure.

It continues from what I will  
start in Māyāpur.

Here I am, the man in the room,

who was at *maṅgala-ārati*. Here is what I feel about it at this stage of my life. Why do I want to get out of it so quickly? What's the problem . . .

Would this be done in a series of writing sessions or something more structured, direct than that? I don't know. Maybe it can all be done in the



freedom of WS where you are not attached to that one message yet you keep it in mind.

Or it could be a separate "timed book" kind of adventure, but they tend to get a little "literary" or forced (don't they?) if you continue them for too long.

So for now, say I do WS, two a day even while in a temple and keep addressing myself, "How do I feel about temple life? How is this preaching? Is it better preaching than retreats? How do these yin and yang elements work in your life, temple and retreat?"

The main thing is to remember to write two hours a day, even in temples.

Nine minutes left for this session.

Yes, I see, Twinge, you are under control and not so savage to hurt me. Of course, "I" am not this body, but still I identify with it. So take care. Don't rush. I still have to dictate all of this onto the machine.

Hypers and jipers. Besmirch and beware. Your teeth to clack and whistle, it's a long road from here to Roma to India, Bombay and all that . . . all the way back to U.S.A. Who are you kiddin' when you say you can do it all with no rest time? Well, then find me rest time, two days in a hotel, a day or three here in some quiet place, find me that time.

And do the writing practice.

But when you leave this retreat, you will not be able to chant thirty-two rounds or read so much . . . I know, but I will have gained ability in the basics.

12-3 A. M. program can be kept intact, write from 12 to 1, read thirty-five minutes, and chant one hour with votive candles. Keep that up wherever you are, plus a second WS and you are doing okay. Don't be too hard on yourself.

Yes, plan for the next retreat, a big one, and little ones. And plan and prepare also for the stress situation as your duty as a visiting *sannyāsi*, an ISKCON guru who teaches in classes . . .

Four more minutes. Sesame oil on head, neck, chest, belly, arms. Then the hot-cold treatment while listening to His Divine Grace speak *Kṛṣṇa* book back in 1970. *Vedas* personified or maybe a section easier to hear. Oh, I'd like at least try the philosophy. I may not be able to pay attention. Too much inattention and you get depressed. So try it and make a little effort to console yourself, "It's good to hear the arguments against Māyāvādis. You don't have to memorize them. Just sit here and listen and know that it does you some good. It's not dry, only I am dry and feeble. Smash the Māyāvādis. No, Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Truth and it can be explained according to logic, analogy, and *sastra*. Your master did it and you can hear."

Okay. Sign off one-hour, the twinge is not worse. But it might be settling in. Still, I had to write. Now be careful and try to squeak through. No duties today if it hurts too much.

(1 hour and 5 minutes, Kenmare)

## September 28

12:07 A.M.

Here here. I am here. Don't go jumping yet to Roma and Māyāpur. They are soon enough. Frayed edges to sweatshirt. Cool but not yet cold. You will last a little longer.

(In a dream Draviḍa told how he had all "A's" in his high school classes. He read my booklet and read a short criticism of one point at the end of it.)

I jumped at the alarm. I wrote a fix. I wanted to be serious and focused on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. With limited words and I.Q. and certainly devotion, I tried. But I'm a *nitya-siddha*, *nitya-svarūpa*—we all are according to some śāstric phrases.

So grip that pen and keep writing. Walk those two miles (each way?) and unless the twinge comes up stronger, write straight through.

The prayers of Prahllāda, you might say, get a bit dry in dwelling on material conditions. But we need to hear it, different reasons why we are in *māyā*. The futility of material engagement as seen by one who is the son a demon (demoniac blood virtually flowed in his veins, Śrīla Prabhupāda says.) You are that too. Prahllāda isn't barred from devotional service. We have heard from a representative of Nārada Muni in disciplic succession.

Initiation means to hear Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra from a bona fide guru who gives.

Please, I pray, let me be a devotee. By steady execution of *vaidhī* acts, we hear it will take many,

many lifetimes to proceed to *bhāva* and *prema*. It doesn't happen by ordinary increments or self-effort. That may take us only a certain distance—maybe. But we need the Lord's descending mercy. So do you try to find out how to convince Kṛṣṇa to lower that mercy? But there is no trick or leverage you can gain over the infinite One. Nothing but pure devotion to Him will succeed. *Bhaktiā mām abhijānāti*.

This is writing out your thoughts in *bhakti*. I need a little freedom from headaches to prosecute my plans, my walk, my writing, my reading. Or I may re-order them and try *bhakti* in some other arrangement of hearing and chanting and prayer. When I have the right attitude, Kṛṣṇa may be pleased with me. I read that . . . He is ready to exchange with anyone according to their desires. He doesn't think, "This one I like and that one I don't like." He gives what you want. To those who want to serve Him in unalloyed love, He gives them the *buddhi-yoga* to do it. We get according to our acts and desires.

He is especially inclined to the devotee. Other acts don't interest Him as much.

Dear Twinge behind the eye, I feel your intermittent signal like a flashing light. But I want to ask you to let me carry on. I have no choice but to live as long as I can. I don't think I am violating laws of health. I just want to read and write a few hours. So I am proceeding.

A WS is to figure out. It could break into pure prayer. Dear Lord, there is nothing I can figure out. Man proposes and God disposes. Please let me render You service, whether I am in the retreat or in the temple. I may for some time read and chant extra or be alone to pray. And then sometimes I'll be lecturing and reading with others. In any case, I can chant the holy names, I can desire to spend my energies, (*prāṇa, artha, dhaya, vatra*) for Your cause.

We serve Kṛṣṇa through the spiritual master. Prahllāda Mahārāja said this too. It is nice to study his prayers and think someday I might teach them as a seminar. You could also do a series of classes on His instructions to his demoniac school friends. If you are well prepared, you can photocopy the verses only and hand them out to students and then go over the main points in the classes, giving verses quickly to pick out the essential themes. It requires that you be well familiar with it. To study in preparation like that is useful and directly benefits devotees when they get a well organized seminar. But for now I prefer to try to use my limited time in praying with selected *Gītā* verses, hearing from Kṛṣṇa. Become more familiar with them for your own life's purposes and trust that it will be useful for lecturing too.

One is ultimately not an author of books or topics for lectures or sections analyzed. One is (or isn't) a sincere devotee. As Prahllāda says, "Only devotion pleases and attracts the Lord." He said, "You touched my head with Your lotus hand, although You didn't touch the heads of Lord Brahmā, Śiva,

and the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmi." The Lord favors any sincere devotee in any status.

Food digesting, gallumphing this way through the intestines.

(The amorphous books or writings of the detail diarist who saw Rome burn and the great fire of London and Chicago, who was at the scene for Lincoln's assassination in DC, who ran and hid out with Jessie James and saw atrocities committed on both sides in the wars between American Indians and Colonists from Europe and between Rebel and Union soldiers and even today he writes his diary. I mean many do. But one or two relatively can say, "I met His Divine Grace and I massaged him and served him this way for eighteen months." Who did it the most? Who did it the best? Who comes out on top? It's not like that. Śrīla Prabhupāda rewards us accordingly. Don't think you are number one. Or two. Or three. There are many and you are one. You each have a claim as spirit soul.

Might one write with a different pen, wielding it like an axe or big knife? "I want to do damage to my false ego," he declares and strikes at the page and the false self. I am gentle, you could say, easy with myself. Don't want to cause harm. The nonviolent school, go with the flow.

Books won't be included in the next package. Not my own self-published? Just letters until it gets through customs and nothing is held up. Don't ask.

Just receive what comes, letters and manuscripts.  
More later.

I don't have a hell of a lot to say. I know. I just get up early and try to write. When you chant, what comes out? You feel you can't pray. You just count. "Let me stay awake," you tell yourself, and look up sometimes to candle flames in votive cups. Let me keep moving the beads in the correct direction and keep pace, and if you are lucky, you put aside too much deliberation on lines of thought and you direct the mind to examine or hear the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantras. But when you observe them, they have no meaning and you have no gut feeling for them. You are prevented from that, unable to feel. Physical sensations like eye twinge, etc. are a concern to you. And memories and dreams. But when you pause to consider *mahā-mantras*, you don't get far with it. Okay. Alas. I notice it at least. A faint cry or prayer comes up like a little puff of smoke, a small flame of my soul like the flame flickering and burning down in the votive cups. My motives. My aspirations. I chant to get the rounds done, seven or eight before the time is up in the first session.

But your repeated chanting, while still invested with offenses, cannot bring you to the goal, *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

No use even telling New York temple when you are coming, because who cares? They get so many *sannyāsi* guests, it's like revolving doors in and out from the airport, preaching . . .

"My time is limited," he said. Lord Caitanya said, "How many places can I go? How many fruits can I deliver?" He said it as if He needed the help of others. That is His mercy, to engage us as preachers of *saṅkīrtana* so we may taste the fruit and deliver it to others.

Realistic—I'm more or less in the way when visiting in American temples during the book distribution marathon. I can't get into the spirit of directly encouraging as many devotees as possible to go out and distribute books. I do admire those who do it. So if I can't preach like that or set an example by going out and distributing them myself, it's better to not even be present while that's going on. So I'll come afterwards and talk of *sādhana* and they may appreciate.

Life goes on in the ISKCON temples, without me.

Yes, even without me. They in fact hardly notice my absence and in a few years they will hardly even remember you were there. Life is like that. Lord Caitanya assures that His movement continues. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa. And you too may come back to serve more in the same movement, twenty years later or born into a family of devotees living with a connection to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Some may desire to bring a devotee child into the world, by ISKCON *garbadhana samskara* (fifty rounds and right attitude at conception). The successful ISKCON-ITE can go with Śrīla Prabhupāda in his next life or go to Goloka. These things are mentioned by our spiritual master.



Serious persons write directly on some topics of *kṛṣṇa-kathā* in their notebooks. I'll ask students to do that. Hare Kṛṣṇa. Get your work done and do more and then more and then that's all you can get. Kṛṣṇa says that relatively speaking, you have had sufficient time to indicate your desires for going back to Godhead. Yes, in later years your drive diminishes on the physical side, but the devotion is indicated in spiritual desires and *bala*, so even an old man may be young in spirit.

I don't know whether the morning walk I take is an over-exertion. You write by the clock. Is it half-hearted?

Cluster on the word, "eye twinge":

Is it sent by God? It's Providence, karma. Remember Dr. Sharma of Hindu Natural Path. Witch doctor is he? He had no clue really how to get rid of the headaches. And then there is Āyurveda which I am trying now.

You speak to it, Mr. Twinge. You say, "Lay off," and, "Hi. Be kind." Pain is like an alarm sounding. You reason with Mr. Twinge and say, "Give me a little time."

