

ELECTRIONIC BOOK

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Every Day, Just Write

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A Lease on Life

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Also by Satsvarupa dasa Goswami

Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita

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September 22, 1998, 3:05 a.m.

Late start today. I want to start including a little reading of Vrndavana-related material every day, but otherwise, go with the usual flow. I feel I received a new lease on life, or more accurately, on the quality of life in this Wicklow house, when I discovered that the chest pain was not caused by heart disease.

Right now M.'s son is visiting for four days, and I'm feeling M.'s neglect. I appreciate that he has to give his son time because he has neglected that relationship for so many years. At the same time, this house is getting dirtier, the dishes go undone, and the tapes uncopied. I swallow my complaints in front of him, but I'm venting here. Even after his son leaves, I have to face the fact that M. now has many other interests and is obviously no longer absorbed in the menial life of the guru's servant-secretary.

* * *

4:35 a.m.

A new lease on life? Then approach Vrndavana.

Daily.

Are you *sure* you don't have heart disease?

A love supreme, a heart beat. Bradycardia "that's me, the slow heart beat. Brad Card with his Visa card.

M. and Brad moving into the twenty-first century. With his son along for the ride
"Colm Padraig, Padraic Colum. Inverted
columns of
the Parthenon.
The pyramids the
Grand Canyon.

Clinton has been shamed. The Army is republican. I link one to another even as my *dhoti* is tied over my right hip.

I yearn for God in a blue flame, but I'm no St. Francis. Just a little ISKCONite who wants to have his birthday party where each disciple (initiated) stands and speaks an homage. What's the harm?

September dwindling. The crisis hit Italy, but it's just a symptom of all of ISKCON's problems, which are symptomatic of the influence of Kali-yuga. We say our problems are caused by nothing but insincerity. We also say we have inherited our troubles. "Prabhupada said" is often not good enough for us anymore. The Chinese armies keep coming down over the border and we can't hold them back.

* * *

It was old times

Sing it again.

What, fifty years ago?

No less. You were

twenty-four out of the Navy,

twenty-five. Oh no, Stephen T.

* * *

Oh no. Gremlin axe "
"God, the Axe," I called
my prose-poem to
'Trane's Love Supreme.
And marijuana heaven was
hell. Alone. Didn't know
my dear friends, disciples
sunset years.

* * *

No more do I have to go on without God. As Prabhupada assured us, Krishna will personally deliver. He will. There is nothing in this age except *sankirtana-yajna*. Yoga is a farce, *yajna* a farce, meditation . . . only chanting of Hare Krishna and the active life of devotional service for Krishna. Keep at it, some kind of service for the Lord.

Yeah, I do keep at it, Lord. I beseech myself to keep going and swallow my pride.

That tractor keeps at it too, circling tighter and tighter around the house. It keeps me awake and my thoughts scattered. I want to know why Madhu doesn't tend to my needs and I have other worries about a particular disciple's income and service and that Stephen Spielberg someone sent me in the mail "stuff coming in and down and I can't get to sleep if I take that particular medication. And my lecture!

Perfecture. Me and St. Francis and
feverfew "get a ticket
to Vrndavana and never become stagnant.

I told my parents that there was no truth to designations like Ma and Pa, to Christian, Hindu, black, white.

Then what are we? *Gopi-bhartuh pada-kamalayor, dasa-dasanudasah* . . . At every step, there is danger. Karmic reactions are waiting to get us, new and old. Only the devotee chanting prayerfully feels relieved.

This drumming I hope doesn't
bring a headache to me
or disquiet to you,
gentle reader.

* * *

But we control our rage
and gospel shout
a *kirtana* well-behaved
before the Deity
of Radha-Govinda.

* * *

5:28 A.M.

My morning walk now and right through fall and winter will be to march round and round the inside perimeter of this compound. First I circumambulate on the boards placed tight around the outside of the house, chanting one round. Then I hit the gravel paths and chant *gayatri*. Then I encourage myself by making writing plans, then speak a "morning walk diary." It would probably be better for me to walk briskly "make it aerobic exercise "because that's the real point of my coming out here. But it's hard to see the flowers like that. These flowers are so tolerant as they stand through the driving rain or are blown sideways by the wind. Hare Krishna dasi had propped some of the more delicate-stemmed ones with sticks. If I walk too fast I might step on them, or trip over a stone.

O blowing wind, I didn't sleep well and neither did you. I can catch up on my sleep later, but for now, let me be grateful for the devotion I feel when I contemplate the service ahead of me today.

I heard that Krishna was tied by His mother to a mortar. Let's dip ourselves into the dust of Vrndavana and feel the peace, and for me, the flow of ink pulling at the feelings Krishna has given me. He has allowed me to make deft motions with my hand and wrist, broader motions when I'm holding a paint brush. He has given me air to breathe, food to eat, people to assist me, people to serve "and the knowledge coming down from Prabhupada "just so that I can have a relationship with Him. I am grateful.

O Krishna, in Her madness, radha spoke to a bumblebee, criticizing You. Suddenly the bee disappeared, and she thought it must have flown away to tell You of Her pain. When the bee returned, She thought it had come back from You and that, despite Her criticisms of You, You were still kind. Did the bee want to take Her to You? How sweet Srimati Radharani is to think of You in these ways, and how dependent on Your forgiveness. I too turn to you and to my spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada, hoping that You will forgive me my lack of devotion. Lord Brahma states in his prayers, "Lord, I am like a baby kicking in Your womb." A mother doesn't become angry when her baby kicks, so Krishna does not become angry either. Please forgive Your servant's transgressions.

* * *

9:10 a.m.

"Mother Yashoda Binds Lord Krishna." Let's read it. Or, we could sit here and think about why certain disciples don't write me anymore. Or we could read that book with the description of feverfew in it. Or go back to sleep. I am about to get a headache, I think. I also wonder why my chest and arm pain hasn't disappeared entirely. Peeved that the tractors are back. Maybe it's because the sun is out. They have to cut their hay or plant or whatever it is they're doing out there.

Sri Sukadeva Gosvami opens with a description of Mother Yashoda churning yogurt. "While churning, she remembered the childish activities of Krishna, and in her own way she composed songs and enjoyed singing to Herself about all those activities." (*Bhag.* 10.9. 1 - 2)

I think I too could compose Krishna conscious songs and sing them to myself. But I can't remember Krishna the way His mother remembers Him. My songs are way out on the fringe. I know a *kind* of separation from Krishna, something we call the "desert." I also know quite a bit about distraction (splayed consciousness). I have, however, heard stories of Krishna's direct pastimes. So let me sing what I know. Srila Prabhupada sankirtanam."

Srila Prabhupada mentions that Krishna's breaking the yogurt pot and being bound by Mother Yashoda took place on Diwali. Diwali is in the month of Karttika. This year, Karttika begins on October 5. So many ISKCON devotees will go to Vrndavana at that time. I'll go there too, but only in this volume and the next of *Every Day, Just Write*.

One reason Mother Yashoda composed songs about Krishna's activities was to remember Him all the time. Thus, while engaged in household tasks she could sing her Krishna-centered songs and poems. "This should be the practice of persons eager to remain Krishna conscious twenty-four hours a day. This incident shows how Krishna conscious Mother Yashoda was. To stay in Krishna consciousness, we should follow such persons." (*Bhag.* 11.9.1 - 2, purport)

Yes, hear and think about the eternal Vrajavasis, but know that you can't become them just by meditating on their *bhava*. For example, while Mother Yashoda was singing her songs and churning her yogurt, Krishna appeared. "He caught hold of the churning rod and began preventing her from churning." He wanted to suck milk from her breast. He began to do so, but when Mother Yashoda saw that a milk pan on the oven was boiling over, she left her son to take care of the overflowing milk. This angered Krishna, and we all know what happened next.

* * *

Visits To Vrndavana

My first sip of Vrndavana nectar will come from reading my own book, *Life With the Perfect Master*, which tells of my visit to Vrndavana with Srila Prabhupada as his servant and secretary. You don't just sail into Vrndavana with no austerities. right away I'm reminded of the fortune I experienced of being Prabhupada's personal servant in 1974 and how I eventually backed away from that service, finding it too arduous. *Life With the Perfect Master* tells how we arrived in Delhi, then started out by car for Vrndavana the next morning. I was seated beside Prabhupada. No doubt we were riding in an Ambassador. Try to imagine what it was like. I was young (thirty-four years old) and still enthusiastic about being his servant. I wasn't suffering from headaches at that time. (If I got a headache, I simply took an over-the-counter painkiller and it went away.) On that trip, Prabhupada remarked on an old, dilapidated bus we passed on the road, and how I took his advice to see India (especially Vrndavana) "in a softer, more kindly light" as loving. When he then asked me if this was my first time to Vrndavana, I knew he was watching over me. He didn't dote on us, but those few words were enough indication that he cared. Ah, I wish I could hear such words today! I seem to need more kindly words.

Because right now, I feel exiled from Vrndavana. I described my last visit to the *dhama* in *A Sojourn to Tapo-bhumi*. I won't be going this year "at least not

physically. The headaches come too frequently, and the pain stops me from going out on *parikrama* or even to the temple. I'm just too physically frail. I could live with that "I could easily stay in my room and soak up the Vrndavana atmosphere from there "but there are the controversies. This year they're probably heightened and more complex than ever. No, although my heart yearns for the experience of living in Vrndavana, I'll have to find that experience from this house in Wicklow while the neighbor circumambulates our house on his tractor.

* * *

10:50 A.M.

Sunshiny day. Devotees coming and going. I gave Hare Krishna dasi the jars of paint I've used up so she can refill them. I gave Aniruddha (who's visiting for ten days) a list of jobs to do: paint the *parikrama* boards, fix the desk drawer, make two portable boards for me to paint on "and I'm bound to think of a few more. Feeling outward, social, even exhilarated. Aniruddha told me that he spoke with a man named Mikey, who sold us top soil. Mikey was not impressed with our neighbor's leveling the old stone walls and turning his property into characterless grazing land. Mikey said, "Those walls have been there for thousands of years, and they weren't harming anyone."

Time for me to worship Srila Prabhupada, who makes sense of all this and who draws me to him.

* * *

11:25 A.M.

M.'s son. Wheels.

Deals.

Krishna consciousness.

Prabhupada gone somewhere, but we can join him.

But it's not cheap. There will be austerities.

Vrndavana. Don't stand on formalities. Nowadays we walk under the Bhaktivedanta Swami arch on Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg, but in those days we went to Vrndavana with *him*. We were so young in those days. Young and ignorant. Always competing with Godbrothers. We were headed for so much pain. Are we wiser now? Maybe.

* * *

12:05 p.m.

If you and Srila Prabhupada are present in a description or a photo, do you mind if we pay more attention to him? Make a terrible confession. You look to what Satsvarupa thought, even though he was suffering in material consciousness. Because I am me and want to know myself. I also want to know what I was when I was with him. That is an important, not much explored area. But yes, I am willing to hear what Srila Prabhupada said and did when I was present "me, the foolish bump on a log. "I thought of the descriptions of lush vegetation, *surabhi* cows with milk-dripping udders, ecstatic cowherd men and women "and I saw that the present Vrndavana was suffering by

comparison. Yet even I could feel an inkling of the Vrndavana atmosphere, and I recalled Prabhupada's writing that one cannot enter Vrndavana just by the external act of purchasing a ticket or driving there in a car." (*Life With the Perfect Master*, p. 56)

Just now I don't feel like reading the interactions between Srila Prabhupada and his servant. I want to read about Vrndavana-dhama itself.

"After Prabhupada's lecture, an American devotee visiting Vrndavana asked, 'What is the difference between Goloka and Vrndavana?'"

"None," replied Prabhupada, "but your mind is in America. Fix your mind at the lotus feet of Krishna and you are always in Vrndavana. Krishna is everywhere." (*Life With the Perfect Master*, p. 59)

* * *

2:40 p.m.

Srila Prabhupada explains that Mother Yashoda did no wrong in placing Krishna down to take the boiling milk off the stove. Both actions were for Krishna's service. "Sometimes one must take care of more than one item of important business for the same purpose In Krishna consciousness everything is dynamic. Krishna guides the devotee in what to do first and what to do next on the platform of the absolute truth." (*Bhag.* 10.9.5, purport) But Krishna, acting as a child, became angry, with false tears in His eyes, and broke the container of yogurt with a piece of stone. He took the stolen yogurt and distributed it to the monkeys. Mother Yashoda came upon Him in a solitary place, and when Krishna saw her, He ran away.

I'm reading, but I'm restless. I want to find fault with M., then with myself, then with that tractor-riding neighbor. I could go outside and see what Ani is doing. Is he painting the deck? I asked M. to tape up drawing paper in the art room. He taped up three of them, but left four undone. Most of my paint jars have been taken to be refilled anyway. Still . . .

Krishna is afraid of Mother Yashoda. Great *yogis* cannot capture Him in His Paramatma form, but Mother Yashoda is about to do so. "*Bhaktya mam abhijanati. Bhaktas* enter even the planet of Krishna very easily . . . "

She caught Him. He cried and admitted to being an offender. His tears mixed with the ointment around His eyes, and as He rubbed them, He smeared the black ointment all over His face. She threw her stick away. For His own good, Mother Yashoda wanted to bind her child so He wouldn't leave the house in fear. "Mother Yashoda did not care to understand who Krishna was and how His power spreads everywhere. This is an example of pure love for Krishna." (*Bhag.* 10.9.12, purport)

* * *

4:55 P.M.

I was weary, but after working for an hour in the art room, I feel more energetic. Painting enervates me. While I was in there, I was aware that someone was coming to interview M. and that they might see me in my "mad" mood, but I didn't care. I wanted to paint.

Played a tape of Prabhupada's '66 *bhajan*s. Felt them as I painted, so they went into the pieces "were parallel to them. I told myself, "I'm with you, Prabhupada. I feel your yearning, and that awakens my own harmonious feelings." The images that come out of these feelings may not be pretty, may even be wild, but they come from my communion with Prabhupada. I dance to his *kirtana*.

That farmer going over and over his piece of newly landscaped pasture. First he scrapes the ground, and then he tamps it down with a heavy roller. Then he scrapes it again, then again tamps it down. Will he ever be done? I guess he's planting grass for his livestock to eat. Whatever he's doing, he has attracted a flock of seagulls. They are out there pecking away between tractor passes.

Aniruddha came by and painted my walking deck a nice light green. I don't know if he plans to give it another coat. Will I be able to walk on it tomorrow morning?

Free-write, free wheat. Tangible Krishna shredded wheat, shredded secret office files, nail files, nail biter's records, secret women. ISKCON aflame with the latest every time you check your e-mail. They say Prabhupada this and Prabhupada also said that. Contrasts and counter-contrasts "the whole world can now get in on the debate, literally.

Pitaro nrsimha. Lord Nrsimha, please scratch out from my heart the unwanted things that make me unable to chant the holy name with devotion and attention.

One picture I drew I labeled, "Krishna and Radha." It was a childish scrawl full of layers and gouging, and yes, I dared to draw the Divine Couple. He is so beautiful no one can capture Him, so what have I got to lose? I also drew two *mandira* domes. Pictures of Vrndavana. Look at photos of Vrndavana and do your own versions of them, chanting Hare Krishna throughout.

* * *

6:25 P.M., Night Notes

Smooth sailing just now. Window wide open. Quiet "no tractors. No headache. I'll be alone in the house tonight with the holy name to protect me. "Don't expect smooth sailing," Srila Prabhupada told us in his hotel room in Jagannatha Puri. That was in 1977. But sometimes it is smooth sailing, as when Prabhupada crossed the ocean in 1965. The Atlantic was calm. Of course, that calm followed the stormy red Sea, where he experienced two heart attacks on two consecutive nights. *Padam padam yad vipadam* "that's the truth. I don't like danger; I'm such a baby that I'm always crying out to Krishna. But Krishna, I don't just want material relief. Hare Krishna. I want You.

Krishna, I bruised You just now. As I was reaching over to place Your flute and leaning stick behind You, my hand hit Your Deity form and You spun around. At least You didn't fall over. I'm sorry about the blindness of my hand.

Everyone to bed now. Let all the spilled ink and paint dry.

September 23, 12:05 A.M.

Reading further into *Quest*. The next section is titled, "Spiritual Solutions to Material Problems." This essay was edited from a room conversation in Geneva, Switzerland, with a representative of the United Nations. I was present for that conversation, and I

listened alertly, submissively, but no doubt aware that the UN man would never take Prabhupada's words seriously. Nevertheless, Srila Prabhupada gave advice. Mr. Hennis was diplomatic with Prabhupada, and he accepted his point that society needs a priestly or philosophical class. He dismissed, however, Prabhupada's statement that the slaughterhouse is evil.

It is, in a sense, hard to see Prabhupada as relevant. He doesn't try to make himself acceptable, doesn't "package" himself for a successful talk at the UN. Because he speaks openly against animal slaughter, we already know he'll get no support. Mr. Hennis wants to speak against poverty, but Prabhupada won't submit. Or at least he wants his guest to understand the link between poverty and sinful activities like supporting the slaughterhouse.

Do I agree with Prabhupada? I mean, is he relevant to me? Yes. And here I am, living surrounded by Irish cow killers. Do I not stand against it? Speak against it? Do I believe society can prosper and be peaceful when they are slaughtering so many innocent creatures?

In May 1974, in Geneva, I sat silently with Prabhupada and handed him his eye glasses or drinking water, recorded his talk, and tried to let his words enter my heart. I'm a quiet protester, I know, but I protest nevertheless.

Mr. Hennis: "Well, we can't be accused of engaging in sinful activities when we don't think what we are doing is sinful."

Srila Prabhupada laughed at that, "Oh? If you don't know the state laws, but you break them, won't you be accused?" The priestly class may teach us not to sin, but they themselves don't know what is sinful.

It is good that this talk, which could have so easily been forgotten, has been preserved for us.

Mr. Hennis: "You can't expect an international organization to indoctrinate people." Prabhupada said that an organization for peace and well-being should maintain a class of people who can act as society's brain. Prabhupada stressed that ISKCON could act as the brahminical class. Hennis barely found a way to sustain a brief conversation with Prabhupada, whom he saw as a radical religious proselytizer. I see Prabhupada as my spiritual father. He gave us the four regulative principles. Even when ISKCON is on its best behavior and at its most attractive, few people appreciate its insistence on following the four rules. That side of ISKCON life may never be widely appreciated. But we have to follow the four rules anyway.

In a talk with a few disciples at New Vrindaban in 1976, Srila Prabhupada said that the pursuit of modern amenities can distract us from the real goal of life. He said that city life breeds lust and anxiety. "Anyway, learn to love this natural mode of life, life in a wide open space. Produce your own grain. Produce your own milk. Save time. Chant Hare Krishna. Glorify the Lord's holy names. At life's end, go back to the spiritual world to live forever."

Which is better, the "advanced" method of life, where you continue in *samsara*, or the "old-fashioned" method, where you accept no more material bodies? With their dull brains, people can't understand the soul or transmigration. "It will take five hundred years to teach them this simple truth "their education is so advanced." Let me honor what

my spiritual master taught me by reading his books, living the life he taught as far as I can, and on the right occasion, encouraging others to do the same.

* * *

4:26 a.m.

I got through the *puja* and now feel purified in body and soul. I bowed down to Radha and Govinda, and tried to use my body and mind to make everything as nice as possible for Them. They have Their own mood. No one can enter into it except by exclusive devotion. As I worked, I heard Prabhupada dictating the forty-seventh chapter of *Krishna* book, which deals with Uddhava's visit to Vrndavana. The method of loving Krishna in separation as practiced by the *gopis* is the highest of all expressions. Lord Caitanya also taught this.

Srinivasa Acarya sang that the Six Gosvamis experienced *gopi-bhava* in *vipralambha*. They roamed around Vrndavana crying, "He Radhe!" "O Radha, where are You? O Krishna, are You by the Govardhana Hill or Yamuna's shores?" They always remained unfulfilled in their mission. They never said, "We've seen Radha and Krishna and now our work is complete."

We should learn something from their example. Uddhava spent several months in Vrndavana and engaged the *gopis* and other Vrajavasis in always remembering Krishna.

I . . . stone . . . *Krishna-nama* melts stone, so why does my heart remain unmelted? He's asking when *he* will make it. He's asking what *he* must do and where *his* strength is to accomplish it. And less noble questions. He bargains, looks for cheap redemption. Can You let me in, Lord, even if I'm not pure and surrendered and don't work hard?

Oh, you already know the answer to that.

* * *

Tired eyes. Keep treading the path. Words allowed. Hallmark. Santoka the *saki* drinker. A sad display. The old man in the house: "I ask you to honor his privacy." I mean, his personal, madcap painting. The luminous faces and forms on the white pages. O Krishna, let us join Your entourage. Let us . . .

They laughed and played. Business as usual. I'm alone. I'm with friends. Funny faces, freckles. I'm scorching the earth with my Sankarsana, dancing the *pralaya*. The man plays the violin as best he can.

Please stay with us and hear from the *gopis*. They told Uddhava that they knew that Krishna liked the association of beautiful young women, and that He must be happy among the enlightened ladies of Mathura, "who are more beautiful than we village girls. But does He sometimes think of us? Is He going to return to us at any time?" They wanted Him to resume His *lilas* with them in Vrndavana.

He's asking if he can understand this. At any rate, he lets it pass through him. He wants no other mood or attitude toward God but this one. All those other moods may be valid, but this is the one for him. We all must have our personal aspirations.

* * *

This house is filthy. I can't clean it. I need someone to come and do it for me. I'm too preoccupied with cleaning my heart. Don't ask me to stoop and scrub the floor or bathtub. That's too plebeian. I'm for inner beauty.

Yeah, mister, you devotees of Krishna have your own insular understanding.

In *parampara*, I say. This is neither India nor America. It's . . . this. We leave behind all that is not part of the pure Krishna conscious understanding. That's the way our spiritual master goes as he follows the previous *acaryas*. We can't place where we end up in this material world.

A moment wasted cannot be regained. Say, "Hare Krishna Hare Krishna." Even when you utter it irregularly you'll get benefit from it. He bowed down to Lord Govinda and Radha and Their *gopis* and guru and that killed all doubts. The Lord of all matter and spirit is enchanting Krishna wandering barefoot in the land of Vraja. We can never seem to estimate what that means.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

The routine for the past four days has been that Madhu stays overnight at someone else's house with his son, then comes in the morning to make my breakfast. Any routine is all right with me as long as I can maintain my privacy and my writing can continue. I'm faithful to my morning walks around the house. The boards are now light green. Ani said that particular type of paint was supposed to make them last longer. Without the paint, Aniruddha said, they would last about five years; with the paint, they will last up to twenty. I don't know if I'll be here in twenty years. Five didn't sound like quite enough, though.

This morning there are no stars *at all*. And no moon. Over our little wall I see only darkness. One thinks of different walls behind which people have been confined, like the Berlin Wall or any concentration camp or prison. Any factory. Any monastery. High walls. This one is okay. I like it.

Hare Krishna. They say this good weather may last another day, but then it will change. When has it not changed?

* * *

9:40 a.m.

If he doesn't have a birthday party, does he have to explain why not? If he's moved by an inner music, does he have to say what it is? How private is private? When he's tired and tried and his Esgic didn't quite knock out that last headache, can he just do Nothing, as the Taoists teach?

When the Lord of the waters decided there should be another creation, the *Srutis* prayed to Him to wake up. He created the universes out of His energies. It starts with *pradhana*. The *mahat-tattva* comes from that. The *jivas* were injected into matter (matter is foul and contaminated by death and other miseries, so material happiness was an illusion right from the start). There were innumerable *jivas*, and I suppose I was one of them, as were you. Each of us may at least trace our origins back to that relationship with God when we lived in His body as He slept on the ocean. But we

didn't love Him, or we wouldn't be here. rather, we loved ourselves. We wanted to enjoy what we could get from a material body and to feel a sense of control over the environment. That's the bad news. Now, is there an easy way to pray?

* * *

10:35 a.m.

Go ahead, cry on my shoulder, or at least tell me something. It's good to flow-create. When I complain that my servant-secretary can't cover his duties, it reminds me of the complaints I receive. For example, I often hear that temples are short-staffed, the few inmates feeling frustrated and resentful. What do I advise them? If they are there by choice, then they should do their best. They shouldn't overendeavor, and they shouldn't resent those who have made other choices. We each receive our own reward. Is that enough? The fact is, however, that the understaffed temple has to run on a less efficient level. Standards come down. But at least the few devotees living there keep the temples open in case better times are ahead.

Upcoming twinge. The Esgic didn't subdue it and now I can't try some other painkiller. I may have to skip the Prabhupada *puja* and go to bed.

Is that a car approaching? My ear strains, anticipating the gate bell. I'm not so eager to go to bed. What else can I do? If I push on here, I'm in for trouble.

* * *

12:40 p.m.

Maybe the head pain will go away, huh? I added an Imitrex. Don't like pain. I identify with my body. Side effects of that? Birth and death.

Can I play a *Bhagavatam* lecture while I eat?

M. just rushed in, will rush *prasadam* up to me (while his son waits outside), then rush off to Dublin, leaving me here alone overnight. That's fine, ordinarily, but today it may mean a day of too much quiet because of the pain. Of course, when I'm in pain, I *need* quiet. But it's nice not to be alone.

Couldn't read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* or Vrndavana literature to tell you something nice this morning. Strain in heart, poor memory, bad karma, and if I want spiritual life, I sometimes feel left behind. That's Kali-yuga for you. Expect it to get worse. More Bosnias too. Don't come back for that.

* * *

2:39 p.m.

Lord Krishna is unlimited in time and space, but Mother Yashoda considered Him her child and attempted to bind Him with rope. Mother Yashoda discovered that the rope was short by the width of two fingers, so she brought another rope to join to the first. I have seen beautiful earthen dolls of Yashoda and Krishna. They display them during Karttika at the Krishna-Balaram Mandir. I bow down to Him.

"Unless I agree," Krishna showed His mother, "you cannot bind Me."

"In other words, one must be in transcendental love with Krishna, but that does not mean that one can control Krishna." (*Bhag.* 10.9.15, purport)

He will reveal this more as we advance in devotional service.

Mother Yashoda kept adding to the rope, but it remained two fingers too short. It was a wonderful incident, and all the motherly *gopis* enjoyed it. Mother Yashoda was smiling, struck with wonder. Seeing His mother fatigued and anxious, Krishna finally agreed to be bound.

* * *

3:17 p.m.

Outside bench. A bit too cool for what I'm wearing. Ah, a clear head again, but of course, I paid for that. Now can I use the remainder of my day in His service?

The leaves are singing their *whoosh* song. Hare Krishna. Can I hear that song as if it were the Hare Krishna mantra? I chant myself, thumping my feet on the deck while the pieces of gravel to the side of the deck shine back at me, wet from recent rain. A bunch of blue flowers tosses its head. They learn to hang on by the roots and to take the wind's pummeling. Can we learn that too?

In the distance, the valley between hills has a sunshiny haze to it. I can see clumps of evergreens.

Mother Yashoda captured Krishna, and when He agreed, she bound Him with her rope. "How much do you love Me?" He seems to ask in this pastime. She seems to be begging, "Please accept my love and my service."

M. said he walked with his son to the top of the hill because Colm wanted to talk. He says Colm lacks confidence and blames it on having grown up without a male role model. Well, we are all handicapped in one way or another. We have all grown up absurd, agnostic, sectarian, dogmatic, without knowing God in almost any way. For some reason, we chose to come into this world and live with such handicaps. Now we have no other choice but to get on with our lives, depending on and turning to the Lord for shelter. He's the "real" and in our lives. We can ask Him to be there more "not to be there more, but to allow us to feel His presence more.

* * *

3:58 p.m.

Reading about Prabhupada in Vrndavana in 1974, me envious that he called TKG to talk with him at 4:00 in the morning and not me. I was just the menial servant, and although that sounds disadvantaged in some ways, it was I who could pack up and travel with him anywhere he went. I blew it showing that I couldn't take the austerity, neither as a manager nor as a personal servant. I always wanted my own space. Fervently a devotee of myself. An egoist of a small kind, yet fiercely attached. Now it has come out again by my reading this book. I was willing to pay whatever price necessary to have my own way. Now I have my own way, my own space, and my own private service, and still I think I have found freedom.

In Vrndavana I bathed in the cold February mornings outdoors and said I liked it. I accompanied Srila Prabhupada on his walks and spoke up whenever I was addressed. He

said he liked what I said. I enjoyed being a philosopher or even just a protagonist for him on those walks. Other disciples were also there. He often commented on Vrndavana itself. He criticized imitation Rupa Gosvamis and told us how we should live, what we should do. I recorded his comments. I should have recorded more of them, because each comment was a gem. People have been willing to hear from me because I have repeated what he said. "He lasted only six months, but it makes an interesting story." Someone said that.

Prabhupada also said something about Krishna being the spiritual master of the people who live in Vrndavana, even today. If they don't follow the spiritual master, what then? Vrndavana is Krishna's land, but they are committing sinful acts and receiving a harsh reaction. There is no greenery here. In the West they are ignorant. They are not directly disobeying because they don't know Krishna. When Srila Prabhupada told some of us what Krishna was, we gave up our sinful acts. He told us the esoteric meaning of Vrndavana. Look around and see.

Vrndavana can't be understood if you have material desires. Don't come here for that. It is *cintamani*. Follow the advice of Vrndavanacandra and broadcast his message if you wish to see Vrndavana.

* * *

Open the window and see the bright haze. Keep writing *something*. This may not be Vrndavana but a railway car of my own mind. Thirty years ago, Srila Prabhupada said that he was riding a railway car when he saw a man suddenly jump from the open window. "Might have been insane," someone said. Prabhupada replied, "*Everyone* is more or less insane."

I'm in the bedroom while Aniruddha is in my room fixing the desk drawer. He's also going to clean up the mess in the art room for me. I'm waiting for the impetus to get up and do something in here, but I don't feel any. Look at the bright bulbs "burning electric lights. Heard Ani scraping the floor downstairs. That encouraged me to become more industrious this afternoon.

Confessed to him my difficulty with Madhu's negligence. Got it off my chest, then decided to live with him in peace. I don't want to mention it to him because he's powerless to change himself and would feel bad. No need to vent at someone when you're not satisfied with them. Venting is only advisable sometimes.

One night in Vrndavana, Prabhupada explained that serving in the *dhama* is risky. He said we would make a hundred times more gain in Vrndavana than anywhere else, but if we were offensive there, we could also lose a hundred times more than anywhere else. Behave yourselves, he said. He also said that this is why there is an injunction that ordinary devotees not stay more than a few days in the *dhama*.

In my book I listed my duties: brought him hot milk and eggplant and *puris* after the evening lecture, cleaned his room, then saw him go to bed and cover himself with a quilt. Then I went to bed, still wearing my clothes and a hat, while praying not to try and cheat Krishna and become an offender in His *dhama*.

Now I have read all there is about Prabhupada in Vrndavana in *Life With the Perfect Master*. I'll have to dip into another book.

A hundred times more gain and
a hundred times
more loss
Henry
Grimes.

Sorry folks if I have to cancel my lectures on sick days. I may be back tomorrow if I stock up on Sumatriptans and Hari-triptans.

* * *

5:58 p.m., Night Notes

Painted while Aniruddha cleaned up. Couldn't relate so well to the *bhajana* by Srila Prabhupada with the echo effect, and I couldn't recognize the words he was singing. Felt resistance while painting, but I persisted. It was hard to feel the ease that "Srila Prabhupada is singing and I'm close to him as I paint." Still, it felt good to persist, to look for the breakthrough and feel underground faith break surface.

Near the end of the session, I became aware that whatever didn't come out now could still come out later. I could still add to the work I did today. Still, I don't want "later" to be a tacked-on Krishna consciousness or even comprehensibility.

I cleaned my brushes and jars while Ani cleaned the bathroom, so I thanked him for his help. Now I have to choose Radha-Govinda's clothes for the morning and move along. May Krishna be pleased with me and with all of us. I live with the hope that I'm giving something to the world.

September 24, 12:05 a.m.

Beginning the longest section of *Quest*. It's called, "Discussions on Western Philosophy and Science." remember, Srila Prabhupada's answers and remarks are off the cuff, and even those have been edited. I'm not afraid of what I'll find here. I have come to worship his words, to be creatively submissive, not to challenge. Those who don't understand this method of hearing from guru can hear from themselves, their favorite philosophers, and their eclectic cliques.

Freud renounced God's leadership and accepted the leadership of sex. "On the other hand, if we accept the leadership of Krishna, our life becomes perfect." Those who accept sex as their leader constantly talk about it, and "those who have accepted God as their leader will speak only of God, nothing else."

A tricky and important discussion will be Prabhupada's presentation of Jung's subconscious/unconscious. This used to mean a lot to me, and I thought it was a crucial area for investigation: the Krishna conscious version of what Western psychology means when they speak of the unconscious. Now I don't think it matters so much. I've accepted a simple definition of the unconscious as "everything we are not conscious of." This takes the term out of the control of Western psychology. Thus God is the unconscious to most of us, as are the simple and complex operations of the material nature. Gradually we become more conscious or aware of these forces. They are within us as a personal unconsciousness. Our karma drives us. All of this is beyond what Jung defined or

imagined to be the "collective unconscious." We can never know everything, but gradually, the Supreme Unconscious, God, reveals Himself to us, and both guru and Supersoul teach us of ourselves.

This still doesn't deal directly with Jung's definition of the unconscious, so let's hear about that. Prabhupada speaks of a "stored impression, a shadow or a photograph. The mind takes many snapshots, and they are stored." They come up, like bubbles in fermentation, even when we don't call for them. Srila Prabhupada accepts that Krishna or God is an archetypal understanding shared by all humans. "This is an experience common to everyone at all times."

We read this discussion about philosophers and see how often Srila Prabhupada agrees with their teachings. Jung gets particularly good grades. Some philosophers will get no agreement from Srila Prabhupada, because they are so far from the Krishna conscious *siddhanta*. The "disciple" (Syamasundara or Hayagriva were present, so I don't know which is speaking here) cites Jung as saying we need to awaken to our subconscious life and face it. Srila Prabhupada replies, "That is what we are teaching . . . the soul is in a sleeping state. 'Please wake up! You are not this body!'"

A human being can be awakened, but not an animal. Srila Prabhupada is not making a serious attempt to assimilate Jung before giving his opinion. rather, he is springboarding off the remarks his disciple makes about Jung and preaching Krishna consciousness. If we are hoping he will listen to each philosopher submissively before responding, first receiving an accurate exposition of his teachings and an academic, carefully logical treatment of his philosophy and how it compares to the philosophy of Krishna consciousness, we are bound to be disappointed. These discussions are not like that.

I find I don't mind. Actually, Prabhupada never said he was "learned" in Western philosophy, and whatever problems there were in how the philosophers were presented to him were our fault. His disciples did not always give accurate renditions of what they taught. They themselves prepared for these discussions by quickly reading a simple summary of each philosopher's ideas. Srila Prabhupada was only interested in preaching. Still, this is the longest article in *Quest*.

* * *

4:30 a.m.

We want to celebrate Krishna consciousness as best we can. That means letting go of petty differences among ourselves. We wanted to practice and Prabhupada gave us a chance. We wanted to worship Radha-Govinda and sing the Hare Krishna mantra. He allowed us, but it is up to us to continue to act on his mercy.

Chapter Forty-seven of *Krishna* book has ended and now I'll have to think of what to listen to next while I'm doing my *puja*. It's especially fitting to hear Vraja-lila at that time. After Chapter Forty-seven comes the narration of Krishna and Balarama meeting Kubja on the street. Somehow, I didn't want Radha-Govinda to hear that.

I have a small wardrobe for Them, but hope to increase it. Today, They are wearing light maroon and blue checks with the little blue flower patterns. Krishna holds His silver flute, buffalo horn, and walking stick. Srila Prabhupada is all in saffron as usual

"wool *cadar*, scarf, and hat. The weather seems cooler, at least from my room, so I gave Radha a pink wool scarf. Offered Them each one necklace.

Soon I'll go out for my walk. When M. comes, he should be carrying a week's worth of mail for me.

Hare Krishna. Motor running, as we say. My rounds feel slow this morning "each taking eight minutes, thirty seconds. Maybe it's just a physical thing having to do with my pulse or the Depakote. No passionate energy in my body. Can't move fast. Interesting. But it hasn't stopped me from linking one mantra to another, one round to another, during prime time.

Hare Krishna. Hare Krishna.

Krishna Krishna Hare

Hare.

Srila Prabhupada on a morning walk in Vrndavana "he said if we follow the process, we'll become free of *anarthas* and become fixed and determined. Then we will taste the holy name. This is Rupa Gosvami's formula, of course, but when Srila Prabhupada said it, we listened to him. *He's* our teacher. I could picture him and his disciples in my mind's eye walking on the road. I could almost hear people greeting them, "*Hariiii-bol! Jaya Radhe!*" To which he always replied, "Hare Krishna!"

* * *

We are entranced to know, sir, that you are going on your honeymoon, but please don't tell me the details, because I'm a *sannyasi*.

Did I blow my stack? Now quietly subdued. This world is such.

"If you don't work hard day and night you are considered a burden on the world," Gopala Krishna dasa said when Prabhupada requested opposition.

"No," Prabhupada replied. "You don't have to work like that."

All the hurts,

all the hurts. A tired man can sing like no one did before him

Hare Krishna sonnets and sonics.

The investigating committee checked him out, but came away disappointed. He applied for medical insurance because he was a vet. They looked him up. How come, after you were discharged from the Saratoga, they want to know, you never went back to the Tompkinsville reserve Center? Instead, you grew your hair long and moved to the Lower East Side. We never heard from you again.

It doesn't matter. I'm now fifty-nine and a member of the Hare Krishna movement. Just tell me how to get that insurance. Also, I worked for the Welfare department once. Can I get Social Security? Look up my records as a civilian. All these are affairs of my material body-self.

He leaped and prayed, but some thought he slowed down the action of the entire body of people who depended on him. I'm not sure if you know about it, how ISKCON fell and stumbled, but whether we go slow or fast, we should all continue. Because then we'll never be far from Radha-Krishna. They are always with us.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

I heard the wind, and when I came out, saw it swaying the tops of the plants in the garden. But no rain yet, so let me walk and walk, swinging my arms. This process is going well. All I have to do now is stick to it. Only a few stars visible, and even those are faint.

When someone says something important, we might say, "Put it in writing." We don't always trust the verbal statement. After all, talk is cheap. Sometimes, however, we refer to writing in a derogatory way. After all, it's just words on paper. Or we put someone down, calling them "a bookish personality." So many sayings about literature, pro and con. I just mention this in passing. We all live within visions of ourselves and others "like men in an ink drawing by William Blake. In my vision, a man looks over a stone wall and sees the stars, or becomes a shepherd crawling right through the inverted bowl which forms the upper firmament. Where will it lead him? To Krishnaloka, if he's fortunate. Even a fallen *yogi* is given a chance to perfect himself in devotional service. You know all this, but I'm telling you again for your good, so you don't forget it.

* * *

8:45 a.m.

"O Maharaja Pariksit, this entire universe, with its great, exalted demigods like Lord Siva, Lord Brahma and Lord Indra, is under the control of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Yet the Supreme Lord has one transcendental attribute: He comes under the control of His devotees, *bhrtya-vaSyata*. This was now exhibited by Krishna in this pastime." (*Bhag.* 10.9.19) Krishna allows Himself to be conquered to display His *ananda-cinmaya-rasa*, that which increases His pleasure. Mother Yashoda is situated in *vimukti*, which Prabhupada calls "special *mukti*," as a result of her *prema-bhakti*. She is therefore a *nitya-siddha* devotee, "an expansion of Krishna's *hladini* potency . . ." (*Bhag.* 10.9.20, purport)

Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is easily accessible to devotees, but not to *tapasvis*, *yogis*, or *jnanis*. Let me associate with the best devotees, who appear in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. I don't need to range into other scriptures or paths to enhance my spirituality. Everyone is searching for Krishna, but most don't receive direct *darSana*, and therefore relationship, with Him. He's the Supersoul, the heart of the *Vedas*. Unless we follow an eternal devotee of the Lord, "especially the inhabitants of Vrndavana," we cannot expect to reach the supreme position of associating with Krishna. Big demigods have exalted positions, so "they have some small sense of being like Krishna," but the Vrajavasis have no bodily conception. "They are fully dedicated to the service of the Lord in sublime affection, *prema*." (*Bhag.* 10.9.21, purport)

This is a wonderful purport. Sometimes I feel intimidated by an ISKCON preacher when he says we have to give up what we like or are and do as Krishna desires. Something about the way they say that makes me think *they* are not yet perfect, yet *they* are trying to push *me*. I don't feel intimidated when Prabhupada says the same thing, however. And Prabhupada assured us that if we are not surrendered, we can work at it gradually. What other choice do we have?

But maybe I'm too easy on myself. Am I clinging to a mode of life where I can "be like Krishna," the center of my little universe? I don't know, and I can't always analyze it. At least I like to hear of the pure stage where the Vrajavasis love Krishna and He becomes subservient to their love.

* * *

10:34 a.m.

Mail arrived. Someone feels I am not his disciple. I mean, that I'm not his guru. (Talk about a slip!) Someone says these letter exchanges seem too stiff and formal, but perhaps that's her fault. Someone else says I seem to live with "madness" in my writing, and yet another person tells me that she is engaged to be married, but her future husband says he wants illicit sex. What's my opinion on *varnaSrama* in ISKCON? Don't I agree that it's the only solution possible to our present crisis? Someone writes, "When you reply to my letter, please tell me all the details of what you are doing on the day you write it." All right, but what can I really say? My life feels private, not just because I'm alone and like it that way but because my life here is quite simple. Others may not really understand. They might misjudge it. I mean, will she think the art room is just more "madness"?

Soon time to worship Prabhupada. I had to cancel the *puja* yesterday. M. is out with his son, and it's peaceful here "another sunny day with plenty of wind. Maybe Aniruddha will come by and do some jobs around the house. I feel like I'm on a sailboat made of today. The weather is sunny, but the water is a little choppy. It doesn't matter, though, because Prabhupada is the captain, and he's quite seaworthy.

Krishna, Krishna. I did bat back (as in badminton?) a few letters. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

St. Francis on Mt. Alverno, barefoot, freezing, bleeding. His brother Leo, earthy, attached to the body, keeping watch because Francis told him to, and loyal to the end. And down here . . .

Someone says we have the wrong value system, that people are jockeying for positions too much. If that's true, then it makes me think I've already left ISKCON. Is that really what it is? The source of all our problems? Are we just a bunch of heavy guys, and now women, debating about what we need? Is our management still authoritarian?

* * *

12:03 p.m.

To write here I have to lean on my left arm, which causes a strain. Hurry up, then. Lean on your elbow. I have the front gate and the door to the house open. The door swings back and forth in the wind. I'm waiting for someone to bring lunch. Radha-Govinda's plate is on the counter, waiting and clean. Tell me what you do as you write your letter to me, she asked.

But there's a tiny hole behind my right eye. I'm not mad or even so detached from the world; I'm not ready or eligible to return to the spiritual world at any moment. It's not like I'm staying here only out of compassion for my friends. I am staying here because . . . I guess I belong here. The Lord seems to will my presence here. My time isn't up yet. I

have no guarantee that I'll be going back to Godhead at the end. All I know is that I'll try to write for Krishna until that time. That I know. Krishna redeems me when I write His holy name on my page.

The door blowing open and shut. Krishna and Hare. Here is a photo of a statue of Gopala Guru, here a *samadhi mandira* of a great saint. I wrote *Prabhupada Samadhi Diary* because I am loyal to the best saint, but that doesn't mean I should be dragged into any loyalty conferences. What if they decide that for me to be able to speak I should first live as they dictate? No or yes "what would I say? I simply pray for world peace.

Fifteen minutes before an estimated lunch time, I take a spoon of Lavan Bhaskar. I'm not going to tell her *that*. Perhaps I'll tell her that the day I wrote my letter to her, I wrote to many other devotees. I have a brother in Ireland "a Godbrother. Other than that, I spent time patching my quilt and worshiping Radha-Govinda. What is she expecting? At the same time, I don't want her to think I'm too formal. She'll become disappointed in me. I want people to like me, but I wonder why, if they want to know more about me, they don't just read my books. No, they want me to write an individual "book" to them. The fact is, however, that I don't really do that much in a day. Does she know what it's like to dodge pain all day? What it is to stay pure, not to manipulate others, to avoid debates? Does she see those things as virtues?

Well, it doesn't matter. Let each of us go ahead and do as we can, cultivating our small plot, protecting a few cows. We don't have to expect to instantly clean up the joint mess, but one step toward that will be to cultivate our own gardens.

Yeah, but we need temples. And it's important to take care of the devotees.

But who is the caretaker? We also have to take care of ourselves in Krishna consciousness. Start with that.

* * *

2:40 p.m.

Kuvera's two sons enjoyed liquor and young women in the Mandakini-Ganga. Narada Muni arrived and saw them intoxicated. He became angry and cursed them out of compassion. His curse was to become their cure.

In this chapter, Narada will denounce both misspent wealth and animal killing. Animal killers obviously don't realize the suffering that awaits them in their next life. Narada assures us that we don't even know to whom our bodies belong, yet we maintain them by sinful acts. Since Kuvera's sons had misused their wealth, Narada told them the benefits of poverty. He hoped his words would bring Nalakuvera and Manigriva to the devotional platform. Srila Prabhupada: "If we give up the association of *sadhus*, saintly persons engaged in Krishna consciousness, and associate with persons seeking sense gratification and accumulating wealth for this purpose, our life is spoiled." (*Bhag.* 10.11.18, purport)

Narada's curse was a blessing because he predicted that after taking the bodies of trees, the two sons of Kuvera would "be able to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vasudeva, face to face, and thus revive their real positions as devotees." (*Bhag.* 10.10.22)

* * *

3:40 p.m.

Will I be able to squeeze in a page out here before it rains? Sitting in a window alcove. Blustery winds saying something stronger than *whoosh* today. I can still hear the birds above the wind, but the blossoms are breaking and falling to the ground. Low, ground-hugging flowers seem to do the best out here. The sycamore leaves are the first to turn brown.

Say something more please.

Aniruddha is fixing the desk drawer again. M. is with his son, soon to drop him off at the ferry back to London. I have no material son or father. In the shelter of this alcove, the shelter of Srila Prabhupada, and the shelter offered by devotees who treat me as an elder, I live with the rewards of *bhakti*, dependent on Krishna.