Your eye twinge is diagnosed as spasms of vessel motor instability. That's technical lingo for a headache behind the right eye. The doctor who analyzed himself now has a heart attack. There's a plague in India. You've got it easy compared to others. And death can come "at any time."

Headaches are psychosomatic. You may hypnotize yourself and tell yourself to cool it. Then the

pain goes away or you go away. But I can't get rid of it. And so I retired from the GBC and no more management committees for me. That's how I want it.

How do you deal with the eye twinge? I lie down and hear music. Sometimes I subdue it. When it develops, then I can't. In the early stages I take hot/cold baths.

That's all I can say, nothing new here.

Seems I don't say anything new in the cluster. Just a way to get some words out. Space-filler. You want more motivation than that.

"Oh, it's all been said by me for now."

If you persistently feel like that, you could put down your pen. But this is like a big trick by the gremlin to immediately stop your writing function. I prefer to plunge ahead in the darkness with light beams on.

M. detects an oil leak from the engine onto the ground of the parked vehicle. Fix it or we could be in a fix as we travel to Italy. See mechanic in Glen-gariff?

So many potential little leaks and disasters and goings wrong.

So take a day at a time and make use of it. Yes, Dennis, it is quiet here, and one could pray if one is inclined. No one is stopping you. The small, white sheep is suffering on his damaged foot and flies all over him. He (or she) can't even eat grass, is too sick for that, but sips at water from the puddle. The natural method of trying to get well.

The way . . .

Now I read. Do you dream of Draviḍa dāsa and how I felt?

In another dream, I sought to be forgiven by my wife for my violent sexual intentions toward her and sought to forgive her for the wrongs. We reconciled with some idea to have a no-sex relationship but took responsibility for staying together. I accepted all this, but when I realized it meant the next day I'd have to change from saffron to white dress, I couldn't accept that. I balked. I preferred to remain *sannyāsi*. Sometimes I have a dream where the dream plot is tricking me to accept, as inevitable, some course of events that is a setback for me, a terrible reversion if I had to accept it in the waking life. In these dreams, I resign myself to my reversed fate, but often at some point, I become aware that it doesn't have to be this way. In fact, it is a dream and is contrary to my more fortunate situation when awake. So then I awake and reject that dream reality. It can work the opposite way too. You could dream your teeth are back or that you are young or allowed to be in the devotional state of loving service to Kṛṣṇa.

Now the hour is up. Don't complain, "I didn't write in a such-and-such way." Move on to read. Mr. Twinge, please don't cause too much trouble.

(1 hour, Kenmare)

## September 29

12:09 A.M.

Glad my headache went away overnight. I'll call it quits if you will, Mr. Twinge. I don't hold it against the past, but I am so limited each day. Don't blame the thirty-two rounds or the morning walk or the *capātis*. Don't blame—he who blames is as bad as the perpetrator of mischief. You wanted to look at a book, *Where God Begins*, but I'll tell you in the meantime, He is everywhere, and your contact with Him begins when you contact His pure devotee and receive the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra from him. In my case, that has begun. So don't regret the headache or worry about retreats.

Stick it out, get into it, spend your days as best you can. I'm grateful to be able to chant and read it all, and grateful people allow me to explain Kṛṣṇa consciousness to audiences who listen. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is such a nice thing.

My own relationship with the temples is an individual one, not necessarily to be shared with others when I say, "I quickly tire nowadays of the morning program."

Don't foist it on them

your big books I can hardly

read them, a lot. *Wild Garden* indeed. Oh, you can make fun if you like. He's a sensitive man, I tell you, I caught him dreaming he was repeating some so-called remarks by Thomas Merton, he and others in a group authorizing the exact words of some

statement they were going to make and getting feedback from some Catholics on it. Earlier dream, in Santo Domingo, some person, like a devotee, was going to sell you marijuana. You more or less consented to it and he was arranging the details of delivery, and then you "woke up" while in the dream to the fact that this was breaking the "no intoxication" vow. So you decided not to do it and thought you will find your highs or peaks in natural epiphanies that occur in life each day. If I took marijuana, they would look down on me, the devotees.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, I do want to attain You in loving service. This power you give me to write doesn't make me a god. Whatever is splendorous or great (*mama tejas*) in the world, know it comes from but a spark of Kṛṣṇa's splendor.

He wants God. He walks on a lonely road to find Him even while Girirāja Swami tries to find Him in Rādhā's *sevā* in the words of Mahārāja in Mathurā, or Romapāda Swami sweating it out in New York City, or Nirañjana Swami risking for Śrīla Prabhupāda in Russia, Hṛdayānanda in Harvard. Yeah, he's working hard in Harvard. Is my walk on the retreat road an equivalent? It's what I'm doing this year, and so I better claim it and stand up for it. It's my offering. Better work at it.

He spent a whole retreat asking himself, "Should I be on a retreat?" That's what he had to go through. He wound up saying, "Yes, if Lord Kṛṣṇa desires."

If You desire, please let me know You a little better so I can serve You better and love You better. "God made us to know Him, serve Him, and love Him in this world and the next."

All glories to Prabhupāda.

Flying along as we will do in the van when we leave here and drive to Italy. These precious days in *The September Song*  
*and these few precious days*  
*I'll spend with you.*

Oh, it's coming to the end of the year and you better do something, huh? Well, twenty minutes a day I pray out loud, reading a few verses from cards. Dear Lord, You say, "And he who thinks of Me alone at the end of his life, he attains to Me; of this there is no doubt." You walk and think and feel and you open up to it. That's right.

The hypnotherapist man suggests how you can tell your own self to not get involved with the pain that comes behind the eye. JS thought that was an achievable skill. "Imagine," Tim Wellington said. It's like slowing down one part of your body to run 5 mph while the rest of your body goes at 45 mph. Remember the feeling stage; you can do it. No harm to body. And save the previous hours to use in His service.

But quality is so important. Even if you have to rest more hours in a day, you could still improve as a devotee by improving the quality of attention in your rounds.

I promise to do thirty-two rounds today and tomorrow, then sixty-four on Saturday, Ekādaśī, and then I'll go back down to sixteen and use the time for reading in Śrīla Prabhupāda—for compiling the selections and putting them on tape. I may also read my 1980s diaries and WG.

Do it while you can, learn what makes you tick, what you went through to get through this present stage.

He's a sensitive lad, can't quite take the material world the way it is and the way he is constituted. I thought of the GBC meetings I sat through and how they were traumatic to me. I have perhaps not fully expressed and admitted that to myself—how I was hurt and squelched by it, how I suffered from it. In psychoanalysis, you expressed that to a professionally sympathetic ear who said, "Go ahead, cry, or be angry, fully release that, don't hold it any longer."

The GBC membership and behavior has changed. No one cares for the feelings of an ex-member and what he went through, how he endured it manfully and silently. It's up to him to adjust. Everyone is alone. Okay, so on my own, I hereby got a glimpse of it yesterday and said, "That was a harrowing thing to go through. I commend you, Sats, for surviving it. Now go on with your life. You don't have to attend any more such meetings and put up with the histrionics or power plays of parliamentary procedure experts in the torture chamber meeting hall under the picture of Śrīla Prabhupāda, as if he approves all that went on

there—which he doesn't. But he does want you to endure, *tapasya*, to do the needful for serving Lord Kṛṣṇa. And therefore, you went through it and want him to recognize."

The day on hand, the prayers of Prahāda, a little at a time. I can only read thirty-five minutes at a stretch, but why not schedule it four times a day like that, especially the last two weeks here and especially when we come back here, for say, a twenty day period?

The leaves dwindle down  
to a last precious few  
and these few precious days  
I'll spend with you.

The hare, the rabbit, the dead sheep suffered. I saw her her last day alive, flies around her, knew she was going to die, and they took advantage. She looked my way, did not whimper or ask for anything, drank some water, blank and white-faced, I describe here, why? To show off prose and feelings? No, to commemorate the brave death of a dumb creature. D.H. Lawrence said, "I never saw a wild thing sorry for itself."

She died and Madhu saw the body  
and mentioned it to Dennis who  
probably carted the corpse away  
before the crows attacked.

Maybe they'll take the last wool on her body if it's not considered contaminated. She gave as they asked her. She stood and suffered dumbly until the end.



So this heath, these boggy hills, are a good place to visit, and the open air and creek's rushing sound are a great vacation spot or meditation site—but be careful. Pray hard and live and act right because this material world is a hell of a place to return to. Prahlaḍa Mahārāja has also elaborated on the illusion of trying to be happy here, but no one can improve their lot.

It would be nice to study and scope out and separate main themes and present them in a seminar, the prayers of Prahlaḍa Mahārāja, and the teachings of Prahlaḍa Mahārāja, as Śrīla Prabhupāda also lectured on them in Māyāpur 1975. He says the world is full of suffering, but the Supreme Lord in devotional service is above this, so everyone should try for that, and the Vaiṣṇava is compassionate.

Therefore, a few days ago—did I forget it?—I said my motto on a retreat should be to answer the question, "What are you doing on this retreat to prepare yourself for sharing Kṛṣṇa consciousness with others?" Let a retreat be an improving of self with awareness that any healing or self-discovery or improved state of *śravaṇaṁ-kīrtanaṁ* can be conveyed to others. I tell them, "I'm going to hold a series of meetings with such-and-such dates, and anyone who wants can be with me then." Some will come and consider it worth their while. Seven days *parikrama*, seven days meetings, then at Gītā-nāgarī, five days and seven days. Classes once a day; it's better than nothing. And I'm there for them to cook for me or type and have other exchanges.

And these few precious days  
I'll spend with you.

Oh, you are singing that old song in your head.  
why not chant Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra in the old tune  
Śrīla Prabhupāda gave you in September 1966  
when you were initiated? When you and I were  
young, Maggie.

They sing and get maudlin',  
get violent, old coots, this one will not be like  
that

but gentleman he hopes to have the privilege of  
serving Śrīla Prabhupāda and not succumb to any  
breaking of four rules. No room for *māyā*. Even if I  
don't create a big impression and revolution single-  
handedly, I must go out like a candle who is faith-  
ful to his guru and is no doubt sorry he has not at-  
tained the full surrender. He feels that, but feels his  
love and yes, he's willing to join his spiritual mas-  
ter for service in the next life. Despite the scars and  
difficulties serving with other disciples (all those  
GBC meetings), I want to be with him. Don't want  
to miss the further adventures with Śrīla Prabhu-  
pāda in the *saṅkīrtana* movement.

Words thrown out into the air. Followers of  
Lord Śiva threw flowers around and shouted the  
names of Gaura with intense devotion. I too sing  
Hare Kṛṣṇa mantras with devotion.