Narada cursed those two aristocratic drunks for their own good. Maybe I too have to be pinched into awareness. Someone wrote me about the madness they detect in my writing. Do they mean free-writing, or was he thinking of the poet's "divine madness," as Plato called it? I "let off" as a way to escape the fray and the material so-called realities. But the wind pulls tears from my eyes, and I shiver. The ground now littered with polly noses. But the mist obscures vision. O Vrndavana, that special land where everyone chants the names of Radha and Krishna, and where they say Radha-Krishna enjoy Their *lilas* even today, that's where I want to be.

* * *

4:50 p.m.

The beauty of Vrndavana is that one can easily see things in relation to Krishna there "the blooming bougainvillea in Prabhupada's courtyard, the parrots in flight.

What about the fornicating monkeys? When I wrote in Vrndavana during the *Journal and Poems* days (1986), I was quite conservative, living the role of the ISKCON guru and GBC man. Since then, I have dared to speak out beyond the mask. In those days, I was worried about ISKCON; I'm still worried, but more optimistic. Someone wrote me that ISKCON is coming apart at the seams. If someone had written that to me in 1986, I might have told them they were dreaming, or even in *maya*.

"Vrndavana is the ideal place for the artist. Here, everything is already perfectly in place: an artist is one who sees it. And such vision is endowed by guru and Krishna." (*Journal and Poems*, Vol. 3, p. 258) The monkeys included "they are established as Krishna's playmates. He gave stolen butter to the monkeys.

All right, keep drinking water. You have to reach your two-quart quota. You'll live forever at this rate. In 1986 in Vrndavana, I stayed at Krishna-Balaram Mandir, attended classes, received a Lord Nrsimha *murti* from "Srila Bhagavan Goswami," and I'm sure met with ISKCON's leaders, both powerful and helpless. Where are we all now? Who's leading this movement?

September 25, 12:05 a.m.

Jung "encountered a formidable obstacle in understanding God's personality." If God is everything, how could He have a personality? Srila Prabhupada states, "God's character is transcendental, not material, and thus He has attributes. For instance, He is very kind to His devotee . . . " His personality is unlimited. Whatever small traits we have are but minute manifestations of God's personality. Srila Prabhupada mentions *The Nectar Of Devotion*, where Krishna's attributes are mentioned and five primary and seven secondary relationships delineated. We have such clear information about Krishna's nature and activities; there is no need to speculate about Him.

When Srila Prabhupada hears Jung's statement that he wishes he had a guru, he says, "The guru must be factually a representative of God. He must have seen and experienced God in fact, not simply in theory." Under guru's guidance we perform devotional service; we inquire from him and render service unto him. "The spiritual master teaches his disciple how to remain always in the ocean of God consciousness."

It occurs to me that I have taken up Srila Prabhupada's example of writing every day. I don't do it as deeply or authoritatively as he did in his Bhaktivedanta purports, but I write constantly. Surely I am following his example. He did many things I don't do, but this one thing I do: every day, I rise at midnight and try to dive into the ocean of Krishna consciousness through the gateway of writing. When I practice "writing while reading," I follow him even more closely. What he says about Krishna I repeat in my own words.

When we hear what Jung (or any speculative philosopher) feels or thinks about life after death, their understandings seem so tiny and arbitrary compared to the strength of Vedic knowledge. Jung was one man reading world philosophy and guessing about the nature of things, just one conditioned soul. He gave his opinion and nothing more. Srila Prabhupada gave us Vedic information. Krishna teaches the knowledge Prabhupada presented in *Bhagavad-gita* and in many other places. From Him we know that "once the body is destroyed, the same consciousness begins to work in another body."

I seem fixed in my present body; my consciousness dwells on its short history, its traumas, its impressions, tastes, and present condition. Let me not forget that this body is just one of many. The real "I" is different. Now I work through this body that was named Stephen Guarino at birth, but my consciousness should be transcendental to that identity and more in touch with the eternal *atma* and its loving relationship with Krishna.

Jung says, "From the viewpoint of the ego, death is a horrible catastrophe "a fearful piece of brutality.' Yet from the viewpoint of the psyche "the soul "death is 'a joyful event.' In the light of eternity, it is a wedding."

Srila Prabhupada says, "Death is horrible for one who is going to accept a lower form of life, and it is a pleasure for the devotee, because he is returning home, back to Godhead." Next bodies are awarded according to a superior order.

Jung speculates rightly that karma is personal: "When I die, my ideals will follow along with me . . . it is important to ensure that I do not stand at the end with empty hands."

Srila Prabhupada replies, "If you are making regular progress in Krishna consciousness, your hands will not be empty at the end. Completeness means returning home, back to Godhead."

Rain tinkling-now-blowing-now-tinkling again. I have the heat on to keep this consciousness situated in my human body. I am fit, in a way, to chant the holy name. Dear mind, I therefore request you not to blank out for the next two hours, but to pay attention. Be simple enough to hear the sound of the Hare Krishna mantra, and simple enough to pray, if you can. If you can't, then ask for Krishna's grace. He is already fully present in His names.

* * *

4:20 a.m.

Prabhupada is leading us through the jungle of Mayavadi speculation, past all pitfalls. Let's fw a while.

Detroit mansion tour "here Danny Fisher, Barry Fisher and their wives

used to dance in a mirrored ballroom. Just imagine that.

Words are to be used in Krishna's service, and only a rare person comes forward out of *millions*

to seriously claim spiritual life.

Out of those who come forward,

few are willing to do what is required "give up illicit sex.

And the two packs of cigarettes a day

Right down to none "same with coffee and meat.

If you're not serious, you'll find it hard to organize yourself around sixteen rounds

a day whether you work a job

or not. To keep that flame alive in Krishna consciousness means to have a Krishna conscious *intent*.

Funny. "I want to keep the devotees in stitches," the sewing machine repair man says. His customer stitches mittens, beadbags, and *kurtas*. The man said, "Stephen, do you act like this at home? Do your parents let you get away with that?"

"No, Ma'am." You know what it's like.

Isaac Stern was a good boy.

The pop-fiction-in-Ireland writer said, "My husband notices I'm getting more serious in my writing. I live my characters more openly now, and we're making bucks. That's what we like the best."

Did you say fiction? Bhakta Bob lit a pipe and sat back in a pub. They say if you breathe in secondhand pipe smoke, you will become polluted. The Irish Migraine Society said that the triptans are spawning a new generation of drugs, all of which can knock out any headache (if the patient can tolerate the side effects).

In Krishna worship, all the side effects are *sumangalah*, very auspicious. Today, my Radha wears purple and gold, as does Krishna. Peace to Their worshipers. There's a difference between *arcana* (more formal worship, for *kanisthas*) and *bhajana* (spontaneous loving service). At least that's what Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura said in his preface to *Bhajana-rahasya*. If we cannot meditate on what

Krishna is doing during the eight periods of the day, we can still be Krishna conscious twenty-four hours a day by doing whatever we do for His pleasure.

That's the only trick.

He was thinking deeply when he wrote that *adagio*. Did you notice? Meditating on the particulars.

Jung asked, If God is in all things, how can He be a particular person?

But He can. He can do anything because He is omnipotent and transcendental. We may belong to a particular time (and style "remember those thin neckties we wore in the '60s?"), but Krishna is above all time. He dances and sports in the forests of Vrndavana intimately, sweetly, with His lovers and friends. Face it, accept it, love Him, and join Him.

The devotees are the emblems of religion. Their behavior sets the standard. In Kali-yuga there is nothing as valuable as Vaisnava books and behavior.

Prabhupada, let us sing with Govinda so we too can become happy. Krishna is the Supreme Spirit, the greatest of the great, and to love Him we simply have to allow ourselves to praise Him.

Phyllis Greenfield, I got your message and the news that young Bhakta Hanuman is doing well. I heard the broadcast simple.

I will tell M. when I see him to cook porridge today. Why not also say, "Welcome back"? Play the timpani of hearts "be friends and be generous. Give your life to all the Lord's friends.

And in whatever time is available, offer something to Krishna with prayer.

We listen to our guru, who tells us this, but it's not always so easy. We see newcomers join, and fear for them. They don't know all the troubles we have going, and we worry they'll mistake those troubles for the real essence of this movement. It's hard to stay in this movement these days.

Smith Brothers cough drops and beards in color "my fingers grip for dear life the killing edge of a violin.

* * *

4:45 a.m.

Lester, leap "my heart, my heart, please be there.

You can't believe that man, always. He can't stop time. He's got the beat like no other. A jivey dancer, too. I know only what I read. When we follow him, we escape the blues. O Prabhupada, would you please teach us to dance like that? We want to escape extravagance and nose-crashing dives. Just to be simple devotees!

Seeing my books, he said, "So *that's* what he's been doing."

Smear. Clear. Krishna. So nice the devotees among themselves. Give a guy a decent break "he's trying to help and working within his limits. Don't give him a hard time. You'd like to be treated nice, wouldn't you?

Each devotee gave an argument why we could merge, and Prabhupada smashed each one. "Then I'll kill you, and you can merge!" Who is controlling you that you have to come under illusion, if you are God? Your *lila* is to *suffer*?

Those were happy days, but there were sad times too. All sailors had to report on deck, even if they were sixty years old and got headaches. The officers wanted to know about the Hare Krishna mantra. They knew we had learned about it in our cult.

Yes, we did, and it's sublime. Don't you think so? I mean, God agreeing to appear fully in His names? Not like He is in other things. His presence in *nama* is a full and liberal dispensation. *Purna-Suddha-nitya-mukta*.

Krishna, Krishna, Krishna. She wrote, "Please, please, please, please," again and again down the whole page. Then, ". . . very, very, very soon initiate me." I thought it was childish and emotional, but then adjusted that view. Maybe she really means it. Still, I told her to be more sober and to get a recommendation.

Because Krishna will come to you, even in the rain. But you have to be true.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

In the morning as I walk around and around outdoors, I wait to see when Madhu's light will go on in his hut. He wakes up with an alarm clock. When it goes off, I see a glint of light under the door. A few moments later, he emerges like a little man coming out of a cuckoo clock. We bow down to one another, then he rushes in to prepare breakfast, which I will offer to Radha-Govinda and Prabhupada. In the meantime, I tramp and swirl on the gravel, chant my rounds, enunciate my *gayatris*, then try to encourage myself to continue this writing. This morning, for example, I reminded myself to go on with the mix. I thought of it as cooking down milk into caramel. In my case, I never end up with a finished product, but the mixing goes on and on, pot after pot. I serve it out and the devotees say, "How did you learn to cook so nicely?" Practice. There is a method to my madness.

Remember mixing everything for those breakfasts you used to make in Boston? You put powdered milk into the porridge, used different kinds of grains, and at the end, dropped in the fruit and plenty of sugar. I make porridge differently now, but that stuff was good.

Of course, I know that Prabhupada speaks against hodgepodge, but he's referring to a mixture of philosophies "that kind of randomness. My ingredients are all Krishna conscious. Krishna also likes to mix *rasas*, and even within one *rasa*, different *gopis* provide different flavors. Nothing *rasabhasa* though. The demigods and demons churned the milk ocean. Some poison was released, but it was discarded and destroyed.

* * *

10:00 a.m.

Postponed reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* until I felt more like reading it "until I surrendered to Prabhupada and agreed that I don't have something else to do that's more important or simply much easier. It was good I allowed myself that time. I chanted a leisurely round, answered a few letters, wrote "Post-it" notes to Madhu, then felt the desire rise within me to go with the flow of Prabhupada's words.

Krishna went to the place where the twin *arjuna* trees were standing in order to fulfill Narada's hopes for Kuvera's two sons. You can't see Krishna face to face as a result of material asset or endeavor, but "if one seeks the favor of a devotee instead of directly asking favors from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one is very easily successful." (*Bhag.* 10.10.25, purport) O Srila Prabhupada, by reading your books, I am begging your favor.

Krishna dragged the mortar behind Him and uprooted the two trees. "All these are stories," people say. Srila Prabhupada replies, "Is it a story that you have a father? You may say so, but your mother says you have a father and it's a fact." Good reply.

"This is the pastime of Krishna known as Damodara-lila." (*Bhag.* 10.10.27, purport) Two effulgent persons came out of the trees, bowed to Lord Krishna, and offered their prayers, beginning with the words, "*Krishna Krishna maha-yogim.*"

* * *

12:30 p.m.

Waiting for lunch. Teeth loose. He actually split from ISKCON and is starting his own movement. They'll be allowed to have sex in marriage in his movement, even if they don't want children. In that way, he says, no one needs to become a hypocrite. And there are other attractive features of his movement. But he says they should be respectful of ISKCON.

I doubt I could do what he's doing; I couldn't get followers to mobilize even if I went on TV and told them, "Go to Mount Alverno and I'll see you there." I just couldn't do it.

I couldn't get them to raise the ante either. So I sit home and count my Depakote pills and my blessings.

At least I have a doctor who will write out the scripts and disciples who will sell my books. He told me, "You have a solid readership among the pierced and tattooed as well as the reading Indians." Well, good. And I have come to some peace with "got some handle on "the headaches. Now if I can just write a book, mount an attack, learn how to elicit the holy name's mercy, I'll be doing good.

And avoid becoming one of those who goes after power and prestige. Stay miles away from that stuff, hear?

Hey, no one wants to hear you speak on your alienation from or your union with the soldiers. rather, someone wrote, "If this is ISKCON, then I've already left."

Big deal.

We already knew that.

Besides, you can't leave "couldn't leave. You'll *never* get away.

Anyway, where's lunch?

* * *

2:55 p.m.

Krishna stood before Manigriva and Nalakuvera as a child still bound to the mortar. But they recognized Him right away as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. More of Narada's mercy. They prayed, "O Lord, You exist before the creation. Therefore, who, trapped by a body of material qualities in this material world, cannot understand you?"

(*Bhag.* 10.10.32) Lord Krishna reveals Himself to those who perform devotional service. "Even the descriptions of Krishna in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* are sometimes misunderstood by less intelligent men with a poor fund of knowledge." Go on reading, but don't forget to serve. Krishna will be pleased when you work out your sincerity through your activities.

"Instead of trying to understand Krishna in detail, it is better to offer our respectful obeisances onto Him, for He is the origin of everything and He is everything." (*Bhag.* 10.10.33, purport) Devotees accept Krishna's inconceivable activities in His various incarnations without doubt.

Krishna smiled upon hearing their prayers, and He remained bound by Mother Yashoda's ropes. He spoke to Kuvera's two sons and praised the effect of association (even the curse) of a *sadhu* as great as Narada. Krishna granted the two sons this benediction: "Since you desire to be always absorbed in My devotional service, your desire to develop love and affection for Me will be fulfilled, and you will never fall from that platform." (*Bhag.* 10.11.43)

* * *

3:35 p.m.

Push a little to get this page out. Tracks of chicken feet "not pretty print. Will you paint later, sir? At least don't be lazy. Do something, some activity in devotional service, something with which the Lord will be pleased.

Everyone talks about the best way to serve. Do I have a complaint? Perhaps I just want someone to approve what I'm doing. I live with so much indifference. Maybe that's really what I want when I say I am choosing to be alone. Maybe, but I'd accept a sign from the Lord or Prabhupada. I don't know. I just want the Lord to know me, my guru to remember me. I would just like to be able to take care of myself and yet do good for others. Is that so selfish?

It's starting to rain. I'm outdoors, so rain is already falling on this page. I'll have to retreat so my words don't get smeared.

I thought I could heal myself by talking to my pain as if it were a friend and nourisher. It didn't work. Now I talk to Lord Krishna. "Oh, please, You who do not appear in my life, the salt in my wounds, the taste of ecstasy, please sustain me with Your holy name."

* * *

5:30 p.m.

Painted three versions of Krishna with flute, one tan, one blackish, and the other more abstract. *Hari Hari biphale*.

September 26, 12:00 a.m.

Jung's concept of karma and rebirth "Srila Prabhupada responds, "If we can understand Krishna completely, we will take our next birth in the spiritual world."

Krishna will help us; He will instruct us when we are incomplete. By hearing from Him, our doubts will be removed.

We hear Jung's concept of persona, which he describes as the role we play in the material world. Prabhupada says our real persona is to be the eternal servant of God. In the material world, we play out the perverted reflection of that by becoming servants of family, society, and nation. Persona simply means *person*, and that we always are.

The disciple mentions, "For Jung, the purpose of psychoanalysis is to come to grips with our subconscious, shadow personality. Then we can know completely who we are." There are parallels or contradictions or absolute versions in Krishna consciousness of what Jung meant by the shadow or animus, but the game of matching them up is not so rewarding. Better to take Krishna consciousness straight and absolutely. The fact that a male *jiva* is actually "female," or *prakṛti*, for example, may be called our version of Jung's animus. One thing is clear, however: Krishna conscious truth is arrived at by hearing from the guru who represents God. This fact is corroborated by *sastra*.

The *sastra* presents clear, axiomatic truth. It reveals inconceivable reality. Our task is to render service and eventually realize the Vedic truths to whatever degree we are capable.

Hearing Jung's views makes me feel restless. I don't accept his incomplete views, and I want to move on. When I measure him against Prabhupada, his speculations seem feeble and nearsighted.

Thinking of Bhaktin Phyllis in San Diego. She seems to be becoming a serious devotee. I compose a letter to her in my head. I want it to be substantial, so that what she receives is *Siksa*.

The little pool of light from this desk lamp is fringed with darkness. It somehow makes me feel secure in this house.

The wind is loud out there. I'll go out later for a little circumambulation, knowing M. is in his house. Looks like a friendly day ahead.

Jung says this, Prabhupada says that. Ultimately, Prabhupada says, we have to become free of sin before we can approach God. "In order to approach the purest of the pure, one must become completely pure, and to this end morality and ethics are necessary. If you don't follow the four rules you'll fall down from the spiritual platform." Srila Prabhupada agrees with Jung when he criticizes atheistic communism and the socialist state, where the original, natural function of religion is replaced by immediate rewards offered by the government. Srila Prabhupada says the communists can't solve life's real problems. They don't know that religion is the intrinsic nature of the human being. Jung felt capitalism couldn't effectively combat Marxism, and that Christianity was no longer effective for modern man. He thought as a religion it had become too materialistic. He proposed a religion that was free from materialism as the solution. Srila Prabhupada: "That nonmaterialistic religion which is above everything "Marxism or capitalism "is this Krishna consciousness movement."

Now I, a tiny voice, say I agree with Prabhupada. But in 1998 I ask, "Where *is* the Krishna consciousness movement?" Many other devotees are wondering the same thing. Is it really collapsing? There are now so many schisms. At least we can know that everything happens by God's will. At least everyone can still learn about Krishna consciousness and practice it in their homes. I mean, we can still teach people to "just render service to Krishna and you will find happiness."

Srila Prabhupada: "The basis of change is the individual." We change ourselves, then the world. I agree with that. We have to face not only social issues but the personal issues of authenticity, surrender, freedom, creativity "and failure.

Jung says that material luxuries can cause distraction and that a spiritual teacher is required. Srila Prabhupada replies that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu requested everyone to become guru. Jung says modern man needs religion but finds denominational religions, with their archaic rites, irrelevant. Srila Prabhupada says religions are dogmatic because they don't have a clear conception of God. "When one does not understand, he cannot make others understand. But there is no such vanity in Krishna consciousness. Krishna consciousness is clear in every respect. This is the expected movement Mr. Jung wanted. Every sane man should cooperate with this movement and liberate human society from the gross darkness of ignorance."

* * *

4:30 a.m.

Oh boy, I'm lonely and nothing seems able to assuage it. I could go to *mangala-arati* tomorrow, but ultimately, only Krishna can remove the heart's loneliness. Let me try to fill myself up in some other Krishna conscious way. Just speeding through my day is not going to help. People don't really help either.

They try, though. People *try* to come together. Out of their own loneliness they meet others and exchange handshakes or milkshakes. And why not? But what about the fact that real love is reserved for Krishna? We have to seek it in our hearts and offer it to Him alone. Not alone, but you know what I mean. Feel lonely, feel vulnerable, and surrender.

Aside from my love, I offered Them a yellow dress with gold trim. When They are dressed, They do look beautiful to my eyes, and lo, I am Krishna conscious again, no longer alone.

I think the piece I sent to "Discovering Our Voices" might be misunderstood. In it I wrote, "Burn down hermits' huts," and, "A king and capital punishment." I could explain about persona in the notes, but that might confuse the reader even more. They might think I'm trying to tell them that they don't have to speak from the self. I don't mean that at all.

Anyway, I'll trust that they know me as an old friend. I don't quit movements and start my own. I jes' chew and spit this here tabaccy.

Old songs "how many can you guess?"

Cry!

Cry the beloved. I can't explain it more than that.

Three names for Krishna. I tried to get his mother to chant God's names

because Srila Prabhupada said

if you chant Hare Krishna

at the end of life

you'll go to the spiritual world

for sure.

It's the final exam, and everything gets tested then.

Think it won't happen for a long while?
Well, whenever it happens, all your flamingos
will be taken away "
nothing left to worry about
not even money.

That DOV piece was about this very important topic.
What about life after death?

That's clear too. Although Jung didn't know . . .

Flamingos lifting off. Those seagulls. At dawn "Krishna's eye a reddish glow. I stomp
around this deck as if I were Cap'n Ahab on his deck, looking for the white whale.

I'm seeking, yet not seeking God, whom I love and who loves me,
God who is the source of the creative . . . the one
to whom we want to go.

He'll shake us down and relieve us of desires to imitate Him or become "big creators,
like a Brahmaji in His service. We'll instead become little unsung *manjaris* helping
His *sakhis* . . .

This is not a position paper, though, because it employs too many personas. It's a
play-playful. I read *Govinda-lilamrta* with music in the background, but the music was
too loud and it didn't seem to be in the right mood somehow. read in the silence instead.
Trust me. I'm in line with all laws and canons. I do no wrong, and any that I do do, you'll
be able to spot immediately and rectify me. And don't worry, I'll be off this scene soon
enough and you won't have to worry about me any longer.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

We can walk, but our thoughts will go with us. Watch your step in the dark, though,
or you never know where you'll end up. You feel your body jolt from a sudden dip in the
road.

Thinking of the prose we could be writing that wouldn't be the same tired, step-by-
step exposition of a position paper or novelized scripture. Yes, we can write with the
"flash." readers will have to make the leap with such prose, but I doubt they'll be sorry
they did so. It's like readers of haiku who trust that their author's *siddhanta* will come
through in those seventeen syllables. Expository writing doesn't always satisfy. Too
much to be proved and argued, and we are tired of that. I don't want to confine myself to
only one viewpoint or to that orderly, same old way of expressing myself that doesn't
ever satisfy me. I want to speak in the immediate feelings that are immediately valid and
that don't claim to have the ultimate solutions for the social problems we're dealing with
in this movement and that don't bring out the old, tired insistence that everyone do
whatever it is one way.

* * *

9:28 a.m.

When the Yamala-arjuna trees fell, the cowherd people went to the spot. They could
not discover the reason that the trees suddenly fell, but Krishna's playmates told them

that Krishna had dragged the trees down by pulling the mortar behind Him. It caught between the two trees. "After that, two beautiful men came out of the trees. We have seen this with our own eyes." (*Bhag.* 10.11.4) The cowherd men, of course, couldn't believe it. How could baby Krishna uproot such large trees? Some of them thought, however, "Since Krishna was predicted to equal Narayana, it might be that He could have done it." (*Bhag.* 10.11.5) Nanda Maharaja smiled and released Krishna from His bonds.

In His wonderful, worshipful childhood pastimes, Krishna would sometimes dance or sing loudly at the older *gopis'* bidding. "To pure devotees throughout the world who could understand His activities, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, exhibited how much He can be subdued by His devotees, His servants. In this way He increased the pleasure of the Vrajavasis by His childhood activities." (*Bhag.* 10.11.9)

The pastimes of His carrying His father's slippers on his head and bartering with the fruit vendor are relishable to hear, especially when we hear about them from our Swami. The aborigine fruit vendor affectionately gave Krishna an armful of fruits, even though most of the grains He had brought to barter fell from His hands. ". . . and her fruit basket was immediately filled with jewels and gold." We should not make offerings to Krishna in a puffed-up mood, thinking we are doing Him a favor. If we give to Krishna, it's for our own benefit. Krishna is always happy (*atmarama*).

This is real Vrndavana "what is told in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. My diary accounts of visits there hardly touch the real Vrndavana. Srila Prabhupada says we can't enter the real Vrndavana by airplane or railway passage. If we carry *visayi* (material desires) in our hearts, we can't enter the *dhama*. Sometimes I have gone there earnestly, but still I touched only the surface. Now outside Vrndavana, I'm especially aware that if I go, I'll be distracted by the externals "my headaches, my physical "needs," the high stress of the ISKCON controversies and controversialists who gather around the Mandir. All these things make me stay away. But I'm happy I'll go eventually. By then, my desire will be strong enough to seek Krishna there despite the thorns.

* * *

10:20 a.m.

Sit in a half lotus and lean forward. Don't put any weight on that left arm. Be careful your breastbone doesn't curve too far forward. Write in chunky script if you wish, that's fine. Now give your cart of fruits freely and fully to Krishna, and may He turn your wares into love of God.

That sort of thing is what we're supposed to be doing.

Hare Krishna dasi is in the art room and may have already finished giving my Govinda an extra bath. I have to keep writing this for Him.

Now what? A new lease on life means a grateful heart, a graffiti-ed heart. I'm doing a title search. But if I have no other theme, then why pretend? These will be known as the twenty-one days during which I upped my intake of Depakote. Or the twenty-one days when September ended. When I was peeved sometimes. When I went off and on and felt grateful. When I slept in the bedroom but sometimes couldn't. When I was generally

very happy. During this time the following were the main news stories of the world and ISKCON . . .

If I die, I tell myself, well, all right, I'll accept it. Srila Prabhupada said if we had trouble at the end, Krishna would help us. I'm glad to hear that. Selfish me will definitely need help. Help! Hare Krishna! remembering Lester leaping in won't help me, but if I fashion a Krishna conscious song from that image, leaping myself into remembrance of Krishna's pastimes, then I stand a chance.

Radha-Govinda will soon be carried upstairs by Madhu. Then I'll dress and decorate Him, and think more about how a baby could have toppled two huge trees. Maybe Krishna did it, because it was predicted He would be equal to Lord Narayana. Krishna is Lord.

* * *

11:55 a.m.

Michael, the electrician, is here, wearing a cap indoors and full of high falutin' energy compared to a hermit like me. All my childish drawings are exposed. Just five minutes before he arrived unexpectedly, I had put up two far-out drawings on the wall. I'd really like to be left alone, tended to by a few devotees who appreciate me and who come and go. In the spiritual world there is a lot more socializing and participation, at least if you want to be part of Krishna's Vraja-lila in the more loving *rasas*. If you want to be a solitary, you get to be a bird hiding in a tree or a *Santa*-like creeper, meditating on the Lord, but not really saying anything. You get whatever you want, whatever you are. Krishna will arrange anything to please you.

* * *

12:30 p.m.

Read opening section of *The Dust Of Vrndavana* "poems about entering the *dhama*, the jogging elephant, the human corpse on the road, and the taxi *walla* passing a truck adorned with Siva. remember how I calculated this for the American haiku audience, who ignored it? It got fairly bad reviews in two haiku journals (although *Banyan Tree* got good reviews). So, for whom was this book written and designed? For Krishna and His devotees.

* * *

2:48 p.m.

Rohini-devi went to call Rama and Krishna, who were playing by the riverside, focused deeply on their games. When They didn't respond, Rohini sent Mother Yashoda to call Them back. Yashoda called Them affectionately to come in for lunch. "Your father, Nandaraja, is waiting for You. He has to eat, so You must come back so that he can eat." In *Krishna* book Prabhupada has added the incident that Krishna and Balarama started home, but Their friends threatened, "If You go, we won't play with You again." The boys turned back, and Mother Yashoda had to call them once again, this time with more insistence.

Next, *Srimad-Bhagavatam* relates how the elder cowherd men met and discussed the recurring disturbances in Gokula. Upananda spoke about how Krishna had been repeatedly saved by the Supreme Lord's mercy from the attacks of demons like Putana and Trnavarta. Now this incident of the falling trees . . . From this, Srila Prabhupada draws a lesson: "There have been so many disturbances to our Krishna consciousness movement, but we cannot give up our forward march . . ." People are buying books. "Thus there are both encouragements and disturbances. This was so even in Krishna's time." (*Bhag.* 10.11.27, purport) One might say that nowadays in ISKCON, nothing false can stand; everything will be torn down sooner or later except the essence of sincere devotees and essential practice. So we hope. No one need think he is impeded in his service to Srila Prabhupada. Go ahead, chant and hear and tell others about Krishna.

The cowherd men agreed to move at once to Vrndavana.

* * *

Autumn:
Even without tail feathers
the peacock struts.

* * *

Land of Vraja,
with his rear legs
the dog kicks up dust.

* * *

Is a poem better because a recognized critic says it is? Over the years, some of the quiet ones may come forward for attention, and our minds find new moments in old poems. Reading these poems now is like sitting in those same places in Vrndavana where they were written, again disturbed by flies and children, but capturing anything my senses could record and praying for an insight into life under the material covering. "Cool weather/ new piglets/ crowd the lane." They say a poet should edit out seventy-five percent of his poems. I'm glad I didn't kill the piglets.

* * *

3:40 p.m.

Windy again today. Valleys filled with a sunny haze. The gladiolas are dead and gone in the garden, the ground now scattered with berries. As I rounded the corner of the house, I saw a lone marigold. Laurel, holly, and bay trees remain staunch and waxy green. They too have a lease on life. The dictionary referred to a "new lease on life," but I don't have to add the word *new*. It's just a lease, from Him, and He will renew or terminate it as He likes. But yes, I feel that I have been granted an extension of time. I wasn't aware that I was running out so quickly. Now I feel I can stay here a little longer. Take precious breaths of clean air on a day like this. M. is listening to a tape of the all-

Ireland melodeon champion to hear how he does it. rather than paint today, I think I'll sit at the desk and do ink drawings. Then go upstairs to read. Saturday, Saturday night, Sunday. Let it be mild. Drink water. Get tipsy on air.

747 silhouette with its twin jet trail "where is *this* plane going? Down here on earth, at rathdangan, the wind could drive a man mad or lull him to sleep. Or to write.

O Krishna, the cowherd men decided to move from their homes to Vrndavana just to protect You. There were too many demons arriving in their current location. But You ended up protecting them all. The *gopas* didn't know Your immeasurable strength. They knew only their all-consuming love for You, expressed in their parental affection. For You and Balarama, for You and Radha. Tear-streaked cheeks, heart-heaving ecstasy "O Krishna. I read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* to know who You are to some degree.

* * *

4:45 p.m.

They have Irish competitions, so let me enter a free-writing competition in a Yank's department.

But I don't like to compete. I would want to come out number one, and they might say I was garbled, that they couldn't understand what I was doing with them funny words.

Back to writing alone in the attic. There I come out first and last.

And lonely "or at least, all alone.

They went to a harp festival, to an Irish football game. They went to the beer brawl, the Americans to the bear brawl.

I was divested. I sung under an oak tree, St. Brigid's in the background, in Tompkins Square Park.

I went home and cried not. Not any more. I don't drink beer. I drink water, but left my cup downstairs. I dipped ink into it. I can't comprehend why the hand draws what it does. It wants to connect things but can't. Something on the left-hand side of the page stays there, and something on the right-hand side stays *there*. Because I'm not an anarchist, it improves and learns to toe a line according to the Krishna conscious *siddhanta*. After all, I want to leave this world and go to the spiritual one. Those who go don't have Georgia on their mind can do that by connecting everything in His service. They are simple and fixed on that point, those who go back to the spiritual world.

I draw lines and connect them, waiting for the words to come over the computer of my brain. But I already have sent signals, such as, "Send me some Krishna thoughts in nice-sounding combinations. A little dreamy is okay, but something actual and home-grown." And so it goes.

Teenager and old man over the falls. The soul can't stay in the body any longer. He applies ointment to what he hopes is an injured muscle but not an injured heart valve, and thus feels his lease on life extended.

* * *

6:45 p.m., Night Notes

Everything in order? Don't make fun of me. Time and Death go their own ways and we have no control. How does an orderly man face this fact? Does he prepare to be controlled? Practice detachment. I like to think I'm being carried along in a gentle current because I'm on a safe boat. To stay on that boat, an orderly man doesn't party on weekends or at any time, and goes to bed by 7:00 p.m. after saying his prayers. He wants to just go on like this and living in a clean house, but he can't have it that way in the end. Even orderly men have to surrender control sooner or later. At least in his orderly mind, he can chant Hare Krishna and be carried to Krishna in his next life, his guru as his guide.

September 27, 12:00 a.m.

Socrates: "He Knew Himself "To a Certain Extent." Socrates opposed the Sophists, who taught that right and wrong were relative. Srila Prabhupada states that we follow Krishna; that is our religion, our right and wrong. *Dharmam tu saksad bhagavat-pranitam*. Socrates sought to realize the absolute good by means of the intellect. Srila Prabhupada states that Socrates "was a *muni*, a great thinker . . . People like Socrates are known as *jnanavan*, wise men, and after many births they surrender themselves to Krishna." Srila Prabhupada states that the soul and the spiritual mind, intelligence, and senses are all eternal. By the purificatory process one cleanses the heart and knows his eternal self. Socrates argued in favor of an Absolute Truth. "That is what we are also doing." The relative truth is the material energy. It may appear in this world as the all-in-all, but it's a reflection of the Absolute Source.

After hearing Socrates' convictions, Prabhupada remarks that his philosophy sounds like the preliminary understanding of the Absolute Truth, Brahman realization. Beyond this are Paramatma and Bhagavan realizations. By hearing about Krishna, we come to the stage of goodness, from which we can be free of the lower modes and be happy. "From the *brahma-bhuta* we can realize ourselves and then realize God." Srila Prabhupada is not a speculator or "original" thinker. He's perfectly repeating the Vedic Vaisnava *parampara*. He does it expertly according to time and place. He also worked with conviction, and convinced others to accept the Vedic version.

As his followers, we too are not "original" thinkers. Still, we must apply the teachings personally. That is, we must practice Krishna consciousness in a way that no one has ever practiced it before. We have no choice but to do that to some extent, because we are each individuals. We each have to struggle to overcome our particular doubts and to establish the truth in our own hearts. We each must seek to gain Krishna's favor on the *bhakti* path. We must do that as persons, but all those who wish to be successful will have to sooner or later find themselves treading the *bhakti* path.

"Know thyself." Srila Prabhupada speaks of the meditation by which *yogis* see the Supreme Truth within themselves. He admits that we can arrive at knowledge through introspection. For example, we can come to understand that we are not our bodies. By introspection, we can teach ourselves to distinguish between body and soul. By becoming introspective, we can learn detachment and get to the point of no longer hankering for anything material. But introspection has its limits as a source of

knowledge. To enter Krishna's abode, we must become purified *bhaktas*. We can only do that when we take shelter of a pure devotee.

A devotee is always Krishna conscious. "For instance, we are discussing Socratic philosophy in order to strengthen our Krishna consciousness . . . otherwise we are not interested in criticizing or accepting anyone's philosophy."

When we are Krishna conscious, we no longer accept the mind's dictations, and then right conduct becomes automatic. "Yes, as soon as the mind wanders we should immediately drag it back to concentrate on Krishna. While chanting, our mind sometimes wanders far away, but when we become conscious of this we should immediately bring the mind back to hear the sound vibration of 'Hare Krishna.' That is called *yoga-abhyasa*, the practice of *yoga*. We should not allow our mind to wander elsewhere. We should simply chant and hear the Hare Krishna mantra, for that is the best *yoga* system." (*Quest*, p. 170)

* * *

4:28 a.m.

Move along with no rancor or worry about what others will say. Execute your particular duty to write poems.

Radha-Govinda in any form. If you say the holy name in jest, while mocking, or even simply to end a sentence, you will receive benefit. If you go to the temple thinking Krishna is a statue, yet you say, "The Krishna-Balarama statue," you have pronounced His names and in some way thought of the actual, absolute Krishna. *Yena tena prakarena manah krsne niveSayet*. Somehow or other, chant and think of Krishna's pastimes. In *Bhajana-rahasya* Bhaktivinoda Thakura cites Gopala Guru Goswami's explanation that the Hare Krishna mantra refers to radha and Krishna. Krishna steals the mind of Radha, and Radha steals Krishna's mind. Krishna is Radha-Ramana.

Among the letters I had to answer was one from a *mataji* trying her best to manage her affairs with two growing children and no husband. Not an unusual situation these days, unfortunately. I told her to turn to Krishna. "But where *is* He?" one may ask. Just try and you'll know.

Nothing fazed him he
wanted only to remember Krishna,
Krishna, Krishna,
Krishna.

The *gopis* approached Katyayani and thought of Krishna. They saw Him as charming and funny, and so very beautiful. They loved Him, so they prayed to the goddess that He would become their husband. Imagine how the Hare Krishna mantra opened the way for them.

It was good this morning to hear so many points about the holy name. Makes me aware. Ajamila was saved because he named his son Narayana. India is so pious that despite strong government propaganda against God, the people still flock to holy places and *pandals*, even in the cities.

* * *

Here's a story: We cultists met and decided something had to be done, but one of our members decided he didn't want to meet. He hid in a tent in the woods so he could read and chant. All right. But wasn't he thinking about Bird's "relaxin' At Camarillo"? I wonder what you think of that?

Words always want to reason and explain the struggle to be Krishna conscious. We want to be overtly Krishna conscious, because that's the only way we know to please the Lord. But what we really want is to find that genuine cry of the self. It can't usually be done at meetings or by forgetting that you once heard Bird. We have to be who we are and offer that to Krishna "our intention has to be pure.

Hare Krishna, Hare
Krishna, he
cries and laughs
and life is like that "seemingly
free and yet structured.

I was in Belgium and saw trees and cows and ornate European banisters, was there at that *chateau* when the tourists came. Gave an orthodox lecture to the orthodox devotees and looked forward to lunch.

* * *

5:27 a.m.

Warm outside. It rained, so everything is wet. Let me walk until I'm tired. I'm already too tired to speak.

Went off into a fantasy when I heard a jet in the dark sky. I imagined it was from America, perhaps a fighter jet, and their mission was to drop a missile on me. My little flashlight going on and off as I walked around the house would guide them to their target.

But why would anyone want to kill me? In this reverie, I imagined that this volume of EJW would be lost. Then laughed and dropped that.

It's so dark out here you can't see anything. There are no stars tonight, but you can almost see the darkness being broken by clouds in the night sky. It's so wonderfully still out here. Let's accept the life we have been given for the time we have been given it, and savor it not for sense gratification but as Krishna's gift. Just as the Ganges worshiper offers Ganges water to Mother Ganga, let us offer Krishna back the gifts He has given us in the form of our creative and spontaneous expressions of love for Him. That and our proper behavior in His service.

* * *

5:40 a.m.

Lonely, but don't misunderstand me
O Lala. I do like you as
I used to
each of us, seated together
Lala, on the rickshaw in Puri
yesterday it seems, but ten or fifteen

years ago. Times have changed us. You don't seem interested in the artist in me, and I'm not a fan of yours, although I encourage you to realize your potential as an artist. I can't tell it all here. Some things aren't meant to be told. I mainly want to say that loneliness is neither your fault nor mine. It's a metaphysical reality that can help us in our Krishna consciousness, if we choose to adopt it.

* * *

8:35 a.m.

The old men, women, and children climbed onto the carts and, guarded by the men, started for Vrndavana.

Sitting here daydreaming that I had decided not to initiate anyone in Vancouver back in 1983. It had been my plan, but I was talked out of it. Even then I could see how things would fall apart in terms of my relationship with that farflung temple. I also no longer wanted to be part of the *zonal-acarya* system. And I didn't want to be a tool used by the temple president.

"O King Pariksit, when Rama and Krishna saw Vrndavana, Govardhana and the banks of the river Yamuna, They both enjoyed great pleasure." (*Bhag.* 10.11.36) When They were just a little older, Krishna and Balarama were given charge of the calves. "Krishna took care of the cows and played His flute, and Balarama took care of agricultural activities with a plow in His hand." (*Bhag.* 10.11.37, purport) They didn't waste their time by going to school.

Dark gray sky today, Sunday. I feel a burning on the left side of my chest. read anyway. The boys would imitate the voices of the animals in Vrndavana. Madhu's melodeon sounds drifting up on the wind. I have the window open. I seek Vaikuntha in this world. Dhanurdhara Swami said in a lecture that we should desire to hear the *Bhagavatam*, and if we cannot desire, then we should desire to desire it. I read out of desire. I don't want to cultivate attachment for another writer or another world. Give me Krishna and Balarama as young boys in Vrndavana.

While they were playing (after moving to Vrndavana), another demon arrived, hoping to kill Krishna. The demon assumed the form of a calf. Krishna approached him slowly, as if He did not know the demon's intentions. Then he grabbed the calf-demon, whirled him around until he died, then threw him into the top of a *kapittha* tree. Srila Prabhupada states that this was how Krishna got the *kapittha* fruits to fall. "The pulp of this fruit is very palatable. It is sweet and sour, and everyone likes it."

"After the killing of the demon, Krishna and Balarama finished their breakfast in the morning, and while continuing to take care of the calves, They wandered here and there. Krishna and Balarama, the Supreme Personalities of Godhead, who maintain the entire creation, now took charge of the calves as if cowherd boys." (*Bhag.* 10.11.45)

Killing demons appears to be routine work, and They did it without interrupting Their duties or play.

* * *

9:20 a.m.

Thinking I won't hold a Vyasa-puja ceremony on my birthday this year. Our society is disturbed over the fall-down of a prominent guru, and resolutions are being proposed to the GBC to curb the gurus' "excesses." Included in those resolutions is that gurus should not hold a yearly Vyasa-puja function. I don't feel like bucking that current and gathering the devotees around me to hear their praises, but I doubt I would cancel if I hadn't heard that that was one of the proposed resolutions. Anyway, I can tell my disciples to observe it on their own. Maybe in the future I will resume that function. Let's see what the GBC does this year.

Canberra. Why is that word coming to me? Then a sound-alike, cranberry. Foods, women's beauty, their old age. Focus of concentration. Migraineurs know when "it's" coming a half hour or so before it arrives.

It has happened. I mean, a change by which I won't follow through with a birthday party. Something spoiled it. Something changed the climate, and me with it. It seems better not to . . . Someone wrote me that they are glad I don't seek to be adored.

He wants to be alone to write. Doesn't come downstairs to say hello. Stays in his chair, where he creates. Each of us is actually alone. It's not just the poet's lot. But a poet's corner is not always the jolliest and most outward of places.

He stuck in his thumb, pulled out a plum, and said, "What a good boy am I!" Sorta Fratern.

College days.

The big worry is having to be born again, forced to suffer ordeals, many of which I am now free. I guess one's youthful energy helps you through. Prabhupada writes how Bhishma and Drona were going to get new, youthful bodies, so there was nothing to lament.

But there *is!* We don't *want* a new material body!

Just to go back to trying to impress girls (or boys, if you come back female). Having to figure stuff out all over again. Taking advice, being influenced, playing basketball and learning again to shoot it at the basket. Being stuck doing what others are doing just to fit in. And all children have to study and be afraid. Parental relationships are usually no picnic either, because just as your self is bursting its seams, your parents are trying to mold you into their vision of the ideal child. What to speak of the effect the outside world has on you. Yet to become free of rebirth, you can't merely have the desire to save your own neck. You need to develop love of God and you need to be compassionate. For that, you need guru. Where will I again find such a pure devotee spiritual master?

Bell ringing at the front gate. Did Madhu hear it?

Cars on the hill. Pen scratching. At any moment, in any position "look out the window into the mist and just imagine the possibilities. Hear that farmer on his small tractor up on the hill? He's patrolling his acres.

O Krishna. I was just saying that we need to develop love of God, and for that we need guru. Only the spiritual master can keep us engaged in devotional service hour after hour after hour.

* * *

11:55 a.m.

Last of the morning. Feverfew lifted me up today, but now I'm dipping again. Took a hot-cold bath, which lifted me, but felt fragile when I spoke into the box that calls my secretary. I wanted Madhu to help me decide whether or not I should hold a Vyasa-puja program this year. Madhu suggested I think it over. He thought I could do *something* on that day, because *yajna*, *tapa*, and *dana* should not be given up. Mother Yashoda reminded Krishna of this when He and Balarama were playing at the Yamuna and would not come home for lunch. She said Krishna should observe His birthday by giving cows in charity.

At the end of the conversation, Madhu added that I could attend a *bhakti-vrksa* meeting in Dublin if I wanted.

Anyway, who needs me, a caterpillar atop a mushroom sucking a hookah? He asked, "Who are you?" What did Alice reply?

Check it out. Size 14 dress. Slippers. Spiked high heels. She ran down the center of a Manhattan road in a panic. She was fleeing something terrible. Her guy carried a briefcase and glanced over his shoulder as he ran. Must be a stunt woman to run that fast in high heels. I'm telling you what I saw on a movie ad photo. I knew it was Manhattan because I saw the Manhattan Church. Were they fleeing the end of the world?

Oh, Madhu, will I call you to talk it over when I get my death notice?

Someone told me that a devotee at his temple suddenly received word that he had an advanced case of cancer. The devotees were taking turns trying to help him face facts. It took time. We want everything explained "how to depend on Krishna too. Do we have time to get to Vrndavana? In any case, can we sustain meditation on Krishna? It's never easy. The mind scatters into body consciousness and perhaps less than noble reminiscences.

* * *

12:10 p.m.

I see now how some of my Vrndavana haiku strain. They have haiku-like ingredients "juxtaposition of moods and the other required elements "but they feel suppressed within their three-line limit. They don't really have much magic. On the other hand, a haiku isn't meant to knock you out with virtuosic power. Just love it by trusting the author's sincerity. He must have had some to write like this.

A painting in his *kutir*:
Sanatana in loin cloth
visited by Krishna.

It's wonderful to look inside the *kutir* and see that juxtaposition of ancient days with modern. Juxtaposed: the material and the spiritual; the ideal pure devotee and my actual consciousness. Confronting these creates a haiku moment.

It was quiet
'til you awoke "
sparrow.

I *remember* that moment. I couldn't do it justice.
Singing softly

a *sadhu* bows
before another *sadhu's* tomb.

At least I wrote accurate pictures that can serve me now as I desire to think of
Vrndavana. Don't read them too fast.
I'm feeling steady again.

* * *

2:38 p.m.

One day while the boys were drinking water with their calves at a water tank, they saw a gigantic body appear. "They were afraid even to see such a huge living being. This was Bakasura, shaped like a giant duck." He immediately swallowed Krishna.