May the Lord of all, who resides in Navadvīpa in  
His unmanifest pastimes (seen by the eyes of pure  
devotees, His dear servitors there), be kind upon

this useless, pain-sensitive soul, and allow him an honorable and useful stay in the holy *dhāma*.

May Harikeśa Swami approve or not. May Prabhupāda—I know he will—welcome his *sannyāsi* pretender. He will say, "He is not a pretender. Just a little worn down by vicissitudes of ISKCON and his aging body. Sure, he has it easy in this world and hasn't put out that much, you could say, in the last ten years. He made his shared mistakes, but he is earnest."

Earnest in this room and on the road walking. It's my own mind; it doesn't cooperate with me. And the body has its limits which I have to recognize more, and sometimes just rest and maybe hear someone read to me. Need assistance in old age, but want to produce. Thank you M., and thank you all who help me do this.

Send them thank you notes. Ask JG to tell me who to thank, who is allowing me to go on trekking by airplane at this time in my life. Why should Sats be allowed a yearly visit to India and Caribbean and all that petrol in Europe? Well, "he deserves it." Please thank your donors, patrons of the road travel of this fellow.

Please, I say, if you are coming to India to be with me, bring Ecology note pads for me to write on and ear plugs to keep out noise while I sleep, and a few napkins and mangoes and *bhakti* if you can.

*Bhakti*, ha! It's an old joke among *sādhus*. Where is *bhakti*? She is wherever a sincere soul renders service.

Thank you, Lord, *caitya-guru*, for allowing me to do this morning WS. I jolted up when the alarm rang at midnight and got out of cold sleeping bag because I thought maybe there will be some valuable surprise when I go to write. I didn't know what I wrote but felt grateful and felt my pulse as "steady" for staying in the retreat and not panicky from the opinion of others.

I thought out a few things and allowed flotsam and jetsam to come out.

A pain of recollection to heal of my participation in GBC meetings. I am willing to lend myself a helping hand.

And I acknowledge the right of the Supreme Lord to deal with me as He likes,

I pray to be with Śrīla Prabhupāda in the next life, feel confident he does accept me, want to be who I am to serve devotees.

Said three more days of thirty-two rounds seeking extra mercy if I can attain more attention to *harināma* and then spend time in reading.

All systems still "go" in present plan to understand yourself. You called yourself by many humble Appalachians, fallen, bumbling, useless soul, as even Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura describes himself. You will write, you will teach classes. You will get your headaches. You try to do your best to use your time well on this retreat and in temples and all and all and all and these few precious days I'll spend in *vaidhī-bhakti* with Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees. Sign off now, read Prahlēda.

(1 hour, Kenmare)

## September 30

12:07 A.M.

Don't rush. We slept one and half hours extra—in these ways we are trying to avoid headaches. In dreams, several devotees were narrating some *lilā*—a *lilā*, less known one, about a demon and his guru, etc. Sometimes I led the narration. Then another devotee took over. As I listened, I felt that I was not very enthusiastic about my main service (which wasn't manifest in that dream). Yeah . . . but maybe I had something I wanted to do that *was* deep . . .

These dreams I can't remember. They seem like nonsense and too self-centered. But maybe they hold a key. Maybe in some *Philokalia* I'll find a key to improve *japa* . . .

Before bed, I read a little on *japa* to M. We discussed how it requires surrender. In *The Way of the Pilgrim*, the starets say one shouldn't overdo time spent in "edifying speculational conversation," not more "than on the essential hidden prayer of the heart." Of course, *japa* isn't always much fun, doesn't even have apparent spiritual reward, because we chant mechanically. But the answer to this may be in falling at the feet of *nāma* and asking forgiveness—not in stopping *nāma*.

*Nāma* for beginners like me. "This applies especially to beginners for whom it is vital, but the time they spend on prayer must significantly exceed

even the time they spend on any other pious activities."

M., of course, was enlivened to hear this. He has a conviction that *japa*-prayer is essential. A conviction that *japa* is prayer, that one may pray while chanting. Why don't I have more of this to get me through the dry stretches?

Writing here, I'm thinking to reverse my decision to stop thirty-two rounds on October 2. Why don't I at least go until the mail arrives? And even then, I could answer mail . . . oh well, I'm always trying to balance three good things, reading and chanting and writing. And I like to prepare seminars . . .

Writing digs up good ideas, like this one, to continue *japa* quota.

My health limits the amount of hours and intensity . . . yesterday I did not take my vigorous one hour walk and that seemed right.

You want to preach "also." It is not an afterthought to be thrown in after you have budgeted all your time for "*bhajanānandī*" acts. This burden of wanting to pray and wanting to preach—and the heavy statements by Śrīla Prabhupāda against going alone to pray-chant when one doesn't preach, and the ISKCON attitudes . . . how to engage myself, my own self . . .

To help others.

Prahlāda's prayers I have just finished reading contain strong verses and purports on this as well as many other teachings about illusion of material happiness . . .

Prepare them for a seminar?  
Look into file on disciple's meetings for January.  
What will you do?

Burch. Carl Birch. Best dressed. Why not me?  
Why not forget it all? High school and college, your  
sorted past. The lost lad, buried alive. Words to  
impress and help others.

Ah, now at least, a reason  
to write! To glorify Kṛṣṇa, what  
John Updike and Keroauc  
couldn't do. Even Tolstoy didn't have  
such focus on Bhagavān or know (as he  
died, he asked, "What  
should I do now?"). But  
I have meager talents. Nevermind,  
you can write. You can  
express your feelings praising your  
spiritual master and the Supreme  
Bhagavān, Śrī Kṛṣṇa of Goloka.  
Those who are honest will  
appreciate  
your call.

Make date to glorify the Supreme. Promise to  
chant His holy names and first *become aware that  
you are inattentive in japa*. Then do something about  
that—interject prayers, bow down, call out, spray  
water on face, try to get out of inattention. And go  
on chanting.

I felt I was minimizing the *japa*.

Please Lord, teach me the way You allow someone to feel relief from hunger by eating, so he can feel for ourselves the benefit of *harer nāma eva kevalam*.

And one can go on chanting.

Yes, it's Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, not Vaikuṇṭha. Yes, it's service to Rādhā. She is more important to the *sakhīs* (*mañjarīs*) than Kṛṣṇa, who is Her boyfriend. Very well. But Prabhupāda says first thing's first, and that is chanting and preaching and behaving by following the four rules. I want to thrive on that.

All glories to the Lord of the universe. All glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

You got enough to read and hear.

Prabhupāda lecturing in Geneva and talking on the walks. When he speaks in a small house in the Geneva temple room, the microphone picks up his voice without his having to "shout" over loudspeakers and ringing microphones. I can't pay attention fully, but some comes through. I want to listen again to his lecture, touching *Bhagavad-gītā* 8.5, *anta-kāle*, at the time of death, he said, remembering Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa by Deity worship. Remembering Them by seeing Them.

In Seventh Canto purport to the nine forms of *bhakti*, he describes worshipping a Deity in the mind as suitable for a wandering *sannyāsī*. I could do that. Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa photos, take your pick. Rādhā-Dāmodara of *Gītā-nāgarī*, Rādhā-Śyāma of *Vṛndāvana* . . . where is your love?

Pitiful. Back of neck. Old-timers can't expect to get better health in declining years.



When they say prayer is more important than other pious acts, where does writing fit in? It does, it's me, it's the thinking aloud and hand moving practice, literature-creating,

It's preaching and you can't minimize that. How's it preaching? Because the written down words can be selected and something shared in that way, "permanent," to look at by others.

So the conclusion is, the day is packed with goodies to improve myself—which means improve my presentation to the devotees.

(They've been practicing many years and I have to spend time to find a depth that will inspire them. As a teacher, I need to "stay ahead" of them. Not come harried to a meeting with no time to prepare a set of lectures)—or not repose in life of prayer and *sādhana* and attraction to Kṛṣṇa.

I'm reading 1988 (?) diaries and my dilemma. I didn't have attraction for Kṛṣṇa's form and *līlā* as recorded in *śāstra*; didn't focus on Śrīla Prabhupāda's books as the main or only reading. I was groping . . . yeah. But some good too.

Tried directly speaking to Kṛṣṇa even while I didn't know Him. Now I think of prayer more as reading and *japa*. But in '88 I was onto *something*, but *śāstra* and temple and books may not be enough, unless the person is crying out for his personal relationship with the Lord.

That's true, yes, yes, oh yeah,  
as Dennis would say, yes, that's right. (M. told Dennis a little about our reincarnation beliefs, "like purgatory," and said to him, Don't come back next

life as a sheep. Ironical “light” remark—maybe it will stick in his head. Does he think he will go to heaven for killing sheep? And us? Will we go to Kṛṣṇa heaven for living “neutrally” in this house on donated money and trying to pray during the book distribution marathon? I don’t mean to criticize your acts of devotion.)

This is a bomb thrower.

Let us live a little longer.

But you never know. Śrīla Prabhupāda says don’t count on the idea that you ought to live eighty or ninety years. Right now you could die. And even if you lived to “ripe, old age,” what is that? It may be just more debilitated. Write and read and chant and preach while you can.

Travels of the old man, get him around from place to place. The years are ripening. Govinda Mahārāja of Śrīdhara Mahārāja, now tours the world . . . So many and their disciples, different lines of gurus. But Śrīla Prabhupāda is the main one as far as we are concerned.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare.

To help yourself . . . memories of a skit the devotees in Trinidad put on—when Indra had to become a pig. But tell us something now, how you will pray. Will I go to Trinidad and tell them, “Please cling to your *japa*, don’t give it up”? So many householders who no longer have time or energy or direction. I said it. Now tell them with more conviction.

My going there is something special,

or let's say it has *some* good,  
say I must try to do it, and not think  
it's useless.

Even a little effort to engage those initiated persons is certainly my field of preaching. So I will go each year to see them (or sometimes every other year) into Ireland for that, sometimes Canada, sometimes Northeast U.S.A. *Ayi nanda-tanuja*.

Move the "corpse" as long as it can go around with valid passport and write and publish too. Try to help people in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

There's more to come.

All glories to the Lord of the universe who plays in Vṛndāvana. May He enter my heart and flood me. How bad do you want that? Like hell, sir. Read your own words sympathetically. Your poems—you can criticize, but why not see the bright side?

A soul covered. Out of chaos of mental experience, a drowning soul. And what to speak of all those who don't know Kṛṣṇa. Those who try to give them a book, the chant, the *prasādam*, are gloriously endowed with spark to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness and they attract Kṛṣṇa—like a village boy who becomes a hero in war time. At least I can do is encourage them. Encourage them. The book distributors like Yamunā-jīvana. And also those who . . . preach in their own way, like Karnāmṛta.

Preach for me means temple visits to those places where devotees live. In Baltimore too. You see, they are pulling on with household duties and

many are my initiated disciples . . . encourage them.

I will,

I will.

Give me power to do so, Lord, and let me help myself to see good in these retreats. Hey, you like the prayers of Prahlaḍa? Well, in U.S.A. wherever you go, you could ask to speak on your own *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sections and read those prayers. Of course, any *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* section is good. But a series of classes on the prayers of Prahlaḍa can be given . . .

Don't be afraid of ISKCON leaders. They're not going to "get" you. You will elude them one way or another from managerial meetings, etc. I'm done with that.

Okay, take a pill.

Read a book. I don't mean to say you are a slouch or a crook, you've got to defend yourself.

Hey mate, got any bold or funny, really useful and entertaining book ideas to give people, a story you could speak like Spalding Gray does? But what story do I have? Some. Fiction is "unlimited," but I shy away from it. Afraid to enter big leagues with fiction writers.

Ah, there you go again, thinking of Henry Miller of Saroyan-type writing. Well, that *Obituaries* is a good idea. Your "story" time is no longer here, and you're spending all your time in the loving arms of writing session. If they produce more books, I'll be enthused to write more.

Ideas coming as this Writing Session ends.

1) Don't give up thirty-rounds for now.

2) Okay, health is the limiter.

3) Pray when chanting.

4) *Philokalìa*.

5) I like to preach to my disciples and it is worthy, it does help the movement, so do it in Baltimore, etc.

6) I will not worry of ISKCON roping me into management, etc.

7) I'd like to pursue a writing career, get on to a book, even while here.

Okay, end this and go for straight, straight reading of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. End here, glad to be with you. We who are about to die salute the living readers of the future who will die also, reading matter lives on until Saṅkarṣaṇa breathes fire over it all, or a minor devastation, and we all go on, the *jīvas* scattered—I'm no exception . . . he who helps others is wonderful in the Lord's eyes and Prabhu-pāda is pleased with him. Why be left out?

(1 hour, Kenmare)

## October 1

12:04 A.M., *Ekādaśī*

Last night I mentioned to BP, "Tomorrow is *Ekādaśī*. I plan to chant sixty-four rounds." He approved in a gentle way. Then I said, "I do it just by not doing some other things like writing and reading." Right away, I was disclaiming, minimizing the *japa-yajña* of sixty-four rounds, as if it's not a worthwhile act. The old *bābāji* inferiority complex. Better you do it with the attitude that it's good, healthy, a challenge—and good for anyone who has the opportunity to do it. Dear Lord, bless my *japa* today. May I find the nectar of the holy names, at least a fraction of a drop. Find it or not, I plan to chant.

I read an old note to me by Baladeva, where he said my WS was like a therapy, and that if I kept it up, I would one day be writing—I guess he meant to say—"cured," now flowing straight from the subconscious, and it would be pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Now it's a painful re-training of the body and mind by a patient as after one who has had a bad accident. I don't know. We hear of "cutting through" and writing what is in our heart (what's deepest, what we fear to write, what would make us flow tears but once we get through it, it will make us supremely blissful). I don't know if I can expect such improvement. One writes along. Could it get much better? Is there something I can

do now to cut through? Will I improve and should I even care about it?

This day is dedicated to sixty-four rounds. Shut up n' chant, walk n' chant, count n' sit. I will come back to writing here at different points in the day just to say hello and check it. There won't be separate one-hour sessions, but a series of entries throughout the day. Or perhaps I won't be inclined to say anything. It would be nice to leave a little log of at least a few observations during the day.

It's the usual effort to bring the mind back from its wandering. Do it again and again. I dreamt just now of a performance about to take place by expert lasoo twirlers. The audience was gathered in a room. There was delay, and time went on and on in the dream and different episodes occurred before the performance began. I kept waking up and going back to the same dream. I didn't have a bona fide right to be in the audience, but hoped that no one would notice and throw me out. It seemed amusing. One doubted if the lasoo stars could actually execute the different tricks they were advertised to do. Perhaps if they couldn't, they would apologize. A woman beside me struck up a conversation. She thought that the room and viewing situation was "sophic," good, even though she had to look from one room into another to view the performance.

Well, this waking performance of *japa-yajña* is about to take place without undo delay. As far as I know, I'm entitled to watch it. But am I myself the "lasoo expert" who will try the very difficult trick of bringing the mind under control? Ladies and

gentlemen, we will twirl this here lasoo into the form of a circle and place our mind in the center, even while it continues moving, and we will go on hearing the sacred names, Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare. The names are absolute, beyond these shenanigans—beyond fears like, “What am I doing at a retreat in old farm house?”—and they can carry us beyond birth and death.

Surely I will fail to keep the flickering mind always within the twirling noose. The amusing game—is also more serious.

I will try and not give up. It’s easy enough to do externally, but very difficult, impossible, internally. *Nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo*—the Lord bestows His mercy on whoever He likes, and only the recipient of His mercy can succeed. But *yasya deve parā bhaktir, yathā-deve tathā gurau*, unto one who has implicit faith in guru and Kṛṣṇa, all the truths of the *Vedas* and the results for chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa will be revealed.

It’s not a game. But you can take it in that level if you wish, if that’s all you are able to do.

The holy name is *cintāmaṇi*—it gives you whatever you want from it, that is, whatever you truly want.

So word-speaker, you have to give up your fluent gift of gab, and stumble in the area where you are always inept, to chant with mind on hearing the sounds of the names.

May I please regard them as sacred, not as meaningless. May I come into the presence of God, the



beloved, Supreme Person, the dearest of the  
Vrajavāsis. May I chant as the student of His Di-  
vine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.  
Talk with you later.

Practice now so that you can remember Lord  
Kṛṣṇa at the time of death (Bg. 8.5).

2:20 A.M.

On 13th round. Counting. Keep going. A life  
surrounded in the flow of Names, Names . . .  
bound to get better, bring you closer . . . but I'm not  
yet *conscious* of holy names. "O my Lord, Your holy  
name alone can render all benediction . . ."

5:30 A.M.

Twenty-seven rounds done.

Done? Now go downstairs and read out loud  
with devotees for half hour. *Harināma* alone and  
hearing of the Lord. Lord Nityānanda taught Jiva  
Gosvāmī about Navadvīpa. Haridāsa Ṭhākura  
spoke the glories of the holy name with Lord Cai-  
tanya. Śrīla Prabhupāda has a book, *Nāmāmṛta*.  
And finally, you have to utter the holy names with  
your tongue and ear—O mind, please hear it.

Write a letter to your mind—hey mind, please be  
better, why flit and jit and wit all over the place?  
Who do you think you are? why don't you hear  
Hare Kṛṣṇa vibration?

Who is talking to the mind?

Take it as a self-concerned and above-the-mind, determined intelligence who doesn't have so much power, but begs mind, "We *need* you to work for us."

12:15 noon

Only thirteen rounds left. Missed from hill. Sheep were lying down in grass. Some of them were sleeping. I stayed awake chanting. Love of God hardly even enters my mind as a concern, an aspiration. I just go on chanting, pleased to see the count rise, about 8:40 per round. Little man, poker head, I don't know what to call you, darling. Dear one is God and *harināma*. Okay, I won't berate you; I thank you, child, for spending your day in this way and not thinking it is of little use. It's good, sixty-four rounds on Ekādaśī is good.

So go down now to bathe.

Sometimes I thought of literary plans . . . how I could deceive readers . . . but then I stopped that train of thought and went back to chanting, sitting on a pillow on floor, looking out on the hill and sometimes walking in room with cane, hearing Śrīla Prabhupāda *japa* tape . . . Now M. has returned from his morning outing.

I'm glad to be on to *Letters from a Sannyāsi* again. Chant, chant.

Ekādaśī lunch—vegetable soup, buck "wheat," orange juice, beets and carrots . . . I am a voracious eater, even though I eat small amounts. Tongue is

fastidious, mind demands it taste good and dwells on it.

Take rest now and finish up thirteen rounds in afternoon.

4:50 P.M.

Finished sixty-four rounds. Two blue asterisks on the calendar for today. Now back into the normal grooves. What to do? Why don't you read for awhile, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*? While you are "high," while you are protected by the constant mantras that have surrounded you all day . . . You did hold off other thinking, at least more intricate thoughts. You said to yourself, "Hold that off today. Get into it tomorrow. Worry about it later. Just chant now, up to sixty-four." So the discursive thought will creep back in. I did not pray while chanting, but did hold off a lot of distraction. Felt more like a young boy. Now he has to take up duties again, including this one, where we write what comes.

## October 2

10:45 A.M.

I'm not reading for this WS. But here I am with pen. I know how to swim. You keep some things (like reading nondevotee poets) as part of your "professional" service. Every devotee does this. There may come a stage when you shut out all external input except *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and holy names and you live in seclusion (?) in Vṛndāvana. Not likely unless the last days of life you get such notice. When we say Śrīla Prabhupāda kept preaching and we should too, what does it mean? He did stop travel mostly for at least six months or more at the end and stayed in Vṛndāvana. But if you remain interacting for pushing on Kṛṣṇa consciousness, it may mean the stress of dealing with the material world and when, if ever, does a preacher give up those concerns and connections?

To be grave and bear stress and tension because you are dealing with the material world . . . I felt it just now as M. and I discussed international travel . . . As I left the room, I imagined how devotees who are managers live with this kind of thing all the time—and it's to their credit that they face difficult situations. I thought, "Why do I so much avoid it? Is it the headaches? They disable me. I can't do that management."

Anyway, it's not good to take it easy if your only reason is that you don't want to be bothered. If you were capable physically, etc., and still persistantly

avoided any difficulty—even if the difficulty was in the course of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness—then what is that? Śrīla Prabhupāda says preachers take the risk. They spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness despite difficulties; they get attacked, etc. They go back to Godhead as a result of such dedicated austerities for trying to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. A *sādhū* is merciful and tolerant.

I'm not accusing you here of taking it easy. But put these thoughts also into your life and consider how you carry them out. There are all sorts of difficulties. I do face some. Integrity comes in different ways. I mentioned how it's easier internally to follow your authorities with no doubt that they know what's best for you. So it is difficult to be self-reliant and stay alone on a retreat (Pragoṣa said my life of solitude seemed to him being in prison).

Don't run out of seclusion, shouting, "I surrender! I'll do whatever you want me to do." Stick it out in your bunker, firing shots at the approaching enemies. I too work to defend the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. I too have a place now in the phalanx and I must not desert it out of cowardice or because it's hard or out of passion (restless dissatisfaction, no patience).

Stay and write on the page. Drive on.