And right away, we swallow doubt: "Oh, how could this be? It is a story told to amuse and frighten children, no different than 'Hansel and Gretel.'" Now deliver yourself from swallowing that doubt with Krishna's help and the logic and arguments of the spiritual master. You're not the only one to suffer from indigestion. Balarama and the boys were also momentarily bewildered. But in their case, they were almost unconscious due to their love for the Lord. It is not incredulous that danger could come in the form of a giant duck. What do you want, a World War II B29?

Krishna became like fire in the demon's throat, and Baka disgorged Him. If we are inimical toward Krishna, He'll become intolerably bitter toward us. When Baka tried to stab Krishna with his beak, Krishna grabbed the two halves of the beak and pulled them apart, bifurcating the beak. The *gopas* and demigods cheered. As they returned home, the boys composed songs describing the glorious incidents of Krishna's pastimes. The innocent cowherd men thought Krishna had been saved by God's grace.

Rest assured, Krishna is always victorious over demons who attack Him, even if they come life after life. "In this way all the cowherd men, headed by Nanda Maharaja, enjoyed topics about the pastimes of Krishna and Balarama with great transcendental pleasure, and they could not even perceive material tribulation." (*Bhag.* 10.11.58) Srila Prabhupada says that all of us can be happy just by discussing Krishna's activities. As the *Bhagavatam* states, *anarthopaSamam saksad* (1.7.6), we don't need to practice austerities, which are difficult in this age.

* * *

3:17 p.m.

A few tiny weeds "clover?" appearing in the brown topsoil between our select garden plants. Who are you, a proprietor, as you stroll through the gravel paths inspecting the plants and savoring their names? Kashmir pine, one name tag says. Golden holly. "Sir James Sterling." Geranium. Laurel. No feverfew or morning glories or hibiscus. A few ruddy leaves, a few yellow, but most are shades of green. Sit on the cement of the low alcove, because the wooden bench is wet. Look out at the mist, which mostly obscures the mountains' outline. Someone wrote me, "I hope you are peaceful there, writing in the Wicklow mountains." It is so, and I am.

The wind today is a soft rustle in the leaves. It's Sunday, and Praghosa and his family have gone into Dublin to put on the Sunday Feast at the restaurant. M. off too, making

phone calls. After this joust in the yard (where I have counted up a hundred and eight mantras), I'll go in and paint, if Krishna desires.

O Krishna, I want to think of You. You killed a giant duck and all others who attempted to devour You. The boys composed songs proclaiming Your wonderful acts and qualities. May I bring my attention to Your names. Hare Krishna. This is another perpetually quiet day. rocks in the walls are piled one upon another like pillows. They're not hurting anyone, these walls.

* * *

4:42 p.m.

I did it, painted. The images "people might not be impressed by them, but so what? Gnomey. Did I want to please Krishna?

I added the words "Caitanya" and "Nityananda" to what I drew, and drew a portrait of Srila Prabhupada walking straight. Used no draftsmanship, so it really doesn't look like him but a *sannyasi* with a cane who could be like him.

Instead of using the sharp edges of oil sticks to fill in the faces, I filled them in with paint and a brush. I felt rushed, though, as if Time were at my back. Probably acted like the graffiti artist who's afraid the police will discover him at any moment.

Caitanya. They'll trace this art to the Hare Krishna temple. Now a woman may enter that place where paints are still shining and wonder, "Where is the explicit Krishna consciousness? Why all these ill-drawn gnomes with stumps for hands? Why not clear it up? Can't he draw a more complex human face? If not, why not learn or give it up? My eight-year-old daughter could do better than that. She'd at least stick to more Krishna conscious subjects "because that's what we tell her to do." Yeah, that's the way it is.

* * *

6:30 p.m.

Profoundly soft shades as I pull the curtains in the bedroom. "Something was always missing," says a Hare Krishna apostate when I tried to revive her love for Krishna consciousness. Only after I replied to her letter in an upbeat way did I realize how negative she was. She says she's moved on, because Krishna consciousness is not for her. Get it? Yeah, I get it.

What *was* missing? I'd say it was Krishna in her life. He was missing. May He still appear to her. And if not, may she continue to search for Him and not become totally lost in ordinary, material life. She said . . . whatever she said, I won't give up my personal search for Krishna. Okay, goodnight, and please keep well.

September 28, 12:08 a.m.

"Origen: The Original Christian Mystic." God is the Supreme Person, and we each have an intimate relationship with Him. Now we have forgotten our relationship, but we can revive it by practicing devotional service. Srila Prabhupada briefly explains the Vedic conception of the Visnu and *jiva* expansions. Then he likens the material body made of gross elements to clay covering the spiritual body. In actuality, the material

body has nothing to do with the spiritual body; it is but a contamination causing the spirit soul to suffer attachment and therefore pain.

I know about that. I saw my head and chest in the mirror last night. I'm getting bonier the older I get. Small red and brown moles speckle my skin. Not a pretty sight, yet this body is perhaps even more dear to me than it was when I was young, especially now that I realize just how frail it is. It's like a sacred cage.

In the Vedic conception, the human body isn't cherished in and of itself, but it is considered to be a good place to carry out one's devotional service. Maybe that's why I feel it's dear "I sense the opportunity, and that time is slipping away. I can't really appreciate how little time I have left in this life, but at some point, it becomes obvious that you are hitting the end. Neither can I fully appreciate that the soul is the real glory of the self. It will all be clear when it's time to die.

"Brahma-bhuta is attained when we no longer identify with the material body but with the spirit soul within. When we come to this platform we become joyful." (Quest For Enlightenment, p. 174)

The scriptures should be understood from a realized spiritual master. They don't need to be interpreted, but sometimes we don't understand something in them. That's when we tend to interpret, although the guru tends to clarify.

Origen believes in transmigration. Later Church doctrine held that one's choice for eternity is made during this one lifetime. Srila Prabhupada doesn't seem so interested in Church history "how Augustine denied transmigration, etc. He simply says, "Transmigration is a fact. A person cannot wear the same clothes all his life." We still want sense gratification after a particular lifetime, so we need to get another body in order to enjoy it. As stated in *Bhagavad-gita, dehino 'smin yatha dehe . . .* (Bg. 2.13) "So this process of transmigration will continue until one attains liberation and goes home, back to Godhead."

In this body I was born and named Stephen T. Guarino and baptized a roman Catholic. Now I no longer accept Church dogma in all its particulars. I believe God gives us many opportunities to both live for sense enjoyment and to experience material suffering. He doesn't condemn us eternally to hell for failing in this one human life.

Krishna is kind. I turn toward him as a sunflower turns toward the sun. But slowly "too slowly. Now the flower of my body is beginning to wilt. Where will I go next? It seems sad that I will not reach the eternity, bliss, and knowledge in my immediate next life. I am not yet capable of taking Krishna completely seriously. If I were to have a near-death experience, perhaps that would shock me awake. Or perhaps that would just be more graveyard sentiment and I'd get over it and back to my complacent self.

We have to make an effort to attain the Supreme. We have to try to make as much progress as possible. Do I see the spiritual world from the material world? Do I embrace the means and the end Lord Caitanya has given us "the chanting and hearing of Krishna's names, qualities, forms, and pastimes? Am I using my words and other energies in His service? Hare Krishna. Go and chant and don't let the mind indulge in matter. Cling to spirit by returning to the sound vibration Krishna. Pray.

* * *

4:26 a.m.

Jaya jagadiSa, jaya nrsimhadeva. Bones and body tired, but spirit okay. Mind feels satiated for the time being in hearing *Krishna-katha*, but spirit is still hungry.

A verse in the Eleventh Canto states that some of the Lord's devotees are engaged in devotional service while maintaining their inclination for sense gratification. But such devotees regret their sensual indulgences. They are on the safe side and will be delivered by the Lord.

How much of this can we stand? There is danger at every step in this material world. But the holy name . . . If you fall from a roof or are in a car accident and break your bones, or get bitten by a snake, and at that time you chant the holy name, you may die physically, but the *Bhagavatam's* author suggests that your death may not be so painful. Besides, thinking of Krishna brings you to His lotus feet.

Go on, tell us more. Do you believe this stuff? I like it and follow it. Dressing the Deities and hearing about the science of *hari-nama* "yes, I do believe.

Come on, tell us more. Where's guru? Where's the chow? Any women around? Is there an astrologer in the house? A newspaper? TV? Fly me to India and I'll give this all up.

But he said, "If you give up things related to Krishna, thinking they are material, your renunciation is *phalgu*, incomplete."

You guys have an answer for everything.

* * *

You pause and it's a space out. You need to concentrate on the Krishna science before you. Like Nitai dasi doing her tons of homework, and her mother not being able to help her much. Every devotee is trying to chant his or her rounds with an often unwilling mind. The holy name comes to us as pure but elusive Krishna. Our minds are godlike, ferocious, and now live to flex muscle. What does the mind really know? Nothing. It's not even substance, just a movement from give to take, from accept to reject.

Please.

Pure devotees pay the dues. Or they are granted entrance by past pious acts or the Lord's causeless mercy. They all met a pure devotee and took full advantage. Any of these. We shouldn't be envious of them, just come to them with our sincere brand of loving words and actions, all dovetailed.

St. Petersburg.

Fyodor loved that city.

Yellow fog

T. S. Eliot

Carl Sandburg

Robert Frost

I make music with ice sticks I mean

September has almost petered out and

a stout October will soon enter.

The oak trees have burnished leaves "see
how they are shaped? But this is not

Pennsylvania where you can walk in the leaves
because you won't find such piled fallen leaves
in Ireland in
this monastery.
Hare Krishna Hare
Krishna stumbling-mumbling "count that
quota and they are gone for the day "the mantras
I mean, that tick-tock of numbers.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

I was folding Prabhupada's clothes and facing the window when I saw a small bird pressing itself against the screen. I didn't know what it was trying to do, but it seemed like it was trying to get in. It was so small that I thought maybe it didn't know how to fly. I didn't like the bird clinging there, moving to different parts of the screen. Its white underbelly was buff, and it looked a bit like a mouse (another reason not to like it). Maybe the bird was attracted by the light. I turned it off. It didn't fly away. I was afraid it might poke right through the screen, so I opened the window and gave it a poke to chase it away. The poke knocked it back, but it immediately drew back toward the screen. I poked it again and again, but it kept returning. I decided not to worry about it. A few minutes later, Madhu came in and I called him up. I told him about the bird, but when I turned to the window, the bird was gone. Madhu immediately surmised that the bird had been eating insects that had been attracted to the light. So that's probably it. The whole thing was somehow an irksome incident, but I'm not sure why I felt so much agitation.

* * *

5:40 a.m.

At Jiva's tomb,
my knees touched stone "
the monkeys move in closer.

Maybe I only imagined that the monkeys moved in, but the monkeys are certainly a real presence in Vrndavana. I don't like monkeys any more than I liked that bird earlier. Sometimes they steal the devotees' eyeglasses, and they're always mischievous. What other small animal would have enough intelligence and ability to run up to a human and steal one of his valued possessions?

Poor people "supple, barefoot boys. My words try to grasp hold of the experience of being there.

Thinking what was it like
when he was here.

A frog jumps through the lattice.

I seem to remember that Alexis rotella liked that one. Dry frog "it happened. All right.

Locking the room
taking the dust
of the Vaisnavas.

Somebody else liked that one. Is that why I wrote these "for crumbs of praise? What about the ones no one loved? The three lines look so inconsequential on a page. They're just fragments of nothing. What could they possibly capture?

* * *

9:02 a.m.

"Krishna came out with an unlimited number of calves assembled." (*Bhag.* 10.12.3) Krishna's potency and space are unlimited, so don't think of this description as mythological or false. But if you study Krishna's potency with your limited knowledge, it will never be possible to understand Him. The boys would steal each other's lunchbags, but it wasn't meant to be cruel. They each got lunch in the end. In the spiritual world, the enjoyment is eternal and *brahman*. The bullying or play is *jada*.

We should meditate on Krishna and His activities. The quickest and easiest way to do so is to hear *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. "If we do not care about *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, we do not know what the next body will be. But if one adheres to these two books "*Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*" one is sure to obtain the association of Krishna in the next life (*tyaktva deham punar janma naiti mam eti so 'rjuna*). (*Bhag.* 10.12.11, purport) Srila Prabhupada advocates the distribution of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* as the greatest welfare activity. Somehow or other, remember Krishna at the end of life.

Yogis who perfectly control the mind will still be unable to taste a particle of the dust from the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We can only imagine the fortune of Vrndavana's residents.

Thereafter, the great demon named Aghasura appeared. He wanted to kill Krishna and His *gopas* to avenge the deaths of Putana and Bakasura. The demigods who drink nectar to become immortal were afraid of Aghasura, but the *gopas* were not. "Any material arrangement for protecting oneself from death is always unsure, but if one is in Krishna consciousness, then immortality is confidently assured." (*Krishna* book, p. 127)

* * *

8:54 a.m.

We prepare to be as comfortable as possible, but in this world, comfort is not possible. Krishna, Krishna "sages learn to chant. Some even voluntarily cause their bodies pain to develop detachment. The word *tapah* refers to a meditator who sits surrounded by fires on all sides. For us, Prabhupada taught that a little ease is not forbidden. Prabhupada didn't want us to become dry renunciants. He approved the library party's motor home, for example. He wanted us to be comfortable so we could work for Krishna without material disturbance.

I like that. So here I am on the uncomfortable floor in a half-lotus posture that squashes my right ankle, leaning forward over a 19 x 24 piece of Bristol board, writing this message.

And we just received notice that Caitanya-candrodaya will arrive on Wednesday of this week. He's going to set up an art studio in a cottage, and I'll go there and learn some

techniques from him. Sounds like fun. It may reduce my writing output, but maybe not. I'll have to see how much I'm able to do.

Read another chapter on rebound headaches. Of course, those who write about rebound in online medical journals have been through it all but have still found no relief from the pain. They say the pain destroys the quality of their lives. Things don't work out the way they advise in the headache treatment books. The sufferers do what they have to do.

Krishna, Krishna "Your name enters like drops of blood moving through my system. It becomes my life air, my thumping pulse and the source of my vitality. Srila Prabhupada says that those who doubt the statements of the revealed scriptures that the holy name can relieve one of all sins even when chanted negligently are not "in line." They think it's too great a claim. It's not too great a claim. It's the truth.

So listen to the scriptures and apply their instructions. Be happy. Canakya says, Happy is the man whose wife and servants are submissive, who is not in debt, who has a good stock of grains, who does not have to travel, and whose son is not a jerk. But most important is that he become the Lord's devotee. If our home life is a mess, we could live in a forest like Vrndavana.

Or Wicklow, which is quieter.

We could read *Bhagavatam*, even a pitifully small amount, but read it with quality. We could remember that Krishna has unlimited cows.

* * *

9:45 a.m.

May Sarton's *After the Stroke*. Kat Duff's *Alchemy of Illness*. Each tells a story and sells it to the class. "I was a wart . . ." "I was a lovely . . ." "I had St. Vitus' dance." I have chronic fatigue syndrome. I have word rot and the disease where you forget everyone and where you are and all you can do is chant Hare Krishna all the time. My disease is no joke, especially for those who have to pay my medical bills.

"My disease is that I cannot chant my rounds." Haridasa Thakura said that. In his day, the *kavirajas* gave simple, slow-acting herbal medicines and told their patients to trust in Bhagavan. That was India before the British.

I'm about to begin Prabhupada's *puja*. I don't do it while forty people stand around. It's just me and him and the clothes and warm water. His skin feels good. He asked me once, "Couldn't rupanuga take the library party around the U.S.A. [and you remain my personal servant]?" I said truthfully, "No, rupanuga is not motivated to do that." But I could have said . . .

This is the way it happened. Some flowers stand supported by sticks while others fall over. I am being saved to surrender to my spiritual master at the end. That Elias is portrayed as a real snake who betrayed St. Francis. Don't be puffed up and think you will do better for your spiritual master.

* * *

11:45 a.m.

Stay away from controversies. You want to ask for the latest news, but let it come of its own accord. Don't agitate the mind.

The typists are forty tapes behind me. I don't mind, as long as they don't lose the tapes.

Krishna told Jarasandha, "Don't talk so much. Those who are real warriors show their prowess in action. I can tell by the fact that you are talking so much that you are about to die, and it is useless to hear a person speak who is about to die or who is in great distress." So saying, Krishna and Balarama began to kill Jarasandha's soldiers.

In his *Srimad-Bhagavatam* class, Bhurijana Prabhu spoke on the chapter about the twenty-two *avatars*. He asked the students to write one sentence describing an *avata* of their choice. No one picked Kurma or Varaha. Some chose Rama; many chose Krishna. Some didn't want to speak at all. He coaxed them, "Can you say just a few words?"

I would have chosen Krishna to show that I'm smart enough to prefer the original Personality of Godhead, who has four unexcelled features even Lord Narayana doesn't possess. I would have said, "*krsnas to bhagavan svayam*, Krishna is the source of all the incarnations and the most relishable of all forms of God. He speaks to us in *Bhagavad-gita* and tells everyone that they are His eternal fragmental parts. Our happiness is to surrender to Him and come to His eternal abode. He delights in pastimes of love with His devotees in Vraja in the main *rasas* of conjugal, fraternal, and paternal love." But maybe that's more than one sentence. Bhurijana Prabhu would laugh and ask, "What, are you writing, a book?"

M. coming up the stairs. The doorknob turns. He has a couple of letters for me and some more tapes for me to hear. I asked the devotees in Wicklow to take turns reading aloud from Bhaktivinoda Thakura's novel *Prema-pradipa*, so that I could hear it while worshiping Radha-Govinda in the mornings. Hare Krishna.

* * *

12:15 p.m.

I'm now rushing through the haikus and finding little in them. I think I was trying to capture the attention of the American neo-Buddhist haikuists. It was a hopeless cause. One reviewer said she didn't like them, but admitted, "I'm on a very different mountain than he is." Couldn't appreciate "Krishna" and "Vrndavana-dhama." They deride Him, think He's ordinary or that He's a myth. Ah, but those who cherish Vrndavana . . . could I please them? Please myself?

Talking loudly

an oarsman

plies through the Yamuna.

With haiku they want you to actually deeply experience the moment as if it were a moment of enlightenment "and put it into words. That's one reason I had to give up writing them. I want to write too much to wait for Big Moments. Let every moment be a moment. Straining to perfect seventeen syllables or so can become pretentious. You start to wonder, "How is a haiku supposed to sound and feel? How about this?" I saw the

moments somewhat sincerely with my intellect, knew that the Yamuna is sacred, unfathomably so, and that an ordinary oarsman living there doesn't really treat it as such. He's not reverent like we pilgrims are, yet he *lives* on the Yamuna!

Little observations, that's all. It's true, they weren't all deeply felt.

Shawl over his head,
a devotee of Hanuman
sits at the shrine.

Rotella was right "they should have been edited down to a few. And yet . . .

At the Kesi Ghat
a vicious dog fight,
aftergrowls.

I don't think I'm in a good mood for this right now. I am speed-reading. That's not the best way to look at a moment. It doesn't give those few syllables a chance.

* * *

Aghasura assumed the form of a huge python and lay down on the road with his mouth wide open, expecting to swallow Krishna and the cowherd boys. He was not a toy, and certainly not like the six-foot snake that was animated by two men riding bicycles under its skin as an entry in the St. Patrick's Day parade. He was not three large cardboard cartons lined up together and covered with cloth, such as the imitation snake I saw at a Sunday Feast skit. Neither did he live only in the imagination of a poet. Mystical demons could assume so many shapes.

At first the boys thought Aghasura was a statue. On further examination, however, they decided he was alive and waiting to swallow them. The boys looked at Krishna's beautiful face and, "Laughing loudly and clapping their hands, they entered the mouth of the python." They figured Agha would meet the same fate as Bakasura. They knew they had nothing to fear as long as Krishna was present. "Therefore, they wanted to enjoy the sport of entering the demon's mouth and being saved by Krishna, the enemy of Bakasura." (*Bhag.* 10.12.24, purport) Such wonderful faith and sportive mood the *gopas* have.

Krishna did not want the boys to enter Aghasura's mouth. He considered how to stop them, but He was too late. He was momentarily struck with wonder at His own internal potency and unsure of what to do. He entered Aghasura's mouth "much to the anxiety of the demigods "and at once enlarged Himself within the demon's throat. Agha suffocated and died. You know the story, how the demon's soul burst from his head, hovered in the air, then merged into the Lord's transcendental body. In other words, Agha attained *sayujya*, then *sarupya-mukti*. This proves that each soul is individual.

As I write this I am feeling the opposite of *Suddha-sattva* "the first stage of identifying myself with the twinge behind my right eye. Better pause.

* * *

3:35 p.m.

Madhu playing Irish radio. I can hear it from here "a woman soprano singing. I'm outside on the bench. The trees are swishing, and I'm physically weak today. I may have

to take a pill. Should I take an Esgic or a feverfew? And what is she singing? Is she a nun or a pub woman singing about how her lover left her to go battle the British? M. is a highly rated musician in traditional singing and on melodeon now. The Irish traditional musicians are very much into competition. Contests are a way to stimulate the public's interest in the arts.

The mountain's outline is clear today. The valley too. Let me go inside and lie my head down on a pillow. I can't capture the poignancy of September's last days. Anyway, I've stopped yearning for September-ends and am learning to yearn for the spiritual world.

* * *

5:30 p.m.

Got lucky and got to paint "one of Srila Prabhupada in black and white, and another in bright orange. I painted in silence, but felt a stirring to write pertinent *words* on the drawings.

September 29, 12:05 a.m.

Now I'm reading Srila Prabhupada, springboarding from a disciple's comments on Thomas Aquinas. It's impressive how Prabhupada automatically responds by speaking the Vaisnava doctrine. He doesn't give his opinion as something separate from scripture. He gives himself totally to the act of presenting Krishna. You could say he sacrifices himself. He's a pure devotee; any other sense of personality is consumed, the way wood is consumed by fire. In my case, I continue to expose nondevotional sides of myself as I write, because I'm trying to improve.

On hearing that "Aquinas did not make Augustine's sharp distinction between the material and spiritual worlds," Srila Prabhupada gives a complete and exact description of the position of the material and spiritual worlds. I find I am not interested in what Aquinas says. I prefer not to read Prabhupada's comments in that context. Srila Prabhupada moves so quickly from one topic to another. When he's presenting the Vedic teachings on their own, as in discussing a *Bhagavatam* verse, there is more scope for developing it. Of course, ninety-eight percent of Prabhupada's presentations are like that. Seeing him fielding rapid-fire comments on someone else's philosophy makes me better appreciate the usual presentation of the *Bhagavatam* speaker. He needs no other context. He doesn't have to teach comparative religion or philosophy. Just straight *Bhagavatam* supported by logic and argument and guided by the presentations of the previous *acaryas*.

Anyway, Srila Prabhupada hears Aquinas's five proofs for the existence of God and says, "We also honor these arguments." Then he gives what he says is the strongest: "Without a father and mother, children cannot be brought into existence . . . According to the *Brahma-samhita*, everything has a cause, and God is the ultimate cause."

A wild spider suddenly appeared on my desk. I let them build webs and try not to disturb them usually. Will that bird be back to feast on the screen tonight? Hurry along and read faithfully while you can in this world of bewilderments. No Aquinas or Vedic

philosophy for the spider, who must have misspent its human form of life when it had it. Now it's in my paper clips. I should control myself and not make an effort to drive it away. It's too complicated, with all the objects on my desk, and it could take precious time away from reading and writing. Spiders are naturally shy and don't attack.

Aquinas maintains that God created the universes out of nothing. Srila Prabhupada disagrees and says that material nature is also God's energy. It appears that the Bible doesn't give elaborate philosophy, so you have Christian philosophers who speculate and differ, much the way Western secular philosophers do. The Vedic scriptures come with a complete philosophical and astronomical basis. Everything is explained. Vedic teachers don't have to invent or speculate as to what is the soul, how the world is created, etc. As Srila Prabhupada would say, the research has already been done. "Everything is there" in *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and gurus like Srila Jiva Gosvami systematized the teachings.

God's energy is not nothing. It exists eternally in Him. "If God doesn't have energy, how can He be God?" *Parasya Saktir vividhaiva Sruyate*.

Srila Prabhupada agrees that we are in a state of sin (*maya*) and that we require God's grace to attain salvation, but "the individual has to ascend." Srila Prabhupada calls this ascent *bhakti*, devotional service. Liberation is to engage in spiritual activities in the spiritual world.

We heard of Aquinas's concept of venial and mortal sin. I remember this from childhood. They tried to scare us by speaking of mortal sin. To not attend Sunday Mass was a mortal sin (this has since been changed). Mortal sin stains the soul. Srila Prabhupada says, "The soul is not stained, but he can partake in sinful activity." Thus he has to transmigrate and suffer. As soon as we enter the material world, we lose our own power. "Oil never mixes with water but may be carried away by the waves."

* * *

I had a dream that a community of devotees were having a *kirtana*. The police were waiting for them at the end of the street, hoping to arrest them. The police considered that they had given the devotees three good days to chant, and now, on this fourth day, they could break up the *kirtana* party. I thought there would be a fight.

After I awoke from that dream, I had another dream, this one Kafkaesque and metaphorical. But it was about going to the Sunday feast. The feast was being held in a particular country, and a devotee was traveling all over trying to discover information about it. At first he heard that the feast was a horrible event, then he heard the opposite. It went on and on, but he never arrived, despite fighting his way through various situations.

* * *

4:27 a.m.

Each Deity is beautiful in its own way. I sensed the meaning of the statement that the perfection of the eyes is to see Radha and Krishna. The perfection of hearing is to hear Their pastimes. Warnings are given not to hear, see, or associate with sense gratification

or with persons interested in that. Whatever we associate with, that is what we will become influenced by, just as a crystal reflects the nearby colors.

Living with *yukta-vairagya* means we don't take more than we need for our maintenance. It's not a license for material enjoyment in the name of religion.

But we can't do it completely yet, Lord, and the householders are speaking of revising the rule, "No illicit sex." Let's all relax and be human, stop the hypocrisy. What about *vairagya*, though? And what about a *sannyasi* who is almost sixty years old? What's he waiting for in his renunciation?

* * *

He wanted to tell his momma about the concept of sense gratification (his sister too) ""People are just squeezing lumps of flesh." Neither of them liked to hear it. "Oh, Stevie."

Oh boy, we wanted to tell people about ultimate surrender and the sweetness of Krishna in Vrndavana, but we didn't know these things ourselves, so how could we do it?

We wanted to tell people they could discharge their duties in Krishna's service and that Krishna's statue is actually Krishna. We wanted to encourage them to chant and discuss. We wanted to give them a break. A preacher told me he wants to be strict with himself and lenient with newcomers. He doesn't want to pressure them to get initiated into vows still too difficult for them to follow.

We wanted to say the heels on our boots are wearing down and the rubber worn clear through to some stuff underneath. The black night when we walk . . . Everything is really pleasing. Life here is so pleasing once you warm up to it. But yes, I know I'll have to leave it all. Hare Krishna chanting now and then.

* * *

Caitanya-candrodaya is coming to show me some tricks artists use. Maybe I'll look at William Faulkner's *The Bear* to get inspired by language that comes from the rhetorical.

* * *

Lover . . . Krishna is. Not us. You feel the difficulties you went through with this person and how you continued trying "didn't quit. You were also yourself. Didn't kick off all the people of the world in your quest to attain Krishna's lotus feet, either. Didn't *have* to kick them away. Yet Narada and the other great sages, Srila Prabhupada included, tell us to bite the bullet like Raghunatha dasa Gosvami: give up the beautiful wife and the riches.

Boy, they can think fast, those guys. But they seem to be spending more time smearing than remembering Krishna. Let me remember Him for them. Bless them all, and "May we all have a pain-free weekend," says a migraine sufferer.

Pain comes from karma. Pain doesn't matter so much. Just remember Krishna. Then pain in the human form of life will not be a wasted experience. What else are these next ten minutes for? Or the walk in the dark? Syamasundara Krishna, the most beautiful. All

the Vrajavasis are attracted only to Him. They want nothing but to be able to render Him service. *I* want to be that kind of person. I want to be in the company of good players who know how to make guru and Krishna smile.

* * *

5:26 a.m.

In the dark front yard, one light on just at the doorway. I can stand under it and remember a light like that on the train platform at the Staten Island rapid Transit. I would stand there and write in my little notepad. Then I would get on the train, sit on one of those artificially thatched seats, and write some more. I was often half-drunk, but I scribbled for joy. I was imitating someone else. I still do that.

Look, man, this identity I have of Stephen/Satsvarupa is just for this lifetime. The real thing is eternal existence. Of course, Satsvarupa indicates eternal, but I mean, the temporary identity of a guy who was converted from an American to an American Hare Krishna. Do I see that story as temporary? Does that mean it's not real? *I'm* not real? We have to find the *real* servant, the one who is not attached to the bodily identity but who is lost in eternality. If only we could find *him* . . .

We know he's there because we had an example of pure spirit soul, detached from bodily consciousness, in Srila Prabhupada. He was so obviously situated in spirit, and he gave himself completely to preach Krishna consciousness. He's an example of what it's like to be on the pure platform. You give yourself entirely to your guru's service.

Now in my case, he has fashioned me as a *sannyasi*. I dress like one and have other characteristics. Of course, I can't be a carbon copy of Srila Prabhupada, even in externals, but I can try for the substance of servanthood in order to realize my own spiritual identity.

The white van is parked on the other side of the wall. I can only see its top. It's colder today. Let me take another walk around the outer wall. Instead of my wellie boots, I've changed to my hard walking boots. They crunch louder on the gravel. I hope they don't disturb Praghosa, our neighbor, back late from his labors.

A twinkling star far off. Is it an airplane? No, but the other stars don't twinkle like that one. Lord KeSava has made this most amazing universe. Now I can just distinguish the first outline of the low hills. Hare Krishna. Think of Govardhana.

* * *

8:55 a.m.

"One may doubt that such a demon [Agha] . . . could attain the liberation of *sarupya* or *sayujya*, and one may be astonished to hear this." (*Bhag.* 10.12.33, purport) Oh yeah, I'm liable to doubt anything and everything sacred and Sastric. I was born and bred with doubt, and solidified the doubting when I was younger. Krishna banished such doubts by allowing everyone to *see* the python's soul entering His body. Doubting Thomas says, "That's all right, provided we accept the *Bhagavatam* story in the first place." Kill this guy! Knock him out! He's in the way of our becoming a *sadhu*.

The next purport states that the demigods showered flowers, the *apsaras* danced, and the musicians played to glorify the Lord. They had what we would call kettledrums.

Perhaps their drums looked a little different than what we would see in a modern orchestra. Don't get stuck on that. Anyway, perhaps the instruments we play are modeled on the demigods' instruments. Demigods do not become outdated, and they have their own timeless style that pleases Lord Hari. If we are too attached to certain worldly styles, we may have to return to earth to enjoy them. Better to like what Krishna likes. Anyway, Prabhupada says that all endeavors should be used to please Lord Hari, as stated in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 1.2.13.

Don't be a violent nonbeliever. Hear how Krishna liberated Agha. "When Krishna appeared as the son of Nanda Maharaja and Yashoda, He did so by His causeless mercy. Consequently, for Him to exhibit His unlimited opulence was not at all wonderful." (*Bhag.* 10.12.38)

"If even only once or even by force one brings the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead into one's mind, one can attain the supreme salvation by the mercy of Krishna, as did Aghasura. What then is to be said of those whose hearts the Supreme Personality of Godhead enters when He appears as an incarnation, or those who always think of the lotus feet of the Lord, who is the source of transcendental bliss for all living entities and by whom all illusion is completely removed." (*Bhag.* 10.12.39)

Please give me one such moment. Please give *many* such moments. Please count what I am doing when I read and lecture and chant and write as moments of bringing the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead into my mind. When I bathe and dress and look fondly upon Radha-Govinda, too.

When Maharaja Pariksit heard these pastimes, he became steady in mind and inquired more from Sukadeva Gosvami: "The pious activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are very confidential. It is not ordinarily possible to hear such activities unless one is very, very fortunate." (*Bhag.* 10.12.43, purport)

* * *

9:50 a.m.

What? Not what you were but what you are? I sure am a spouter of truth.

And nonsense.

Next Sunday I'm scheduled to lecture at Govinda's for the Sunday Feast. Why not speak about the concern of going to the spiritual world? Gently remind them that this is what life is about. The Vedic literature teaches it clearly and completely. It's not "a vague idea."

But maybe too quickly we say what everyone has heard a million times "that we are not these bodies but spirit souls. God is Krishna, the Supreme. We have in this age an easy and potent method of reviving our original consciousness. Practice now to think of Krishna at the time of death.

We say it quickly, and perhaps we find ourselves not wanting to say it again. One reason for that is that we are not really living it. Why, therefore, repeat theory? Look for something relevant to say, like, let's divide up into *varnas* and *aSramas*, or sex should be allowed in marriage, even when conception is not the goal. Or we find some psychological angle. We use words to trick people into thinking we have come up with a novel angle on Krishna consciousness.

Well, all roads lead to rome, as they say, so even our "tricks" can connect us to the main road of "surrender to Krishna." If we want them too.

* * *

10:34 a.m.

Morning coming into the homestretch before doing Prabhupada's *puja*. Would you like to look at some hasty pudding from *Dust of Vrndavana*? Would you be willing to honor that poem as actual particles of sand from the *dhama*? It's easy to dismiss sand from a Vrndavana lane as uninteresting once you have collected it in a vial. You bring it to the West, but never look at or think about it again. But why neglect poems in the same way? Let's hold them up to the light, preferably sunlight, and not look at a whole bunch at once.

The devotees from Ireland who are going to spend Karttika in Vrndavana have already left. Maha-mantra dasi left yesterday. She's probably just arriving, greeting friends she made in previous years.

"Go ahead and worship Lord Brahma . . . Lord Siva . . . The Supreme Brahman . . . I shall simply worship the Vrndavana forest . . ." (*Padyavali*)

This forest crane
like Bakasura,
sighing and grunting.

I saw it then, but I'm sorry, it comes across only intellectually now "the desired connection with the actual Baka and the crane in the forest whom I say sighs and grunts. I was sitting in the last vestige of a Vrndavana orchard. Baladeva was nearby, guarding me to keep both people and dogs at bay. I waited for something to come "a poem, a story . . . This is what came. Nowadays I don't wait; I record everything. Like now, no one could protect me from flies or from the waves of ISKCON controversy and falldown, but now, like then, I pray to Krishna to be protected from fallout. That's what sitting in forests can be used for. I wrote this poem during the same Karttika I wrote *Guru reform Notebook*.

Alone in the woods
the parrots predominate.

I meant that the parrots were more *present* than I was, more present than any mood I could muster "I could feel them more than I could feel my guru reform notes or the spiritual separation that permeates the Vrndavana atmosphere. Was I striving for the Buddhist touch? In those days, I was still trying to make my self absent from the writing and to let the parrots speak the truth. Nature in Vrndavana is always potent, and that's why I was tempted to write there "to go there. Anyway, truth doesn't arrive in your life automatically; you have to first cultivate honesty.

Wandering
into Vrndavana forest "
two mongrels.

I intended this to be a description of Bala and I. We were the two mongrels in the sacred place. Of course, there are also the dogs. And it *is* jarring, wonderful, *irresistible* how the animals crack through any too-fragile, sanctimonious

attitudes we might take up in the *dhama*. Steve Kowit liked this book, he said, not because of the temples and bells (and religion), but because I had evoked the animals "two mongrels, one from Staten Island and the other from New Jersey, trying to act as Vaisnavas.

Leaving the forest,
the secret's secure.

Who can penetrate Vrndavana's secret? Not me. Vraja withheld it from me. I went there thinking (hoping against hope) that I'd see the inner meaning of Vrndavana within the first half hour and write it down. This poem is an admission of failure. I came and went, but the secret remained secure.

* * *

12:20 p.m.

People are suffering, but I'm not. Not really. Does that mean I'm spending my pious credits? In this world, suffering comes sooner or later. Materially, it's better to suffer (exhaust the stock of sinful reactions) than to enjoy (exhaust the stock of pious credits), but spiritually, whether suffering or not, if you're fixed in devotional service, you're never suffering. *ViSvam purna-sukhayate*.

FW, VW, VFW "initials in my life. Noxol, naxalite, FVA, U.S.A. In the past, the USSR. Back in the dark ages. Things are different now. Things will keep changing, but I can always chant Hare Krishna.

In Russia, ISKCON has also undergone a revolution. In Malta, in the Canary Islands, Maldives, Corsica . . . these places have been mild or dwindling. There are people who live there, though, perhaps a little estranged from us, who do their own thing, earn money to care for their families, and keep Krishna conscious pictures in their homes. They think one day of moving to another country, perhaps opening a *prasadam* restaurant, or joining So-and-so Prabhu somewhere.

VFW "veterans of foreign wars. FW "free-write. FWVAL "free-write veteran awaits lunch. There is a Meals-on-Wheels program for such an old man as myself. I hope they bring savories and a sweet.

Some people want to be gurus. Some people have good intentions in wanting to become gurus. Sometimes people say, "If you think you are humble, why not trade places with your disciples? You serve *them* for a week or so. See how it feels. read their writing and somehow accept it as absolute."

But I win my disciples over by genuine merit. You see, I was initiated way back when. That's my claim to fame.

Ah, fame, is that what you want? The *acaryas* say that the desire for fame is most abominable. Don't seek it. Spiritual fame-seeking is as bad or worse than material fame-seeking.

At any moment, I'll hear that car carrying my lunch. I expect to eat my lunch in peace, but I won't die in peace. Will I have an ecstatic vision of where I will go next? Will I feel Krishna's confirmation of a life lived in His service?

* * *

2:54 p.m.

I'm starting to reread the slim volume that contains the thirteenth chapter of the Tenth Canto. It was published in 1980. Thinking of 1980, I feel so much regret. I remember Jayadvaita Maharaja being displeased with me for competing with Adi-keSava Prabhu over the zonal-guru rights to New York City. How could I have assumed that position? In 1980 I was deeply entrenched.

Anyway, let me think of 1980 and the opening of this chapter: "Srila Sukadeva Gosvami said: O best of devotees, most fortunate Pariksit, you have inquired very nicely, for although constantly hearing the pastimes of the Lord, you are perceiving His activities to be newer and newer." (*Bhag.* 10.3.1)

Srila Prabhupada: "Unless one is very advanced in Krishna consciousness, one cannot stick to hearing the pastimes of the Lord constantly." Pure devotees hear *Krishna-katha* as ever-fresh. They cannot give up the taste. *Paramahamsas* use all their drives and emotions to serve Krishna. They even turn fear "into fear of being deviated from Krishna consciousness." They are the opposite of materialists.

I wrote a note to M. saying I feel that sometimes he isn't adequately covering the position of servant-secretary. He'll find it tomorrow. Now I'll go out and walk in the yard. rather than attack eight, full-sized (20 x 26) drawing sheets with paint today, I'll do a few small ink drawings.

From the *Krishna* book opening to Chapter Thirteen: "Material subject matter becomes stale, and one cannot hear a certain subject for a long time; he wants change. But as far as transcendental subject matter is concerned, it is called *nitya-nava-navayamana*. This means that one can go on chanting and hearing about the Lord and never feel tired but remain fresh and eager to hear more and more." (*Krishna*, p. 133)

* * *

3:45 p.m.

Will there be time to read aloud today? Madhu has to go out to make phone calls. robelia, "Crystal Palace," is the name of the purplish-blue flower blooming in about six places throughout the garden. The plants grow low to the ground like pansies, and they have small flat flowerheads that shine with an internal, brilliant blue. Maybe the soul glows like that.

Did one hundred and eight mantras while walking on the boards.

Heard that a marriage-to-be broke up. He wanted illicit sex, she didn't. It was as simple as that.

Gravely crunch. White cloud float apart. I imagined myself cautioning a disciple, who was about to leave for a visit to the *dhama*, against the pendulum swings going on in ISKCON.

Tiny thyme blossom. The all-but-gone cotton lavender (yellow buttons), some ivy spreading out. Some plants will do well right through winter, and I will come and see them after we visit the U.S. Time will be suspended because Prabhupada and Radha-Govinda will enter *samadhi* "I won't carry them with me.

"How is it you are mad when you write?" she asked. Is it that you are already eligible to enter the spiritual world, but you are delaying here like an *avadhuta bodhisattva*?

No, no, nothing like that. I'm still attached, unredeemed even. I sing day and night by the light of the moon the croon of right behavior and hope against hope.

* * *

5:45 p.m.

I have chosen in my mind what clothes I will offer Radha-Govinda tomorrow "the feet-showing Vrndavana set. It's red flounced with gold. The *gopis* also choose and design paraphernalia for the Divine Couple's various pastimes under Vrnda-devi's supervision.

It's a little extra quiet this late in the afternoon. I don't want more. One or two softly whispered Hare Krishna mantras suffices. It's as if I'm spiritually undernourished. Imagine a physically weak person. He can hardly speak. He has just enough energy to utter a few words. I sometimes dream I am like that, out of breath and unable to speak even when I want to. Perhaps there is a spiritual version of that, where you are just not robust or full of fire. Yet you want to be. You seem to only be able to focus your energy on any object for a short period of time, but little prayers erupt from your heart, and those whispered Hare Krishnas. And then they're gone.

Does silence help them come stronger? They say we may pray when we are in danger, but that such prayer is compelled by wanting to save our own necks.

No, be alone with Krishna. Feel Him in your fingertips, in your chest. You have a transcendental spark in your chest, and the heat of that spark feels quite different from chest pain. You can't rub it away with ointment.

September 3, 12:05 a.m.

Aquinas says the soul was created. Srila Prabhupada: "The soul is not created but is eternally existing along with God . . . The master and His servants are there eternally." We may turn away from God, but we are never created and never die.

Aquinas believes that sex should be used only to beget children. Here Srila Prabhupada states, "Illicit sex is sinful because it is for sense gratification instead of for begetting children. Sense gratification in any form is sinful." This sounds stark, as if any simple act "appreciating a breeze or flower or a nice meal "is sinful. But we can free ourselves from the inherent sinfulness of forgetting Krishna and engaging in sense gratification by doing these activities with appreciation for Krishna. Sometimes I feel spontaneous appreciation. Other times, my appreciation feels more dutiful. In any case, we have to find a way to link everything in service.

After agreeing with Aquinas on his views on government, beauty, and that scripture comes from God (and is therefore superior to human philosophical speculation), Srila Prabhupada states that scripture is not open to interpretation. Don't change God's words.

Aquinas said it is not possible to see God in this life. "The divine essence cannot be known through the nature of material things." Srila Prabhupada replies that the divine essence is personal. "When Krishna came, people saw Him face to face. Christians

accept Christ as the son of God, and when he came, people saw him face to face. Does Aquinas think Christ is not the divine essence of God?" Here Aquinas seems tainted with impersonalism.

Aquinas says the abstract and concrete names we use for God "fail to express His mode of being . . ." I prefer the Vedic understanding that God's names are pure, potent, eternal, and that He and His servants are also eternal. I also like the way the Vedic meaning allows that God comes here, is fully a person, and that we are capable of appreciating the spiritual nature (through our purification, by His grace and the grace of guru) even while in this world. I like the spiritual personalism of Krishna consciousness.

Aquinas says the best name for God is "He who is." Srila Prabhupada says if God exists, then He is active and we may address him according to His attributes and activities. The devotee conducting the interview says, "It seems Aquinas was basically an impersonalist." Srila Prabhupada says, "No . . . his inclination was to serve God as a person, but he had no clear conception of His personality. Therefore he speculated." Divine essence is the Absolute Truth known in three features, Brahman, Paramatma, and Bhagavan.

* * *

4:28 a.m.

Cooler this morning. Bright, almost enamel, pink and gold outfits to offer. A shawl for radha. Bhaktivinoda Thakura presenting *na danam na janam* and saying that if we are attached to material things, we will be distracted from *bhajana*. The senses . . . properly engage them. right . . . Sorrows and tragedies occur especially to *karmis* because they have all the characters and situations of the drama (family, home, concerns for material comfort, etc.)."

I'm a circus. I'm a devotee.

I pluck me bass.

A few people may come to hear from me because I've been around a while and promise tidings of Srila Prabhupada.

I have to go a little further out, but I'm quite satisfied with things the way they are. Don't want to push my luck.

What's this you say? The *persona* can float from one voice (subperson) to another? Don't you have a definite, one-guy voice that defines who you are? Isn't that voice the voice of the aspiring devotee with all *maya* suppressed?

It's hard when you put it that way, because we have so many voices within us, all part of our human dimension, which is all part of our dimension as devotees. They all carry the same message, but they don't always have the same way of presenting it.

I see . . . And are there nondevotee personas in your nation of people?

They always want to know that. I have memories of who I was, that dumb nondevotee in this one body. I can guess that I have lived the nondevotee life for many lifetimes before. They want me to be a regular person. Personas make them nervous.

But they have them too.

We have to take all of them to the shore of the ocean.

Krishna, Krishna. Use everything "even this " in Krishna's service.

They said they decided it's not fit for me to do what I do.

I have to decide for myself. Give me time. I'm writing a story.

Give me time.

They told me I could have until morning, so I decided to write the world's story all night.

Because art does wonders if Krishna speaks through me. Do I believe He will? Hare Krishna. As an alternative, I could pray all night on my mechanical beads. Or I could sleep as peacefully as possible. read a little in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and take reader's notes. I'm doing all of these in EJW.

Faulkner said he wrote his book on the back of a shovel during his night watchman's job. JK wrote a book during three all-night stands. But we want Krishna consciousness in our expression for sure.

All right, then give the self. Here's a bit o' diary/autobiography: I'm telling him that when he's occupied with his visiting children or music career, he neglects my needs. I approve of his activities and see them as right-on Krishna consciousness, but we need to talk this aspect out so I can feel better, even if I remain neglected.

And here's a bit o' poem:

A man wanted to sing
went into a ring to fight
the opponent and came out
victorious but with a bruised
face and chest.

Here's a bit o' something and nothing: The Buddhists fell off the quay. They were the butt of a joke in the *Caitanya-caritamrta* because they had offered Lord Caitanya unofferable food. The sharp edge of a plate cut the leader's head, but in the end, he took initiation into the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra. All's well that ends well.

Here's a bit o' hell: I may miss out. And besides, all those who don't know God, who defy His laws of nature as in killing creatures, will be punished. The first punishment will be to take another material body. The tortures in such bodies are endless.

Material happiness is illusion. There's a saying that whatever we do will be tested at the end. A saying by Krishna: "Surrender to Me and I will protect you."