Yes. There is work to be done. Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā. He is expert in all He does, and unlike the *jīvas*, never comes under illusion or distress. He is the Supreme Person. It's so hard to overcome the modes of nature—and the doubts that Lord Kṛṣṇa

is the Supreme Person. You think again and again—such a vast and inconceivable concept, the source of all being, how could He be a cowherd boy decorated in Indian fashion, as part of Indian culture? Surely it's culture-limited, and just see, other cultures have similar equivalences. When an outsider says this, I see his inability to accept the Absolute Truth. I can preach to someone like Brother Elred when he says Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā are Bengali expressions of the Absolute Truth. And I can preach to myself also. But deep inside, in root forms, not to be debated, but there—is a lack of faith. It's based on lack of experience of Kṛṣṇa's divine form, you could say. Some live in India to overcome this. But that doesn't necessarily work. India is so mundane and Hindu. Sure, it could help if you live in the *dhāma* with the right attitude and get the mercy of revelation *and* get acclimatized so thinking of Kṛṣṇa as God becomes like second nature . . . but Śrīla Prabhupāda also thought it was possible to achieve pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness by preaching in Western places and taking shelter in transcendental temples and in chanting and hearing and preaching. Lord Caitanya will protect you. Well, I'm trying to do my bit, writing.

Interesting. You go on telling your experience of a person who comes to ISKCON in youth and tries to work out all *anarthas* during his lifetime . . . Stay tuned to the adventures of Satsvarūpa. Will he attain *niṣṭhā* and *ruci*? Will he at least give up his doubts—I mean not the discursive ones, but the gut stuff—and Lord Kṛṣṇa's absolute supremacy as Lord

of Goloka and source of all that be—even though in this world He's one of many "concepts" of God (Hindu god)? Will Sats clear away sex desires and get out and preach? Will his books preach?

And what about his license to catch birds and mites? His lease on life? Get an extension past a due date?

But why should Lord Kṛṣṇa do it? What's he doing that Lord Kṛṣṇa would want him to keep it up? Ah, you know.

I need time to improve.

I am making books and maybe some better ones are in the pipeline.

Maybe I'll develop more strength and be a help, good example to this movement, and therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa, Lord Caitanya, and Śrīla Prabhupāda want me to stay on.

I certainly can't control my own destiny, although I have a part in it. "Man is the architect of his own fortune," is one saying, but—only Providence's sanction will determine whether your boat sinks, whether you live or die.

*Ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam . . .*

You can't write your little marks.

Marks of Nṛsiṃha on the chest of Chand Kazi. Stripes of whips on back of Lord Caitanya (?)—He took them for Haridāsa Thākura?

This WS you look to others for ideas. But it's best you just accept the steady trickle. There may be a pause for when new water comes—like you in this

house, allowed choking of air, the pipe rattles and then finally it gushes out, red-hot water, then again a blank space of air, a kicking and shaking in the pipe, and again it comes out gushing strong, more hot water than you need.

Cold and hot, you shiver.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is teaching and guiding the *Vedas* personified in their description of His nature and defeat of Māyāvādi philosophy.

He is the boy and man and daisy by His energy. But He is also not there in each person or thing. He is simultaneously, inconceivably, one and different from His creation and from His parts and parcels. Everything is Brahman because all comes from Brahman. Param-brahma and individual souls; spiritual and material energies . . .

*Ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam*. Śrīla Prabhupāda is singing now, and I'm empty, not on a God conscious prayer retreat flow like Merton says. Listen, don't rush along on a busy schedule, pray, and softly, slowly savor a verse of *śāstra* . . . okay, I'm doing what I can. I can still walk and talk a few *Gītā* verses out loud. Become familiar with them. Simple life and faith in it, even though it's not sensational. Sometimes you feel elation but Lord Kṛṣṇa warns even that may be material. Don't be depressed or extraordinarily happy about your situation in life. Devotees typically feel humble and low. But they fix their minds upon Lord Kṛṣṇa and praise Him.

Boy, it's hard to keep writing. You say you love this? How can you?



Write on topics in the mail. I give up trying to leap for moon. Settle on enjoying brief lunch tastes, hot soup again today, and then some rest and up and at 'em again. I woke and ask, "Is it midnight? Is it afternoon?" I consider what I have to do and not always with instant joy. Get up and go do it . . . you'll get into it. So many projects, and I can do one after another.

Ideal. Ideal. Compromise. The body and headaches. Yesterday sitting and chanting *japa* round after round. *Śrī-nanda-nandana . . . caraṇāravinda re.*

Will you send and receive letters forever? Will you balance an egg on a hiccup and die like a Pope (of hiccups)? Will you be met at an airplane and given a stale *capātī* in the rear of a cold van? Be in now moment, with always threat of head pressure wherever you attempt any little stress?

Oh, it's hard to write, but a hell of a lot better than working as a waiter or short order cook in McDonald's. That is hell.

I'm in heaven although I yawn and blink tears and talk of me-self.

You have more time to go. Good morning. Hare Kṛṣṇa, they greet you, another morning ticketed off.

Damn it, the pile is getting less and less. That's why you felt grave and stress when you spoke of international travel, because it's all limited. Jaya Gaurasundara dāsa can't live forever in Baltimore and put you up there for a few days while you answer mail. Your typists and editor and you, cannot

go on forever. You are growing older in so many dwindling ways, what do you think it all means?

Oh, another meditation on death, another writing exercise where you reflect a little on crematorium facts and then switch and say, "Well, not yet. Got a lot of work to do still." A honey, a honey. [?] *Śāstra* says at any moment, and not just for you but all your friends and followers and fellow members and fellow earth sharers like Jackie O. who died before I could publish my book mentioning that maybe she had cancer. The cancer moved so fast. And even those who stay around to the limit—no one lasts a hundred years—like flowers hanging on in winter, daisies still here and red berries, strawberry tree,

all is temporary. So Citraketu said, "What is a curse and what is a blessing? Since everything flows like a river and passes by, it doesn't matter to distinguish honor from dishonor—and it doesn't pay to lament."

The inevitable end of the temporary—think of it, accept it, and release yourself from misery and fear, which are indulged in by a crying *śūdra*.

You could write a little more. A Little Moor with black face and earrings. Othello from Brooklyn. Fiction and poetry too is a way to escape mortality. We think of the wall of what to write from actual life. Give us a break, make up a story, and you be the God author. That's crap.

Here is crap too. Your anus is not able to pass out much stool and your intestines don't have much of Kṛṣṇa fire to burn the food.

But still I hear the Kṛṣṇa book tapes, "The *Vedas* Personified," and I can't remember any of it except I believe it at the moment I hear it.

The God is person.

The Brahman, His energy.

He in heart. Meditate on Him not as *yogis* do, on their own bodies . . . meditate on Supreme Person, not yourself as God. The *Vedas* personified said God is all, is person, and Śrīla Prabhupāda says it's Kṛṣṇa. If you don't believe, then tell you who you think is God or what is Kṛṣṇa's defect. He was so strong to combat them.

A football bounces crazily. It's autumn season, crunch of bones, I don't care for that sport. Want capacity to read, to read the books of my spiritual master like TLC. Gain ability for several sessions a day and write notes like,

"I'm reading and I like it. I did a half hour three times today. I like the philosophy and the way he expresses it. I feel Kṛṣṇa's presence and Śrīla Prabhupāda too. I recall the old days when Śrīla Prabhupāda was here. I have faith. The Lord is in the book and everywhere. I am getting 'lost' in this reading practice. Give me more time for it now, please, time so I can attain constant Kṛṣṇa consciousness by constant hearing and chanting."

Ideal? Well, let's approach it. Six more minutes makes an hour. You can dictate it right away or take your bath first.

*Dandavats*. His head on floor. Heart reserved. Let them see me, their long-lost brother. "Where have you been?" I've been around. And you? Bow down and a little hug and maybe eat together with your thoughts on your false teeth.

Iris. Pupils. Kneecaps. Rejoinders. Noodles of Chinese, the alert eyes of a Godbrother. "It's so nice to spend this time with you. You are so exalted. It's not easy to get your association. A pure devotee ..."

Is slop and crap on the floor.

Yeah, okay, I too love thee and it's rare, hey I do like to be with you after so much lonely indoors and alone time. Shake hands. Let's work and eat together and gossip and talk philosophy. Sure enough. And after an hour, you want to escape.

Escape liveness. Escape togetherness. Don't know my Lord directly, but sing this song to Him with guitar:

O God is ma friend  
and yet He is almighty,  
I do seek His touch  
and follow His ways.  
O God I do love Thee,  
can't sing like a skylark,  
please excuse my offenses,  
as I land in the clink or  
pasture.

Umpf. God is with all of us. Your free-write craziness doesn't make a bit of difference. Well it does, to me. So last minute I say WS helps discipline a writer, is not drivel, not ego, is *ceto-*

*darpaṇa*, a *bhajana* form, regular work with arm and feet. See you later.

(1 hour, Kenmare)

## October 5

10:44 A.M.

Go. Don't hesitate. M. is gone to Cork. BP and I in easy house. He's preparing lunch. Sunshine in chilly autumn day. I picked out quotes on Lord Nityānanda for our early morning readings. Asked for His blessings in a letter today. Each day a letter, grateful for this because it's directly share-able and yet personal from heart—it *can* be.

This? This is a WS and you know that means spotty, some good and could be shared, some not. I don't stop to worry about that. He may have the mail tonight or tomorrow. When it comes, I don't know how much WS I'll do each day. Would be good to crack right into the letter-answering *yajña*, put thought, care, energy into the replies. Not to simply get them done, but a worthy reply. Try for it even if I have to suspend the WS for a week. I can take them up again as long as I like and if Kṛṣṇa (*caitya-guru*) tells me it's not wrong. You want to do what is pleasing to Him.

Prabhupāda with *daṇḍa* standing by the lake in Chicago, wire mesh fence behind him. Some disciple's *daṇḍa* in his hand, summer, wears no sweater or *cādar*, what you can't see in the photo is many disciples admiring him during this pause in the morning walk. I like that photo now, he seems thin, you might say physically exhausted and quite old, yet he's upright, spritely, and doing his ecstatic business for as long as he can, as long as Kṛṣṇa

allows. Our spiritual master and founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON. He'd just been on radio and T.V. with his shocking opinions about equality of women. Prabhupāda and his disciples . . .

Me too, despite mental hang-ups. That was 1975. I was doing pretty well with the library party traveling across the U.S. Or was it in '76? Doesn't matter.