Srila Prabhupada says that this is one spot-life on a long journey. If we could see our lives all strung out one after another, we'd know how insignificant this life is, and how it will be followed by yet another. If we could only see them all like that "how that would change us! We would awaken to the true self and begin the real search for God and to feel the pulse of *hari-nama* in us always.

* * *

5:28 a.m.

Outside, it's windy, with lashing rain. As I walk around the house, especially on one side of it, the rain slashes into my face.

A passing car's headlights are casting an unusual beam in the distance. Makes me think of a searchlight. The other side of the house is protected even from the searching beams of headlights.

The wind really tests the saplings in the yard: which will continue to stand and which will be uprooted? It will only get worse as winter comes on. Marigolds, pansies. I am trying to fill these stones with my prayers and aspirations to please Krishna and guru. Life is brief. Hare Krishna. I am full of hope.

* * *

5:47 a.m.

One section in *Dust of Vrndavana* is focused on Narrotama dasa Thakura and my visit to his *samadhi* at the radha-Gokulananda temple. I can see why this would turn nondevotees away, but I'm glad I wrote something so straightforward and devotional.

In this silent yard,
bells from a second temple,
drums from a third.

Packed up in Vrndavana "one walled-in compound next to another, many of them crumbling, their inhabitants poverty-stricken. Who wants to spend money reconstructing an old temple? Nevertheless, the atmosphere is filled with *bhajana*. You enter one temple and hear the *bhajana* from another. Cow-dung fires in the distance, the earth odor, and the morning chill.

Up all night temple-visiting,
he brings me water
from radha's pond.

I chose some of the words in these poems so that nondevotees could get something out of them. For example, I wrote "radha's pond" instead of radha-kunda. It was Tattva-vit who brought me that water after attending the midnight bathing for the appearance of radha-kunda. I never could have gone. I justified my absence by saying that Prabhupada never went. But the devotees who have gone say it's a wonderful experience "very, very special. It was thoughtful of Tattva-vit to remember me and to bring me a bottle of radha-kunda that he had personally scooped into a jar. "Up all night" usually suggests revelers, but in Vrndavana, you do it for *bhajana* and temple-visiting, not out of intoxication.

Before the poet's tomb,
cool thoughts
under a half moon.

Again, an accurate sketch, but you'll have to go deep on your own. Do you have cool thoughts, dear reader, when you contemplate mortality? "Cool" suggests the weather, the tomb, the stone, and the detached view of life and death. The half-moon, of course, means the half-moon.

"When can we see Krishna?"
The young priest
holds up eight fingers.

I like that one. That's what happened, and I grabbed it like a mushroom for my poet's bag.

* * *

8:20 a.m.

Srila Sukadeva Gosvami tells Maharaja Pariksit that topics about the Supreme Lord are confidential, but the spiritual master explains them to submissive disciples. I wish that Srila Prabhupada would explain the difficult-to-understand topics about the Lord to me. Prabhupada's books are before me, and I can read them, but I can't understand anything unless my spiritual master and Krishna give me their mercy (*guru-Krishna-kapaya paya bhakti-lata-bija*). I can think of my disqualifications and offenses, but I hope they will overlook them and find my sincerity.

I have to admit that I feel annoyed when devotees say that Prabhupada's instructions regarding no illicit sex within marriage is "very tricky" to advocate. If we preach it straight, we may be open to hearing why devotees need to maintain this particular form of sense gratification. People may even accuse me of maintaining my own flavor of sense gratification. And it's true, I shouldn't demand more of others than I demand of myself. But in this case, they say practically no one follows Prabhupada's instructions regarding illicit sex. That's one thing, but we shouldn't say he didn't teach it or that his teaching it was wrong. We should always try to find a way to honor what the sages have said.

Krishna brought His friends to a spot on the riverbank where flowers and birds created a pleasing atmosphere. "Also, here the sands are clean and soft. Therefore, this must be considered the best place for our sporting and pastimes." (*Bhag.* 10.13.5)

Srila Prabhupada sankirtana and lecture hall is outdoors. The roof is screened to keep out the monkeys; they rarely dare to enter through the temple room doors. Vrndavana and its sweet mysteries and coverings and ISKCON controversies, where I am not, right now. Vrndavana, described in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* as a place where Krishna and His friends ate lunch together. "Like the whorl of a lotus flower surrounded by its petals and leaves, Krishna sat in the center encircled by lines of His friends who all looked very beautiful." (*Bhag* 10.13.8)

"Each one looked at Krishna hoping He'd look back at him. Even now, to any devotee who raises himself to pure devotional service, Krishna is visible in his heart. The present Krishna consciousness movement is an attempt to keep Krishna in the center . . . "

* * *

10:30 a.m.

Windy day, Captain. Heat's on, I'm glad to note. Here, kneel beside me and look out the window. See the trees dance? They're still green, but a few plants have died. See the stone wall? Its architecture? What do you think of this place? Have you heard people say that we are here so briefly that we should drink in each moment? What do you make of that?

I looked through the *Bhagavad-gita* for a verse that might work for the several themes I have in mind to lecture on at Govinda's. Here are the themes spelled out: (1) that we all

have brief lives and everyone dies; (2) that we transmigrate; (3) that in the human form of life, we should make progress.

As I was writing, I happened to look out the window to see the telephone pole. It's soaking wet, since the rain has been driving against it all day. But now the sun is out and its light is making the pole gleam. The trees are also shining. If the sun stays out, they'll probably dry pretty quickly, but around here, that's not likely.

None of the *Bhagavad-gita* verses seemed what I wanted. Then I thought of an old favorite from the *Bhagavatam: nayam deho deha-bhajam nrloke . . .* Rsabhadeva's instruction to his sons (*Bhag. 5.5.1*) which mentions both transmigration and the purpose of human life. *Tapo divyam*, austerity, may be a bit of a turn-off for the Sunday feast crowd, so let me soften the blow by saying in this age, austerity has been made easy.

I also thought of the place where Lord Caitanya instructs Rupa Gosvami with the words, *brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavan jīva*. That covers the fact that we have many, many lives, and we simply wander through them. Fortunate persons in the human form of life, however, may receive Krishna's mercy. Perhaps going through the contents of these two verses is all I'll need. I don't have to prepare this class to death.

When I hear devotees speak, I don't like it when they work the same example again and again, pushing the audience to enter their mood. I want to be careful I don't do that in my own lecture. State something reasonably, then move on to another point. Be cheerful. After all, none of us are saints, but we ought to be. Let me give Vedic evidence and tell what I have learned, and if any good stories come to mind, great. But wait until something really feels good before using it. Don't be dull.

* * *

12:20 p.m.

An edited EJW that I wrote fourteen months ago (*My Secret Life*) has just arrived. My job is to read it and make any corrections. I wrote it at Inis rath. Now I'm in Wicklow with the washing machine moaning downstairs. rain is spattering on the skylight, and the window corners are filled with cobwebs. It's homey here. M. is shaving up (as he does every Wednesday) so he can look like a proper monk when he does his gig at Govinda's. Another quiet afternoon planned for me.

A Swami Godbrother asked if he could meet with me. We said yes. Caitanya-candrodaya should be here late tonight. I can play painting with him tomorrow. Read and chant today.

Japa is speedy, sir.

Attack the mind's complacency,
place of rut. Insist on
attacking the mind's rut.

* * *

2:30 p.m.

The boys enjoyed lunch with Krishna. They each shared the preparations they had brought from home. The denizens of heaven watched and were "struck with wonder at how the Personality of Godhead, who eats only in *yajna*, was now eating with His

friends in the forest." (*Bhag.* 10.13.11) The boys knew nothing within their hearts but Krishna. That was their qualification for joining Him.

While they were eating lunch, the calves wandered away. Krishna assured the boys that He would collect the strayed calves. Srila Prabhupada: "In the presence of Krishna's friendship, a devotee cannot have any fear." Krishna controls even fear. Krishna can act through any of His energies, but "when there is a need to take care of His friends, He does this personally." (*Bhag.* 10.13.14, purport)

Lord Brahma saw these activities. He wanted to show some of his own power and to see the power of Krishna, so in Krishna's absence, he took away all the boys and calves. "Thus he became entangled, for in the very near future he would see how powerful Krishna was." (*Bhag.* 10.13.15) This is *brahma-vimohana-lila*, the pastime of bewildering Brahma.

* * *

4:34 p.m.

It sure would be nice to write poems in Krishna consciousness that had a pleasing visual effect on the page. But I can't always do it.

Now exhausted. Took an herbal medication to encourage a headache to ebb. red digital clock flashing numbers. Only the wind against the house "no other sound. I feel safe here even when I am alone. I think or more like float, relaxed, in bed, and get an idea for graffiti poems or "what do they call it? "some combination of things Krishna will give me. Perhaps tomorrow morning I'll show Caitanya-candrodaya how I apply the paint, and he can make suggestions. But I'd like to let demons and love of God (wild, raw, primitive) come out more than to learn centuries' old tricks on perspective or how to draw a face.

Every day we think of our senior men gone astray. Can't understand how *maya* works. Is it the human shadow long repressed who suddenly jumps out? *Anarthas* festering? Direct hand of the Lord to smash and teach us all?

This gooney guru says no sex for you householders unless you want another kid, a twenty-year investment of three hundred thousand dollars, *gurukula* worries, etc. He's a *sannyasi* and can sit back enjoying a big meal after giving a lecture. "No sense grat, ya hear?" Where does he get off telling an honest, hardworking man he can't make love to his wife?

I'm an ordinary guilty bystander at the Belmont rail, watching the horses race by. My bets are on the Swami *acarya*, like most of yours. End this here and walk around the empty house, trusting in Krishna.

* * *

5:05 p.m.

Slashing rain all day. Low visibility. Cows on distant hill, most of them apart from one another. Some stand next to one another for solace. rain pouring against the tree leaves. This tenderfoot indoors counts his blessings. He likes to be warm and comfy, his feelings no different than any old aunty sitting by the fire with her tea and biscuits. The

old man comes home and opens a bottle of liquor. Then he turns on the telly. Wastes time. They are creatures too, like me.

Who offers their food to God except devotees? Perhaps some monks and nuns do too, I don't know. But there are pious people out there who pray. Don't think you're the only one. In fact, you don't pray at all. You don't know how. Get out your beads, maverick, and try again. That's what a human being is for. That's why he's allowed to keep dry on a wet day and not be totally preoccupied with surviving outdoors with no consciousness for thanking God and being with Him as His eternal part and parcel.

If someone about ten years younger than me, or even younger than that, who was also a devotee, maybe a *sannyasi*, came to see me, what could I tell him? They are different than me. Encourage them in their activities, although I'm not like that? Encourage them in their pain-free lives? Yes, I would do that. They should keep their health, keep going while they can, but once the breakdown comes, as it seems it must, know what to do with your time. My mother seemed to convey that to me, but in the mood that I should grab all the sense gratification I could while I was still able to enjoy. When you're old, you're not beautiful or bold or carefree any longer. She conveyed this wordlessly to me one of the last times I was with her, walking on the beach at Avalon. That was before . . . before she broke with me for my unpardonable offense.

Visibility lower. That's all right. I only need to see inside this house for my beads and a manuscript to read "reading and writing. I don't need sunlight to look into my heart.

Hare Krishna. Again the brick wall. The mind flits constantly. It has been trained to be untrained. How can I ever expect to catch it now? In Bhaktivinoda Thakura's novel, the Vaisnava who is also a *yogi* said we can't develop pure *bhakti* unless we practice *pratyahara*. The pure devotee *babaji* didn't agree. He said that if we associate with pure Vaisnavas, we won't need yoga. Actually, he says, yoga can hamper us. Granted, but what about those of us who have associated with the best Vaisnava but who still cannot control our minds and who are not about to go live with *babajis*? What about us? Krishna says, "Just hear."

* * *

6:38 p.m., Night Notes

Good night. Written on a wave of ink.

October 1, 12:05 a.m.

Jean-Paul Sartre says that man exists before he can be defined. Srila Prabhupada counters, "But where does human reality come from?" Man has to proceed from someone. Sartre says that even if God does exist, man is thrown into the world and abandoned. Srila Prabhupada: "But God has not abandoned us."

Man is responsible for himself. He's anxious over his freedom to change himself and the world. Srila Prabhupada counters this with theism: We are obedient to God. Sartre doesn't know the meaning of God (he thinks He doesn't exist), without whom everything is possible.

Reading this essay is like watching a boxing match, but I recall Prabhupada saying that a disciple doesn't like to see his spiritual master in a dogfight.

Sartre says we give life meaning. Man is condemned to be free. When Srila Prabhupada presses the point, Sartre seems to say that our freedom and our lives here are accidental. Srila Prabhupada says this is contradictory: if we are condemned to be free, then freedom is not accidental. "Sartre's philosophy is a philosophy of despair, and we say that it is unintelligent because despair is not the result of intelligence . . . the attempt to make life zero is due to a poor fund of knowledge."

Sartre says we have no fixed nature; we are always changing. Everything ends, he says, at death. Srila Prabhupada counters, "The active principle on which the body stands does not die. We change apartments. A sane man can understand this." It may seem odd, in the boxing match, that Srila Prabhupada is quoting *Bhagavad-gita* to one who doesn't accept it, but Krishna has His own logic and Prabhupada states Krishna's authority whether his opponent accepts it or not. Mostly, however, Srila Prabhupada uses only logic. He speaks of God, although Krishna and the *Bhagavad-gita* are behind all he says.

When Srila Prabhupada repeatedly hears that Sartre wants to put aside the question of God's existence, Srila Prabhupada says it's the main question of philosophy. We don't just appear out of nothing, "thrown" into the world. It's important to know where we come from.

Sartre says man is not satisfied with mere being-for-itself. He also desires to be being *in* itself. Srila Prabhupada: "What Sartre is seeking is actual spiritual life." Sartre says man's attempt to be God will fail, so he is a "useless passion." Srila Prabhupada says the attempt to be Krishna conscious is godly, whereas the attempt to be *Krishna* is demonic. Give up the useless attempt to become God and become His obedient servant.

Life has no essential purpose. Srila Prabhupada says this is a superficial view. One has to go further to see the cause behind nature. In *Bhagavad-gita*, those who don't believe in the superior cause are called demonic.

I'm writing quickly to leave a gloss of this talk to look at later. It will probably read like a newspaper account. It's true that Sartre's philosophy came and went. Krishna consciousness is eternal.

We hear of Sartre's conception of bad faith, drifting along, and not taking responsibility, but Prabhupada asks what if his decisions are wrong? The Krishna conscious decision is not blind. It will make the world a better place (which Sartre also wants) by the decision of higher authority (which Sartre denies). Sartre's despair and disillusionment were born of many things, including World War II.

Sartre says we should interact with others. Srila Prabhupada says then why not interact with the best man, a bona fide guru who can give you the right direction?

* * *

4:30 a.m.

Dressed Radha-Govinda in yellow while listening to *Bhajana-rahasya*. Now M. and Caitanya have arrived. When I go out to walk in the dark yard this morning, they will probably come to the house with the mail and news.

Srila Prabhupada said that a devotee knows what's what about why Lord Buddha appeared and Sankara, an incarnation of Lord Siva, taught the Mayavadi doctrine.

A man named Wolfe went to a hill and looked back at his town. He was about to leave North Carolina for New York City to make his fortune. All fiction broke loose. I said, "Get back inside your body and into town. Or travel, actually, in Krishna's service."

Beauty comes from Krishna. He said, "You put that ointment on your chest, but what about all the previous bodies you had? What about you demanding that people serve you now?"

Had an idea how to spend my birthday: no homages, big seats, or *aratis*. Instead, disciples could get together and have morning and afternoon classes. Hare Krishna. *Kirtana*. Don't have to run scared and think we can't acknowledge our relationship, yet I should be as humble as a blade of grass.

Or we could do something Prabhupada-centered on that day, so they'll know that I know I come from him and have no other position.

I painted little monsters, scissored an outline around them so they would look even more real, and taped them to a board just outside the art room. M. can see them as he comes and goes. Who are they? Jinns and evil spirits? Did I draw them in order to exorcise them?

Now I've drawn *tilaka* on one monster. All I have to do now is get him to follow the rules and regs. Then even if he doesn't become handsome, he (or she) will perhaps learn to aspire for pure Krishna consciousness.

* * *

5:28 a.m.

It was raining, but now I'm outside and can see the stars. Seeing stars at this time of the morning does not, however, indicate that we can expect clear skies for the rest of the day. Weather is quite temporary here. See the big dipper? The little dipper hangs just above the cottage in a juxtaposition of the faraway with the near. Like Krishna. He is so far away that we can't even imagine the distance, yet He's right in our hearts. It's inconceivable how close He is, because our awareness of it is dependent on our perception. Our perception is based on our purity. We can't cheat Him into revealing Himself. But He's also kinder than millions of mothers. We depend on His leniency.

Sometimes He shows His leniency by allowing us do whatever we want. We had better depend on our spiritual master for guidance. So many devotees thought all we had to do was follow the temple authority and whatever ISKCON said, but it's harder than that. We have to surrender personally, get involved in our own fate. But Krishna is kind.

* * *

8:40 a.m.

Could I write famous short novels? Too late for that. Continue this roomy (Rumi) book.

Busy day. Candramauli Swami and I will meet over at Uddhava's. What will we talk about? I could ask him about his preaching in the Midwest U.S. and about New Vrindavan. I could tell him about migraineurs, even though I don't know if I am one.

Mainly I'm a penmanship expert. Talk about spiritual life. I don't want to talk politics. Speaking about *japa* would be nice. That would involve confession on my part, but I could also tell him what I told Gopi-manjari in our *japa* workshop "how dry chanting is an act of will, sacrifice, done with no payment of spiritual sense gratification. Preaching and *sadhana*. Anyway, I'm sure we'll just talk.

After that meeting I'll go directly to see Caitanya-candrodaya, who's visiting for a week. He has brought art materials with him, and perhaps he can help me learn better how to express myself more fully. What am I seeking and what are the obstacles to attaining it? Here's a few things I am thinking about art: (1) how to blend freedom with a Krishna conscious message or expression; (2) how to get beyond stylized pictures of the human form so that I can put my heart into them; (3) do I need to learn skills?

I have an Esgic in my pocket in case I need it. Hare Krishna.

* * *

2:38 p.m.

Two meetings back to back, and I didn't get a headache "yet. Scheduled to meet Caitanya-candrodaya at 4:00 p.m. He has new art materials and techniques to show me. He can watch me splash, too, as I move to the beat of Srila Prabhupada.

Candramauli Swami is a sweet person. He leads the life of a simple traveling *sannyasi*, and is based in Chicago. Next to the temple, he says, are a rough ghetto and gangs.

* * *

3:20 p.m.

Hesitant to write because how much can I add to what I've already written? And because he said many devotees expect World War III or an earthquake or tidal wave or economic collapse, but he wants to go on preaching and asks if he can come and live in Ireland. Hesitant because I don't want to use up my limited energies and Caitanya-candrdaya is coming soon and I'll need energy to paint. Hesitant because I've already had twice as many meetings today as I normally would, so . . . I have lost touch with my usual activities "I usually read Srila Prabhupada's books twice as many times as I have read them today. I don't even love to read. Some say we should only do what we love. They could laugh at me, struggling all these years and saying, "I still don't love to read Prabhupada's books, but I do it as austerity, and maybe if I'm patient, Krishna will reveal their meanings to me."

I told my *sannyasi* Godbrother that we want to please Krishna, but we admit we are not yet completely surrendered. He said it's good to associate with Godbrothers. I admitted it's hard to trust all of them. He said if he finds that several or many of them say the same thing about him, then he should take it seriously. Interesting. But I may be in a different position. It's a fact that I have a long way to go in order to surrender. He said sometimes Krishna will test us. I've heard that before, but I said, "Yes."

I may say to Krishna that I'm happy to act according to my inclination, but He may say, "Yes, but I'm still the boss, and this is what *I* want you to do." As my *sannyasi* Godbrother and I spoke in the shed, I thought that I should give up certain

possibly frivolous habits I have because they are unbecoming of a *sannyasi*. Because *this sannyasi* seemed so simple and standard, always going out to preach and making himself available to speak with anyone. "I'm almost sixty years old," I told him. He was surprised that someone could be so old. He likes the books I have written on *japa* because he's interested in gaining tips on how to improve his own chanting.

An ISKCON *mataji* who has lived for years in Vrndavana has begun to travel and preach in the East European countries. She wants to encourage devotees to visit Vrndavana as often as they can. I understand why she might see the devotees outside Vrndavana as too Westernized. She seems to say that only in Vrndavana is real *bhava* available. Just take me as an example. Just see how I live here and cultivate something that is not exactly the mood they cultivate in Vrndavana. Or is it? It's not always easy to sort it out.

My *sannyasi* Godbrother said he thought I was living in a remote place with only one or two assistants. He got a different impression today. I told him about the Wicklow families and the interaction I have with the devotees in Dublin. It made me sound quite busy.

* * *

Yes, I will go downstairs and paint "something I wouldn't do in Vrndavana for sure. Vrndavana only allows straight painters, and I am a revolutionary, except that no one cares to join my revolution.

How to make my art more Krishna conscious? How to mount the rungs of the ladder left by Miro? How to make the world remember Krishna? A devotee wrote to me from Poland and said that they used to preach that they should sleep in their vans in winter without heat, wear secondhand clothes, and do nothing but distribute books. Push, push, push. Now he doesn't want to feel guilty for living peacefully. He wants to find a way to distribute *prasadam* and earn money to support his wife. In Canakya Pandita's spirit, he wants to be a man who is happy not to have to travel out of his home. Is that all right? Yes, I'll say I agree with that.

The man who holds the key should
not sell his poem for a fee.

The Alder John ambled up the
Faulkner story.

There were too many things to do
and he became confused.

If I could do only three things, wouldn't I rise at midnight, read Srila Prabhupada's books, and then chant my rounds "and while reading make notes? Yes. And I would eat only fruits on EkadaSi. I'd rub-a-dub my chest with liniment and ask for an anticonvulsant to thwart headaches. I'd not plan to go east to India but west to speak to people, and would try to dodge bullets and crank phone calls. I would have the courage to stand up in my boots and take a walk in the woods without bodyguards. I would not recite slovenly *gayatri*s, but reform my wrong ways. I would answer people's questions. I would say that life is short enough, although we have many lives. And they could reply, "We have heard this many times before."

I confessed to my brother that I am not able to control my mind when I chant. Did he have any hints? He said chanting is part of an entire life. If we act properly, then when we chant, we will better be able to concentrate. Chanting requires a special effort to control our minds, so if in others ways we are unable to curtail the mind, how much harder it will be in *japa*.

Yes, that made sense. I gave examples to support his words. He also suggested I remain patient. Our version of patience is impatience: "I have tried so hard and waited so long." God may not see it that way at all. We bargain with the Lord, trying to convince Him, but He knows best when to reveal Himself to us. Maybe He *wants* us to chant in the desert for a while. Let's just carry out those intentions without ever giving up hope.

Oh, and he said, "Pray "pray to the holy name and to Prabhupada while chanting."

"Verbally?"

"Yes, or mentally."

"I don't know how to pray, but I wish I could, so I'll try."

"You are always praying."

"Yes, writing is prayer for me, but I want to pray while I chant."

* * *

4:15 p.m.