I was formed by him. My approach to KC theology and personal inner development, *vaidhī-bhakti* understanding and practice, etc., was all directed by him. So I don't want to abandon that or even jump from it to take guidance from a *śikṣā-guru* who would eventually form me in different way even down to some basics. No, let the formation I underwent so carefully and lovingly (both ways between Śrīla Prabhupāda and I—if you love me then I will love you) from 1966-'77 continue. Let me think whatever he taught was permanent in a personal way. Memories of our exchanges are very important. Yeah, and his books as I re-read them, as he wanted me to. Did Śrīla Prabhupāda in his later years read deeply in the *rasika* books? No. I cannot compare myself to him or imagine his inner meditation. Some may say he was always thinking of himself as a *mañjarī*; some may say, no, he wasn't. His whole being was absorbed in the preaching to deliver fallen souls. I prefer to say I don't know.

But he didn't give much emphasis to *our* culturing *rāgānugā*, *gopī-bhāva*. We make conjecture that it's okay for us to do so after his disappearance and it is even expected. But he taught in a certain way,

which was to emphasis Kṛṣṇa the Supreme Personality of Godhead as *rasa-rāja*, king of *all* pure devotees. Even if Śrīla Prabhupāda's inner life was centered on serving Rādhā as a *mañjari*, chasing Kṛṣṇa away from the *kuñja*, etc.—it's significant that he didn't write or speak that way. So if we are to very closely follow him and mold our speech and reading—and writing—after his, the example is clear. It's not concentration on *gopī-mañjari*, *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali*, *rāsa* dance chapters of Tenth Canto—but on *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and yes, Cc. and NOD. It's all there. Take it as he gives it and be satisfied with that—or go on to higher studies but not in his own words, not as he demonstrated. You do so with a risk of conjecture and making much (too much) of his saying, "Go to Śrīdhara Mahārāja and Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja for instruction."

Anyway, I am determined to do it his way and that's my adjustment. It was certainly a gain in education to learn the goal of life as *rādhā-sevā*, and how the Gosvāmīs cultivated this and the nature of those *rasika* books—if only to ascertain that I think I'm not qualified for it. My own resolution is simpler than that. It is simply the fear of straying from the exclusive, affectionate relationship I have with him and fear that it may get replaced by the intense loving relationship the disciples of Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja have with him. I have made my choice; I'll live with it. Prabhupāda, please don't abandon me now.

Lord of heart, please protect my affection for my spiritual master. And give me courage to perform



*acts* that will please him. (Yes, writing and reading and speaking and thinking are prime acts, and also bringing your body to the temples and with his other followers and related austerities of preaching and institutional life)

Brown hill. Browner than in early September? The book of birds and trees and shrubs. The news from Cork and from abroad.

We are all patient and quiet and self-contained. But I think we all are looking forward to the change of pace, even a challenge of it, in less than two weeks. You want to test yourself against some strain. Do what others do and prove yourself capable. But I also felt, when we were discussing travel plans, that one could avoid it all and stay in the life of chanting and hearing in a quiet place. But Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't do that. Took all risk.

Lord Caitanya sent Lord Nityānanda to Bengal; that doesn't mean Lord Nityānanda missed out on Gaura's mercy. It is better to go outside Vṛndāvana and preach—or outside rural Ireland—better than to stay in Vṛndāvana for your personal interests.

Heigh ho.

Heave ho.

The way is clear.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness my path. "Religion is nonsense," said Śrīla Prabhupāda in a certain conversational context. He meant that nominal faith, sectarian belonging. "Science," he said. Surrender to Kṛṣṇa is science. The fact that *jīvas* don't own anything; it's all owned by the *īśvara parama*—that is science and not a kind of faith.

"But people haven't seen Kṛṣṇa."

"That doesn't matter," Śrīla Prabhupāda said. You may call Him Kṛṣṇa or by some other name. But you have to admit Someone (God) owns all and you (*jīvas*) do not. That is science.

(Whether God is known as Kṛṣṇa and why, His specific nature as Kṛṣṇa, etc., this is higher discussion.)

So in that way, ordinary religion is nonsense. And so it passes on as such in the world, in the eyes of liberals and politicians, and especially intellectuals, the literati.

Anxious moments. The day stretches but doesn't have such great length. Like a smallish suitcase. You fill it as best you can with morning to evening activities. That's it, contained in one day and no more. No more room between 10:45 and 11:45. You may write in that time or read or chant, but you cannot do all of them and you cannot do even one of them unlimitedly. An hour is an hour.

Hunger is healthy. Some medicines promote appetite. How many *capātis* can you, ought you eat?

Commence. Begin. Scarf on and glove. The cold and fumbling over *japa* beads with thick gloves as you walk. You read one entry on "Writing" in *Wild Garden* and it seems somewhat "mental." But when you think it over, it's a serious and interesting point—that when you go to write, it is several times removed from life itself. From Kṛṣṇa conscious life. The limits of written expression and

how free-writing tries to cut through and make it closer to life. A worthwhile effort. My expression of this grew a bit tedious perhaps, but it's not a triviality or against KC. I get like that sometimes, strung out and not everybody would be so interested.

He's sighing and gasping (?); grunting as he concentrates and labors to prepare lunch downstairs. It takes elbow grease, to mold the dough, to flatten it out. I hear him laboring as I scratch away more quietly upstairs, no door between us. Next time we come here I will be downstairs with two doors separating me from them.

Last page in this notebook.

Park belongs to Gaurāṅga. Śrīla Prabhupāda on walks in Paris. Says everything belongs to God. Says they are *mūḍhas*. Says so many things I can't remember. I was there too, tagging along. Thank you, dear spiritual master, for not rejecting me. I want to continue *sannyāsī* work for you.

The bare bones. The evocative muse. Trash it is not. The pulse in elbow. Daily ablutions, moment to moment respiration and heartbeat, secretions and so on, they are not hateful or boring. They are precious for as long as we live. We don't worship them as *praṇa-māyā*, however. One doesn't worship a car sitting in the driveway. He drives it somewhere. The body is to be used to advance yourself in self-realization. And ultimate self-realization is serving Lord Kṛṣṇa. *Hṛṣīkena hṛṣīkeśa-, sevanaṁ bhaktir ucyate*. To follow Śrīla Prabhupāda also means to repeat key verses.

Cluster on the word, "to follow":

We follow the guru and that's good. But they don't. However I do. They are skeptical. They are also proud. Maybe they got cheated, or they couldn't find one, like Carl Jung in Calcutta. To them, "guru" is a farce, some Māyāvādi they met in India.

The Sanskrit word is *anu*. Little one. Where is originality in this process? It's in how you follow. You can do it well, and you can give your whole life. That's up to you. And you use your own words.

You can write a poem of your own. And your face. But so what if it's not original? Lord Kṛṣṇa is original, not me.

You follow suit. It's his way, but it's also mine. The follower is humble.

When you follow, you won't get lost. And we need a guide to get over the ocean of *saṁsāra*. The Absolute Truth comes down.

Is it more brave to not follow someone? What it is is dizzy death, sometimes suicide. Speculation. So I say don't be mad. Where did you go, Camus?

I do follow. I wish I could do better. Some rebellion in me?

You get to fill up a day in any case. Speak to a group of hippies or people who come off the street for lunch program. Your rhetoric, you seek examples to make it clear in an introductory way. They raise objections; you get enlivened answering their

doubts and it deepens your conviction—a preacher's ecstasy.

Or (also) you meet in your room with a devotee who wants counseling. Maybe a girl or a man. Say it's a valuable *saṅkīrtana* devotee. They want you to motivate him or her to continue at it because the temple will close if they don't collect their "*lakṣmī*" quota. Thus your preaching is motivated. What if she says it's too hard? What if she's your disciple? You mean, you won't give any advice? You just say, "You decide for yourself if you can do it. Go on chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. You have to have *some service*. Is this your service for now? If so, then don't quit it."

Balance, truisms. The platitudes you speak drain you. It's so relative. You feel cornered. You don't know what to say. Wish the counseling session were over. It's a duty, the hour task.

One does that as a service.

Another service is to write this instead. In this one-hour WS I don't motivate anyone. But it is just as lasting and does good in its own way as when you speak to someone to lift up their spirits. It's what I am doing. People may read what I write. They may not find out what they immediately need. At least I'm telling what I can.

No ink spot on finger from this pen. The other one writes smoother but stains you. Take your pick.

We are getting ready for India. What will you put in your suitcase and his suitcase? Take sleeping bags, sleeping pills, sleeping shirt, take mystic glue,

denture few, apple mew? Leave behind satchel of woes? Take stickers and transfers and port books? How much do they weigh? (all the way to Hinterland and holy *dhāma*. Make all those little decisions.)

Minute by minute. The blood moves and drops.

Did you cover that enough, the sketch of you or someone spending an hour active in a place like Soho Street and how it compares to writing a WS in remote place? I think I said enough. I don't say I am better or worse. It would be easy for the activists to put down the WS as personal B.S. or vapid or "not preaching," weird, etc. But I don't buy their analysis.

Lord,  
he prayed.

Give me guidance. To be a person who can be himself and help others also. I don't take all risks to preach. But I think my "preaching" isn't so significant. More lectures, more counseling, my opinion added and balanced by others, time spent in that way passes away, someone else could do it as well.

I therefore come alone and keep practicing. Kṛṣṇa, I want to be a better person. Read, then. He said householders should give money, and since I read it again, I'm convinced in it and can repeat it. You have these ready references as a result of reading.

How does the WS help? I am in touch with myself.

What does that mean? Means you aren't blind or robot or insensitive—you are satisfied. You are

striving, happy. Honest. Make something they can read. It's like that.

And it's not either/or. I do counsel by mail and do sometimes speak a journal introductory lecture. I'm a different one, on the reclusive side. It may be a strength or weakness. I try not to overdo it. But today we got two WS and I'm glad for it. World is added to? Subtracted? I feel devotion to my Lord.

(1 hour, Kenmare)

## October 9

12:06 A.M.

Write without thinking. This is recommended but the dead and killing—a fourteen year old Negro boy in casket or display—what's it called?—the wake, a file of young gang kids had to go up one at a time and look at him to impress on them what happens when kids play gang games and then adults of religions play it and big powers play, "I got the nukes," and everyone is killed, well, not everyone.

Devotees are spared the worst.

Where's your faith?

So far to go now, you who talk of benefits of his books, how you are satisfied by his books, now let us see you actually do it. That's the theme of the next retreat in two months. Preach and then go spend time studying. I will and can do it. Enter the tunnel of wonderment that enters into the spiritual world. *Śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda*, they gave a nice photo of a man reading to go along with my essay on reading his books . . .

Oh . . . you are back to WS after a few days away from it. Thanks to be back and search yourself in relation to Kṛṣṇa, you are His part and parcel. Nice classes to prepare.

Please, can you give a seminar?

Oh, I am not prepared, but if you give me a little time I could work up something from the prayers



of Prahlāda. Oh, that would be nice. Go over the points and what can you expect?

*Śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda gadādhara śrīvāsādi gaura*

I said I'd like to write something on Caṇakya. It came out clear how we could proceed.

*Haribol.* I am a devotee of my spiritual master. It's good you wrote a hundred poems of Prabhupāda. Why not start another collection, 108 poems? You were doing two a day along with other things you wrote. It was nice how those poems followed your travel route and gave little descriptions of the temples you were visiting and how it was connected to His Divine Grace. Yes, it could be done; starting in Rome as we go to travel.

May I be able to write un-self-conscious pieces, WS and others as I go along. It's best to be not attached to being praised or blamed. Then why did you defend yourself against TD's book review and reprimand him? I thought I ought to do it, I'm supposed to be some kind of teacher for him and he could use some straightening out.

It's a risky role the managers play, but they have to do it. For the sake of love they get angry with a subordinate. It's spiritual. But I am out of it. I write and published, "I'm not into management." Let anyone try to drag me in. They preface a heavy statement, "I hope this doesn't give you a headache," and then dump it on me and the opening line is almost like, "Here, I'm going to give you a

headache." But I'm learning to wear a Nārāyaṇa-kavaca armor shield. Don't tread on me.

After this hour we will read in Śrīla Prabhupāda. Ride in back seat of this Sedan called WS. Walk this WS gait road. Imply. Write a letter to. Glorify. Match. Match a couple for marriage (tie the *dhōtī* and *sārī* together har har).

Durgā Durgā, plague, Calcutta  
at normal, the taxi keeps us  
distant but not so distant as you  
roll through, roll on through the  
poems giving you impetus to  
write your own. Kṛṣṇa  
poems, Prabhupāda poems.

This is not managing blues. It's up early, I do declare. Fist fight I do abjure. Nonviolent stance, Stafford and other CO's didn't go to war or army, had to serve some other way.

And they wrote poems.

I have the books in the service. Dear disciples, thank you for coming to hear from me. Swamiji charged a fee of one dollar per lecture three times a week and then he stopped that after awhile. It was an experiment—or else how could he live in NYC? With no fee? A mere one dollar for all the knowledge. When I went he wasn't charging but I gave. Give man, give, put something in the basket from your earnings. You've got money in your wallet, didn't get mugged, not yet, but stolen from apartment. How you survived this far, luck of Irish.

Saving you so you could reach the Swami's lotus feet.

I do want to

I do want to lay low but I can make a few jokes about Centennial fanfare, what's the harm? Old conservatives may get back at me, a slap to the face like Ned Finly gave me but I'm more prepared, or should be, to defend myself.

Some criticize me that I don't stop out more on what they see as the wrongs of ISKCON. Well, I may do a little of that and not always play so safe. But neither do I want to play outspoken.

Be true on deeper issues.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is a person. You think of Him in His *līlā*. You pray by chanting prayers and mantras. You have to put your heart in it as Theophan says. Good stuff. Bring words into mind and bring mind down into the heart where you mean it (totally) as you say, dear Lord, You are great—the *chandah* prayers range from one *rasa* to another and don't stay on one. You lifted Govardhana, You stopped the *gopīs* at the *dhāma* pass and taxed them with their yogurt. Don't pass here, beautiful girls, until you pay a tax which Śrī Kṛṣṇa is collecting on behalf of King Kāmadeva. "We've never heard of any King Kāmadeva tax before," the *gopīs* said. This forest belongs to Rādhā. No, it belongs to Kṛṣṇa. They quarreled. Yes, but what about Śrīla Prabhupāda's books? Does he dwell on that sort of scene? No. Now you may touch on it or dwell on it as you see fit. I can't see myself telling it to an

ISKCON class and illiciting their laughs as I emote the mode and words of the *gopīs* party versus the cowherd boys.

So we were saying, I want to pray but not to a vague God. I replied, "Śrīla Prabhupāda teaches Kṛṣṇa is in our hearts and guides our lives and is our protector, is His holy names and Deity too—and all these forms we may think of as original Kṛṣṇa. When He expands, He's still original Kṛṣṇa. Get the point I'm making?" I think it is Śrīla Prabhupāda's way of presenting Him, *aham sarvasya*—the source of all. So it's the same Kṛṣṇa. Prayers to Kṛṣṇa are always appropriate, and even if you say, "When you say God in heart that means Paramātmā, four-armed form and we don't worship Him"—I may reply that they may think of Śyāmasundara there. But even if we see or read of four-armed form, that is also Kṛṣṇa. Don't be afraid to think and say in that way.

Kṛṣṇa is Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā is Rādhā, in all cases. She is in Him sometimes manifest and not. And Lord Caitanya adopts Her mood to worship Kṛṣṇa. Especially in Gambhīrā. I am fortunate to go to the land of Māyāpur. You will learn more about it. You will a better devotee. Yamunā-jīvana will be on traveling *saṅkīrtana* party and I will go on my own travel to Māyāpur. That's my nerve or courage, to continue to drag this body around, touching a headache in many different places and not having just one bed and one house, say at Gītā-nāgarī or Ireland.

He said, "Please stay here three months a year and attract people to come here." I said, I can't do it, not as easy as it sounds. I'd get dragged into the doom doldrums of the place . . . maybe . . . left alone. GBC men could call me by phone and drag me into their altertations and meetings, better to keep the wheels moving and the bones moving. Basho's

yol on a journey  
my dreams continue  
wandering over the moor.

I go forward, Santoka said, perpetual wanderer. Take up the spirit of some of his poems, as they wander under sky. I visit many houses . . .

Yes, but what if Gītā-nāgarī fails, especially as Centennial is coming, it would be a shame.

Yes, but don't pin it on me. It may not be a viable project. Too big, too centralized, no leader. I'm not the one to go down with that ship. I have declared since I left the GBC in '86 that my mission is different, is to learn and give lessons from the road. I can't be the in-resident guru . . . But I will make a gesture to stay there a month from mid-January to mid-February, worst time of year, could be beautiful if there is snow, and I trudge around on walks of my own and write WS and build up to two and a half hours a day in reading Śrīla Prabhupāda.

How about poems based on reading his books? That's an infinite world, isn't it? You may pick up on themes you are reading . . . well, I think it could be done within the broader "category" of "Prabhu-

pāda Poems." Often you turn to him in his books but not only there, also in other ways.

Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't write so much of his Guru Mahārāja but was always carrying out his order and saw it as the order of Lord Caitanya coming down in *paramparā*.

I do what is natural to me and as I am obliged. That is, I am dependent on His Divine Grace.

Work up your plan to write as much as possible as you travel, it's a good way to express yourself, "Hey, I'm on the ISKCON map," announced in "AF" that I went to Śaraṇāgati and hey Jaya Gaura, I am happy—and said JG and others are also happy to live in that valley. They welcomed me there to do my writing work. No harm in admitting that purpose. And admitting I am happy.

Envious people will try to shoot you down just because you are happy. But as poet you have to proclaim it so others can benefit. That is my version of preaching spirit. Say when you must the truth, word which may draw fire from others but you have to do it. There are times when it would be cowardice not to speak out.

But don't do it just to play some role or as reformer. Mainly . . .

Bhurijana said better not to get on soap box except for those who are willing to hear you or rate like that. I put it in books. Don't criticize others

with their Centennial plans. Just as they don't criticize me. Yeah, but . . . can't we have a little fun, just a little fun and speak our truth?

He's got a right to say what he feels like, "Everyone should give top priority to the book distribution marathon."

Interesting purpose. Should I remove all controversies from what I write? So I stay clear of fights, but because I shouldn't hurt anyone or criticize their service.

But by the admission, I sometimes say something that needs to be said. Don't have to wait until something becomes official policy before I adopt it. Bring relief to devotees who want to hear me speak my truth.

Please allow me the daring  
to pop a few balloons,  
I mean no harm and I can  
expect some loud balloon popping  
when I may not expect it or  
welcome it in my own ears . . .  
it's a game, a sport and I can  
play too although I'm an old cat  
and mostly want to be left alone.

The purring of the motor,  
the trip from Ireland to South  
Italy, we'll make it in three days  
in white van, here we come,  
hope to hold up for it,  
next Saturday morn we pull out.

Truth bearer  
angel of mercy.  
The *New York Times* burnt in the  
stove, I already pursued it  
and all letters answered.  
Ready sergeant, although  
we have not killed and  
have not saved except on a  
small scale with sighing  
insects and the effect words may  
have which I may not be aware  
of. To him who has . . .

You have five minutes left on this WS. Give  
thanks to be back at it, do at least half hour ones  
and don't use them just as brainstorm sessions to  
decide on some issues but as regular practice of an  
odder way of life, beyond the essay or story-writing  
. . . or day-planner notes, writer's exercises, but *bha-*  
*jana*, life-communing, prayer should be included,  
it's a way to do that.

And you'll be better for it each time, leave a trial,  
I mean a trail.

He can tell the others. Satsvarūpa gone to the  
woods, as a woodcutter, writer in a yurt, a French  
postcard I don't mean always what I say or what it  
sounds like, a Freudian slip, a crowbar, a cop chases  
a woman, a saw divides a board, the lady refused to  
sit on the temple board because she didn't want to  
get into management and make judgments. O.J.  
Simpson. Shot. Wright. You can stop. Praise Lord  
Kṛṣṇa, God of all.



**You have another two or one more minute.  
Praise Kṛṣṇa. Go now to the reading of *Bhāg.* well  
trained and let your hour go by in reading, leave a  
note.**

**(1 hour, Kenmare)**

## October 9

10:46 A.M.

We have one full week or less, because today is half gone. Use it as if it's still solitary mode retreat. Don't get carried away with on-the-road plans. Let M. do that on the telephone. I can confer with him but keep a part of myself removed. It's Sunday but there will be no feast items. If I asked for some, he'd say you got *halavā* yesterday and sweet rice the day before. I won't speak. You hear, mind? No feast and you don't need it either, you are a *sannyāsi* on a retreat.

But hot food and plenty of it at least, six *capātis* if you like. "And the main thing," I said, *πis* keep on reading and writing." You could even write a third WS in the day or at least two poem times and then go out into nature's backyard and pray with *Gītā* index cards; that's an important part of the day. And a second time for reading *Bhāg*. These composite activities make for a general kind of retreat pace, it's good and you will see how good it is when you leave here and all these pockets of peaceful study and prayer and writing are not available. But maybe some of them will stick to my *sādhana* in abbreviated form (one half hour WS twice a day, etc.). If you feel enough *mead* and taste you don't give it up. I'm hoping you may continue the *Gītā* prayer with cards in that way—or hearing your prayer tapes—but it takes solitude to do, alone somewhere to call to Kṛṣṇa, to hear from Kṛṣṇa,

the speaker of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Write a letter to Him? To the maker (Artist) of the beautiful clouds in the sky? To He who gives inspiration for poems.

You can write, dear dead animals, dear cruel nature, 7 A.M. dawn, neighbor Dennis, no. No cars. Books in the mail. Opportune phone calls. Dear last week, last days . . . unforeseen events, death or accident on the road . . . Dear *Bhāg.* selections, may I speak to you nicely before the assembled devotees?

Don't complain. BP was reading *Gītā* and I asked him what. He said Fifth Chapter and pointed out 5.20, to one who isn't affected by happiness or the opposite, he is a steady sage. He can do this because he realizes himself as a spiritual soul, part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. He's not attached to palatable dishes, takes what comes, pursues his Kṛṣṇa conscious duties, and prays to develop real taste for serving the Lord.

May I have attraction, devotion for hearing His pastimes and teachings. May I have compassion expressed in the preaching spirit. May I serve my Gurudeva with full willing obedience as his *cela*. Those kinds of prayers.

Keeping close to his chosen path, aided by close following of the daily schedule. I am going to talk about 1970 what I remember of the disastrous New Vrindaban meeting and the "medicine" (poison) dispensed there by the *sannyāsis*. The letters tell a story. I can try to recall, especially being with GBC members in Hayagriva's A-frame house. Śrīla Prabhupāda is not displeased with us. The GBC rallies

to counter what the *sannyāsīs* are saying. Almost everyone is growing a beard and looking haggard, and eyes downcast, new people leaving confused and not attracted. Tell it to Madhu to record.

Then you keep writing one letter a day on a tape for *Letters from a Sannyāsī*. Did five letters tapes answering mail. All free.

Ringaleevio, favorite game. He runs to the home base and if he gets there first without being tagged, he calls out, "Home free all!" And the catch persons are released. What is it, a kind of extended hide and seek? While the person is out hunting, a person in hiding may spring out and try to race back home before he's caught. It was called Ringaleevio, in Queens, New York.

Who knows why?

Old witch, are you coming out  
at 9 o'clock?

No, I'm eating my breakfast.

Old witch, are you coming out at  
10 o'clock?

No, I'm adjusting my britches and  
my flying broom.

Old witch, are you coming out at  
11 o'clock?

Almost ready, just setting the  
clocks and cats and the scares . . .

Old witch, are you—

Yes! Agh! Now! Here

I come to get you all!

Ahh! All kids scream and

scatter out on 76th Street  
running away from the  
running-after old witch.

We also played "War." Each country has a chalk-encircled space right in the middle of the road. He throws the ball down to the ground so it will bounce high in the air, and as he does so he says, "I declare war on—" We wait to hear which country—"Germany!" The ball bounces high, and everyone runs and the boy who is Germany runs to catch it and to run after the others, maybe he has to throw the ball and hit them . . .

All those scared and wasted useless times of games and screechy foolish kids in the streets. Stoop ball was more enduring, more of a steady sport like baseball with innings.

Ah yes, those streets and brick stoops made of maybe half a dozen steps.

Kṛṣṇa, I'm going to stop the reminiscing. I want to remember the spiritual world when I was with You or something like that, some original nature. I want to reawaken a desire and attraction to return to eternal service. I want to cast off all doubts and remember in strong *śraddhā* what You teach, what my spiritual master writes, and engage myself in suitable acts of writing—to produce something to help fellow members of ISKCON congregations. Individuals who may read my books.

Up, up.

I won't quit the books yet, but apply myself. Especially to reading in nice workman-like attitude, the books written by Śrīla Prabhupāda. Not workman exactly, but student, aspiring transcendental devotee who desires to enter the tunnel of wonderment that leads to the spiritual world. That's done by reading in prime time.

Early in the session, you have to stretch out over waves and roads

to say what helps, what is best

he . . . I . . . the temples . . . the hiding out from others (like ones of those games on 76th Street. Hide and seek with me and GBC members) and then release. Also hiding out is your inner self—it's covered and hidden and you are seeking it. Dear strong Vaiṣṇava self, humble pure self who is pleased only by the happiness of Govinda and guru—where are you?

O Gaura, O Nitāi,

please deliver this soul.

Let others pursue impersonal

Vedic studies or mount a

campaign for their own prestige

in power and temporary

gain. Let others rightly pursue

what is best for them at their

current stage in life—

but allow me the sanctity of

my own thoughts and goals.

May I seek and find

the real self and his happiness

when he may give up

all false things  
and serve Govinda  
by chanting and hearing and preaching  
the glories of the name and  
the *upadeśa* of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Get close to Prabhupāda. Remember where you were in the old days. Now tell, now praise.

Elm tree is beloved, the tree book says. In winter it looks like this picture of it—all bare limbs. Winter is like that although sometimes it snows. You don't know what the trees are actually doing. Mostly they are reduced in consciousness and buried in their barks, enduring the cold as they've built up resistance to it, and the animals like groundhogs are hibernating . . .

You may live a month at Gītā-nāgarī to experience winter privacy and being part of that community for a while.

All oaks all treasures,  
all bad habits—they  
are given up and Lord Kṛṣṇa will  
forget them if you will and with  
no fantasy-desire to revive them.  
No, I don't want it,  
I don't want it,  
it never made me happy. I  
only tried those sinful and  
illicit acts because I was  
desperate. No more bloody retell.

Rise up, my friend. Write through a half hour more. I attempted, he said, to write what it was like to live two years in the Walden woods away from civilization. Han Shaun [?] said I sit up here contemplating No-mind and Buddha-hood and eschew society and live frugally in the cold mountain, meditating and becoming lost in sky and cloud and rock and waterfalls, simple, simple . . .

And others say the same.

If you worship Govinda, your  
life is worthwhile.

The modern way to do it is  
given by our spiritual master.

All glories to Prabhupāda.

Can you give me a six-day goal and schedule of activities on retreat last days? I already did. You know what it is. Just fill in those activities and find quality in each one. They await you. Quiet is still here. Lord Nityānanda . . . play again the *Navadvipa-mahātmya*. Start it maybe tomorrow.

O Lord,

be peaceful, the *vata* man should get hot food, regular schedule, wear hat and socks to bed, no pasta or yogurt or raw food. Slurp hot cereal food, stay calm, don't let the confusion-prone, anxiety-prone mind of air go sailing into chaos. Order and the creative act of life of mind needn't be preoccupied with worry.

Wear hat and socks to bed  
and forget Ned and Dagney,  
lay your head amused on



the pillow and not concerns  
of bad days inhabit your  
flowing mental life but more  
*Letters from a Sannyāsi* flowing  
talk and prose, "Dear God,"  
"Dear guru." Let poems come  
out, you are a baker in the  
temple bakery, shoving loaves  
in and taking them out—creative  
plain good works like  
*One Hundred Prabhupāda Poems*.  
I am all for you.

Wear hat and gloves and socks  
to bed, be happy therefore  
brief nap and up and at the page  
of sacred Vedic literature—  
your drive contained and harnessed  
there, what Nārada said and  
you can read. Note down the attempt,  
"Here goes, another record,  
another prayer. Dear Speaker of  
*Bhagavad-gītā*, please let me hear  
You in my life. All glories to  
the Lord of the universe who is  
the son of Mahārāja Nanda—  
He is both, is all, is beyond  
conceiving by ordinary mind."

Oh, I am not a blank Zennist,  
I am not the landlord Dennis  
in County Kerry, nay,

but spirit soul immersed in  
*Gītā*, in hearing, in milk  
of *Vedas* and arranging my  
faculties to simple work of  
*upasana-kaṇḍa*,  
find a way to preach.

Yes, I like your nonfruitive approach in six days  
to go on reading and writing.

They may whisper loudly downstairs, I will write  
through it. Play a *bhajana* tape of Prabhupāda . . . no  
extra sweets needed, just hot food.

*Na dhanam na janam na sundarim.*

Happy to have written *Japa Walks*, *Japa Talks* and  
to be involved, embarked a current "Letters from  
dear rain, dear Lord Nityānanda, dear Gaura of  
Māyāpur, dear Prabhupāda in Śrīdhāma Māyāpur,  
dear speck, dear Writing Session, do thou behold  
sermons of freedom, in discipline of *bhakti*."

A house. A pill. The moon is expanding of *bhakti*  
as in the first verse *ānandāmbudhi-vardhanam*.

I hereby release  
disciples who don't want me.  
Let 'em take reinitiation, I  
can't officially approve that  
but release with no curse or  
even misgiving as far as is  
humanly possible. Don't  
want them to suffer or  
feel bad  
or me either.

Don't want them killed  
or with stomach cramps.  
"Brits quit Northern Ireland."  
Quit,  
quit my mind and let us  
worship in peace.

As for our own brothers,  
similarly, don't harass each  
other. Don't tread on me and  
I will refrain my chuckling  
tongue and cheek from teasing  
your management and you are missing  
out of fun of  
retreats introspective poems  
lonely walks you don't know  
how nice but neither do I  
know deep feelings you experience  
as Prabhupāda's man in dangerous  
world encounters as you  
preach despite threat,  
preach overcoming hesitant heart and  
actually save souls Now  
turning them to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I need a little fun and truth-  
telling and you do too, but let's  
cool it for any violent  
action of one on the other  
cohercing. CRdd knows  
how easy it is to wound  
another, to be wounded

by V., so she advises you,  
get it out old barbs. I made  
a good joke on fanfare of  
the Centennial—a moment of truth,  
but is it more than they can bear?  
I feel someone ought to say it—  
we will be worshipping him peacefully  
in 1997 and I even look forward  
to such normal pace.  
But you can't say the whole  
society's organizers are a hype.  
Just a little joke.  
Oh yeah?! Well here's a little  
joke on you, squirt—and  
they bash me.  
But I got to stand up for my  
private remark  
as truth speakers always do when  
they really need to.

Three minutes more. *Ceto-darpaṇa*. I will talk it  
out with Madhu who is organizing today he said. I  
will relax me spine and head and rejoice in six  
more days of these varied retreat activities. I will  
write to you, these things and you will see lines of  
poems forever more. Hally-lou-yah.

There is no recourse. Except the daily normal  
fare of heartbeat and talk if landlord insists, M. can  
tell him that we intend to stay and tomorrow, we'll  
tell you for sure exactly how long we intend to. It's  
a week to go. *Bhajahū re*.

Theme of this one: keep at last day's routine,  
except no feast, except . . . Praise Kṛṣṇa, ask about  
my poems' exposure and whether to tone it down,  
memories of childhood and rancor, better not  
indulge in them. Praise and write.

(1 hour, Kenmare)