Caitanya-candrodaya is late. I'm all set up in the painting room and now waiting for him. He may arrive at any moment. I could read Prabhupada's lectures on 5.5.1, but it may be too taxing. I'd only be skimming through it anyway, looking for something applicable to my lecture.

* * *

5:30 p.m.

Painted with Caitanya present. He encouraged me, showed me some technical points, messed around. He said I'm free, and that's the main thing. I'm tired, but I have no pain even after three big events today. Krishna's mercy. But I wish I had read Prabhupada's books and got through my regular writing times too. Too busy. I skipped Prabhupada's *puja* and the extra rounds I usually chant in the afternoon.

O Krishna, You are wonderful, and I want to remember You now that I am back in my secluded garden. HK dasi sent me a book by a man who designed secluded gardens and conservatories where one could sit out among the flowers and get away from the world. That's nice too, as long as one is with Krishna. Not that we see ourselves as the sole proprietor and enjoyer of some garden, as if the flowers were our subordinates, their fragrance meant only for our pleasure.

Hare Krishna. This day ending. It was an unusual feeling to paint in someone's presence. After awhile, I kind of forgot he was there. Then he said, "I think you are tired." Yes, I was winding down. I said I'm not focusing my eyes on the painting. I'm just moving my hand, my arm, my heart toward the Lord. I want to make Krishna conscious offerings. Devotees have to sacrifice.

* * *

6:31 p.m., Night Notes

M. has taken all the Wicklow children to their music and dance lessons in Donnard, a nearby village. He's expected back by 10:00. "They are great kids," he said. I hope he can protect them from harm.

And you "who will protect you? Krishna.

October 2, 12:05 a.m.

I started to read a short transcript of a morning walk in *Quest*, "Give God the Nobel Prize," but my eyes skimmed over it. It's a talk, not literature. I have so many things to do. That's what is running through my mind. Candramauli Swami said yesterday that if the mind is uncontrolled at other times, it will be even *more* uncontrolled during *japa*. Try to control it now. I *want* to read everything in *Quest* and have only a few more lectures to go.

Srila Prabhupada says God makes a fig, and in it are many seeds which can grow into trees. Where is the scientist who can do this? (Okay, the atheist would say a "god" isn't necessary to make the tree. They say "nature." Prab

hupada asks, "Whose nature?" No one's nature. Etc.)

Man's boasts are like a man imitating a dog's barking. If man could produce life in a laboratory, he'd win the Nobel prize, but millions and millions of life forms are being created by the Lord. ". . . we want to give credit to Krishna . . . "

The last section of *Quest* is called "Love of God, The Ultimate Goal," but just now I want to look at the transcripts of Prabhupada's *Bhagavatam* lectures for *Bhag. 5.5.1* because I'll be lecturing on that verse in a couple of days.

Human life is rarely achieved. We shouldn't misuse it for exaggerated sense gratification. Use it for *tapasya*. This is a criticism of modern life. *Tapasya* should be aimed at realizing the Absolute Truth through purification. What will be the result? *Suddhyed yasmad brahma-saukhyam tv anantam . . .* We'll get unlimited pleasure. That's the basic outline of the points in his lecture on 5.5.1. I may use it as a background and dwell on the those points that keep occurring to me "evoking a feeling in the audience of the brevity of life, how this present life is simply a spot-life on our long journey through the species, and how we have to make progress spiritually. We won't progress if we waste our energy in sense gratification.

Of course, encouraging *tapasya* instead of sense gratification is not going to be a popular theme. Let me keep it easygoing and palatable. More palatable themes would be how to feel love, that Krishna consciousness has been made easy, that God can be contacted in all things, and that Krishna consciousness is easy (again).

I hope my sleeplessness from last night doesn't catch up with me. I'm feeling pressure about meeting Caitanya twice a day.

I could anticipate the opposition to *tapasya* too. The response? From the performance of *tapasya* we get unlimited pleasure. As soon as we become purified, we'll feel that higher pleasure. We will also be released from material anxiety and discover the positive relationship between the soul and the Supreme. We may also achieve entrance into His eternal kingdom.

I don't want to be intimidated by the presence of nondevotees in the audience. Let me not feel the need to go into defensive digressions about God's existence or anything like that. Just speak straight.

Srila Prabhupada lectured on 5.5.1 in Los Angeles in 1969, and again that year in September in London, at John Lennon's estate. First he dwells on the point that Maharaja Rsabhadeva was retiring. I could mention that. I also want to somehow include Lord Caitanya's verse about how we are wandering through many species. We get a human form finally. The human form is the only form in which we can receive Krishna's direct mercy: the attainment of a guru.

* * *

In a dream, Mahabuddhi and I fell from a great height "a total of six hundred feet. I thought we would die, but we were both chanting Hare Krishna. We didn't die. We landed among unfriendly people. We found the devotees, then lost them again. I became sorry that we had lost the devotees' association within a moment. We looked for friendly faces, but realized how few devotees there are in this world. We hoped that if we met the devotees again, we would always treat them with respect and gratitude.

* * *

4:21 a.m.

I want to tell Madhu that I want a fulltime servant who thinks his entire service is to facilitate my service. I also wrote a letter to another devotee saying I honored his respect for his guru. This world we live in . . . your guru, my guru, the spiritual family itself. We're insular in this movement, and have insular layers even within that.

She said, "I want to not deny this world, material or spiritual." Said some people act more renounced than they are even while they're rotting inside. They hurt others around them. They become hypocrites. "I want to act out of love," she said.

Yes, but let's not forget that *vaidhi-bhakti* means we follow Srila Prabhupada out of love, even when our love is not yet spontaneous.

But they say they want love now; let it *all* be love. Unless we feel love, they ask, why should we chant Hare Krishna?

But that's a different philosophy then.

Values shift. They want the Krishna consciousness movement to be the world power. "It will never happen," others say. Then at least let me shift my own paradigms. How? From matter to spirit? From dishonest and uptight to more relaxed and human? We were surprised that such a big general in the Army became a lover.

I told you, I can't tell his story.

He painted and was encouraged that "it's very professional." I smiled and later didn't know if I had done well or not.

Don't look at me now; I'm doing something you can't understand. You'll have to excuse me, Ma'am, because I'm not a pure devotee. The *brahmacaris* approach the ladies and say, "We were told we have to get married."

What's this?

He went out on the lawn and started blasting the blues while devotees danced to Hare Krishna. Some people were surprised at the combination of rock music with Hare Krishna tunes. They wondered if such a combination was authorized by the *Vedas*. Can these things be brought together? Well, it may be possible. But at the time of death, we want to know what we have been up to and how that affects our remembrance of God.

I'm nervous, folks, I didn't get enough sleep and I heard too many things in the mail. Spies are on the alert. I didn't know how to handle the various geebies. I am a basically happy man, but if there is a tidal wave, then that happiness will be washed away. A man who is fully in Krishna consciousness can't have his Krishna consciousness washed away. I saw that in that dream with Mahabuddhi and I chanting. And Krishna and Balarama plunged eight hundred miles and remained happy. You can see that in the painting.

Indiana is in this world, and the spiritual world is completely different. I don't think you could bring the two worlds together, where in one world someone is trying to enjoy himself, and in the other, he is trying to please Krishna "so pure he is that he is happy only if Krishna is happy.

Boy, oh boy, this has to be figured out! We are attached to this world. He said, "Look, this goes against the philosophy. We should be able to get a higher taste and not have to descend to the lower."

We are tired of hearing that, it seems. They want to do their thing for Krishna and to have it sanctioned, so they sit around and talk about these things for hours. They revise and come up with an angle with which they feel comfortable. Then someone else disagrees completely or has a different slant. It sure is confusing.

Krishna said He wanted to rid the world of demons, so He came and did it. My spiritual master said that people in prisons are criminals. I got hung up on the example and thought how some people in prison may have been put there by a corrupt system.

What else did he say? He said go back to Godhead. He said that the Ph.D. is *mayayapahrta-jnana*. He said "I wasn't able to hear so well. At least now I can't recall it. I was busy putting ointment on my chest and cleaning my false teeth.

He said, I'm sure, that *bhakti* is the path we must follow and that we shouldn't listen to those rascals who would mislead us.

He barely restrained himself "he was so full of soul. He's different from the others who came later. I have my red beads, blessed by his hand. O Lord, please help me.

Basin Street Blues "down-and-out bums, pimps, whores, and merchants of all types, cutthroat gamblers, fallen scholars. We're all fallen. Otherwise, we wouldn't be in the material world. Ajamila got out by chanting the holy name.

The chanting of the holy name is supreme. It goes over the tenement rooftops. It is carried in the souls of sincere persons.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

Sky overcast. Not much of a garden here at this point in the year "mostly earth with a few scraggly plants in it. The gardener admitted this yesterday, and I'm glad she did. Maybe we should grow grass. A lone star low on the horizon. Yes, Krishna is a person,

the holy name is a person nondifferent from Krishna, and therefore I can pray to either.
Breathe the holy name.

* * *

10:20 a.m.

Spent over an hour with Caitanya. He showed me delightful technique of how to first put down masking liquid, then water, then water paint direct from the tubes with a single brush you keep washing off in water, then ink with brushes, and finally a kind of crayon I forget the name of. I took an Esgic just before meeting him, and it kept me clear in the earthly paradise of No Pain. The sunshine is out, reducing the morning chill. One thinks one would like to live forever in this body, in this world, and do lovely things with friends like paint and write.

But life is brief. Better to concentrate on Govinda. remember Swift's Strulbrugs? They were immortal, but kept growing older and feebler. Who needs that kind of immortality? Better to die off. In our case we have the hope of making progress on the journey back to Godhead. Progress in this life for the next, adding to it until we have improved one hundred percent and are released from all that binds us to matter. Work for this as soon as possible.

But how? We keep asking that question. One method is to practice *yukta-vairagya*. See that things belong to Krishna, even though they are in the material energy. Use them to serve Him. And remember and glorify Him. And preach. Do *something* to attract the nondevotees to Krishna.

It's EkadaSi today. I won't eat as much as usual. At least I have hunger pangs in my belly. That's nice. Hare Krishna chanting in Krishnaloka. I'm scheduled to meet Caitanya again this afternoon.

* * *

Who is a poet?

It's the divided lines man who opens the
door of the refrigerated Bungalow Bar
ice-cream truck and reaches in there while
the kids watch in quiet awe in the Queens dusk
while he's parked right on the road, an adult
dressed in white with a gleaming silver
change-maker set at his waist we
waited for our cones and clutched our coins
until it was our turn.

* * *

Who is a poet? He is a person
intoxicated by love of Krishna, goes around Vraja
with paintbrush drawing the name "Radha" in
Sanskrit on any wall or surface.

This one etches his painful and imperfect odes
of "I am here in Vrndavana but
all I can remember is my
material self which I also love.
And I don't love the ISKCON debates.

I hurt I
hurt."

(akip)

The poet is the one who writes down the
lines and tries to improve them.

I heard he was writing while
improvising like a sweet and hard jazz
player. Doesn't he know that's material
that music and

forbidden according to code canon 52 - 34?

(akip)

A poet may be unbecoming despite his
nice smile. A swami says, "I went to that country to be
with the devotees and do home programs,"
and he never in his life dug Monk
and eventually gave it all up because
he wants to transfer to Krishna's abode where the
flute is completely transcendental and
they want to please
the Lord.

* * *

12:03 p.m.

I have God-given intelligence (*buddhi*), which is Krishna's energy (internal), and He can purify it so it radiates His mercy. Let that light come through. I'll add my two cents from the perspective of this self so tiny. For now, those two cents are tainted, but I have hope His mercy can purify me. For now, it's up to me to stand up and claim that all conditioned humans will go through this on their way to surrender to Krishna, and we should honor *any* attempt to become Krishna conscious in such a world. Does it help to know that I once loved Fats Domino and was introduced to bop? I can't bear to tell you everything, but I hope my humanness helps.

Some say that Krishna's external energy is a reality, too, and they like that reality, want to stay with it. So, they will still be affected by *maya*. We're close to them, but not quite the same. More hopeful; higher aspirations.

* * *

2:40 p.m.

Krishna acted as if He didn't know where the boys and calves were. Krishna then expanded Himself as the missing cows and boys. *Advaitam acyutam . . . / purnasya*

purnam adaya . . . /acaryavan puruso veda. By following the path of the *acaryas*, we can know Krishna to some extent.

Krishna appeared to come home as He did every day "in the company of the calves and cowherd boys. Without telling even Baladeva that He had assumed the form of the missing calves and boys, Krishna "continued the usual program."

* * *

Planning ahead for preaching tours, both at the end of November and for about a month from Christmas through January. Then we'll return here to my books, Deities, and quiet routine.

Early this morning I felt disturbed, thinking I wanted either a new assistant or better service. But things are good enough as they are, even with M.'s part-time help. Don't jeopardize what I have, although Time itself *will* take it away.

radha Krishna-pranaya-vikrtir hladini-Saktir asmad: by expanding Himself, Krishna becomes radha and Krishna. So now He became all the calves and boys "and enjoyed transcendental bliss in Vrajabhumi."

Krishna then drank the milk from the breasts of the boys' mothers. This was the real reason for this *lila* "so that these mothers could have Krishna as their son. Similarly, the cows were able to take care of their calves, who were actually Krishna. An increase of affection arose in Vrajabhumi, taking the shape of the mothers' and cows' love for their own offspring.

* * *

5:40 p.m.

I've decided to meet with Caitanya-candrodaya only once a day. Meeting more often steals away too much of my time, and I feel I'm not learning enough. This afternoon he taught me tricks I'm not so likely to use. He's more sensitive to all the nuances of color than I am.

October 3, 12 a.m.

For a year, each cowherd man and woman in Vrndavana had Krishna as their son because Krishna had become *their* sons. "Everything was Krishna."

Chest pain . . . Caitanya-candrodaya, art, ego, dreams of ordeal and death. In Vrndavana, there is never anything wrong, because everything is centered on Krishna and He never disappoints anyone.

The cows were at the top of Govardhana Hill, purposely kept separate from the calves. These were older calves, which were being weaned. Suddenly, when they saw their calves below, the cows "ran with great force, their tails erect and their front and hind legs joined, until they reached their calves." (*Bhag.* 10.13.30, purport)

I don't want to complain of bodily pains and needs, but I have them. I don't like to see my false ego claiming special distinction, seeking praise I haven't earned, but I see it. I don't like to offend the holy name by my inattention, but I do. I also don't like to spend time away from my quiet routine, but I'm doing that lately too. I feel I need that routine

so that I can do all the service I want to do in a day. My *sannyasi* Godbrother admitted that traveling left him no regular time to read.

The pages of this *Bhagavatam* volume are nice and thick, not transparent. The cows and calves displayed an extraordinary sense of affection for one another at the bottom of the hill. The men were angry and ashamed that the cows had broken from their control, but when they reached the bottom of the hill to recover them and saw their sons, they too were overwhelmed by affection. This was simply more of the affection that had been overflowing in Vraja all year. As the men embraced their sons and the cows licked their calves, Balarama looked on with amazement. Thus He came to know, by His own insight and by inquiring from Krishna, the secret.

I too would like to increase my affection for Lord Krishna. I would love it if, unbeknownst to me, He suddenly became an intimate friend whom I loved with new and intense affection. Imagine loving the familiar holy name, the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, or even the familiar devotee friends and disciples in my life "I could suddenly feel great, overwhelming love for them and thus fulfill my inner desire.

* * *

I have a few minutes left, so I'll at least begin another lecture in the last section of *Quest*. The editors have arranged the material so that after reading sections of questing, understanding matter and spirit and the controller of both, inquiring from the spiritual master, hearing what speculators have to say, we finally conclude that love of God is the ultimate goal. This is also what we have been reading in the Tenth Canto.

Srila Prabhupada is lecturing on Bg. 7.1, which is the verse on which he lectured the most. This is the *tac chrnu* verse, "Just hear." Krishna says that to know Him in full, free from doubt, we have to hear and think about Him. It's a simple process, but it has to be practiced. In the beginning (where I'm working), it's more practice than realization or love. We maintain the practice out of faith in guru and because we aspire for future spiritual attainments. Perhaps we think it won't be long before we fall in love with Krishna. Also, we feel such relief to escape from our material habits and duties. Also, we have good hope that the society of devotees will fulfill our human (even economic) needs in a transcendental way.

". . . Our attachment should be towards Krishna like a current of a river. A river automatically flows down to the sea. Just as the river is flowing towards the sea spontaneously, without any official attempt, our love should spontaneously flow towards Krishna or God. This is the perfection of *yoga*." (*Quest*, p. 215)

* * *

4:30 a.m.

Saw M.'s picture and the article on the band he once had, which was called *The Threat*. "You were dedicated!" "Yes," he said, "dedicated to the exclusion of almost everything else!"

I want that dedication in Krishna consciousness. My little heart may burst, but I want to offer myself to Krishna.

Hare Krishna. You are the one, Lord, and we are all Your parts and parcels. I am tired and poke along, and I keep hearing that progress requires patience and the willingness to always accept a lower position, if that's the truth. Being on the altar allows me to feel purified beyond the cleanliness of a bath. I feel bright in Krishna's company, close with the associates who choose what bracelets They'll wear.

Yeah, I will go out and work. I mean, walk. This is not a defilement or diminishment. What's he saying?

All things at once, mixed.

The Lord God comes through him "watch out for that. He could have a messianic complex, a madness.

Well, I don't doubt he was trying to become . . . As for me, I was looking for a secluded garden and a cup of herbal tea followed by a nice breakfast and the ability to digest it.

You mean you are not suicidal?

No, and neither is she. It was just a rough patch for her, and she got through it and sent me photos of Lord Jagannatha, Subhadra, and Balarama.

Give us names, please, for a touch of humanness.

Okay, Sally, Billy, Vidura, the palmist, the hangouts. Abbey Cohen, Ted Patrick dead, Mr. Elliot van Wort, Mr. and Mrs. Nair, Joy Truth, Santiago, Henry Adams, Henry of Washington, D.C., Daddy Warbucks, Paul Chambers, Ron Carter "enough for now?"

He's asking a question and I *want* to answer. I just want a little time to solo. Then I'll merge into the group effort, myself an almost anonymous support of the main players. I'll be off by myself in Ireland, toward the bottom of the country. Hare Krishna will prevail for sure.

Put your little foot out. We wanted to become devotees, so we joined the movement, but we didn't think ahead to how we would live without medical insurance (Blue Cross, Blue Shield) or a pension. Then the chest pain comes, but we don't want to complain.

Because we are nobody. Why would anyone want to see *me*? Hare Krishna. In church you don't want to walk out on a guy's sermon, but it's long and you have to go (to the bathroom). So you fidget and are nervous and at the first opportunity, stand and leave.

* * *

6:30 a.m.

While I was out in the dark on my walk, a car approached the house. Unusual at this time. I ducked back inside and left it for Madhu to tend to.

* * *

10:12 a.m.

Caitanya-candrodaya talking fast for an hour while I sit beside him. He showed me three techniques, painting with acrylics on canvas (using a palette knife), on smaller canvas board, and on paper. The instructions became too complicated and confusing. I felt the pain in my chest and was reminded that listening to *anyone* talking for some time tires me.

I have been writing EJW for close to two years now, and the main evolution seems to be toward a more "incoherent" mix. It's not really incoherent, but let's say it's nonlogical sometimes. More poetic. Tristine Rainier described four modes of diary-writing: reflective, cathartic, descriptive, and maps of the unconscious (which are more pictures than words). I began EJW with more emphasis on reflective and descriptive, but have evolved to more cathartic. A better word for cathartic might be the attempt to write an easygoing, poetic stream of consciousness, which doesn't pander to audiences who want discourse. Instead, I try to give the gift of myself and of Krishna consciousness in the context of the reality I experience.

If I worked exclusively as a free-writer, it would probably become pretentious. Often I end up coming to the page as a friend speaking simple, straightforward words.

10:20 a.m. now. Caitanya is cleaning up from his demonstration class and preparing canvases and paper for me. He suggests that I do by myself this afternoon what he taught me in the morning. I'll try.

* * *

11:50 a.m.

Just imagine you are a pure devotee and that you are sailing on the prairie. Like Narada, you can go anywhere. You arrive at a hunter's hovel. At first, he is rude, but because you are both empowered by and dependent upon the Lord, you're unafraid. One who realizes he is the pure soul doesn't care what happens to the body. He knows the soul is eternal, that he is meant to serve the Lord and the Lord will always protect him. If he has to take a hellish birth or be thrust into some awkward, painful situation, he accepts it as an opportunity to preach or become Krishna conscious (maybe to pray). He takes his suffering as a mere token of the sinful reaction due him. Because he feels like this, he is not distressed and doesn't need some mundaner to counsel him or to set him back on an even keel.

You speak to the hunter and, after a while, subdue him. Or so the story goes. One devotee wrote me that she has written twenty chapters of a novel that will prove God is a person. She said other philosophies have had their teachings espoused in novels. She mentioned one but said it was poorly done "a weak plot and undeveloped characters. It made me wonder what a good plot was. How does one develop good characters? It seems strange that we should even want to do so. Even if it could be done well, how much work it takes (practice) to achieve it! Fiction writing is a professional skill. Many have tried it, with varying degrees of success. I'm not about to try such a high-wire act at fifty-nine years old.

Walking on the rocky road. I take medication now and then and tell myself, "I'll speak what I've realized when I sit on that little pillow at Govinda's." Almost all ISKCON devotees get a chance to say what they've learned. My chance is coming up soon.

It's October, a new month, yet it's already being devoured a day at a time. Ireland's autumns are different. The leaves don't fall and pile up like they do in America. No baseball finals either. Nothing. Nothing but Krishna.

Hare Krishna artist opts for free-write haven of extinguished posters. He wants to leave a message for devotees of Radha and Krishna (and any newcomers to Their feet):

"Oh! Krishna can be so interesting! We can ride the subways and still chant Krishna's name. We can have our purse protected from being snatched and still be devotees. We can grow up in forgetfulness of God (ignorance, because no one in our lives knew Him), yet still become devotees by meeting His pure devotee."

Fortunately, Prabhupada dislodged my attempts at success through the nondevotional system. I was ready for what he offered "an alternative."

Nikovor, the naive artist, was illiterate, but he strung letters out across the page so he could appear learned. I make postcards and discover ways to evoke Krishna through icons and images. Of course, I could use Krishna conscious materials, which would automatically make for a devotional "message." Examples? Peacock feathers or dust from Vrndavana. I could sprinkle the dust right onto places where I had put glue on the canvas. By varying degrees of prayer, the *ad hoc* committee called the Hare Krishna devotee and asked him to tell them how the folks organize their laundry. That's code. But they thought the question might present a lousy preaching image, might prove that we *had* laundry to air. They decided they wouldn't bother with our attitude toward women, because we are slowly, slowly changing it. They could say we were no better than anyone else in terms of our divorce and remarriage statistics. But we have bright faces. That's true.

For those who study religious science, they will see that the *Bhagavatam* teaches advanced and clear concepts. Lord Caitanya is the ideal preacher of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, but He goes even further, you could say, with His merciful emphasis on the chanting of the holy name. The holy name is there even for those who don't want to or who cannot read the scriptures.

Patri will bring the lunch his wife cooked. He's looking better since being treated for his thyroid. Caitanya-daya in New York City says, "I'm not going to let the city beat me." But New York City can beat you. I was going to say they could come and I'd meet each of them individually, but I really can't. I'm very limited in that regard. Don't think when I go to America I'll have the guts and verve to sit with too many individuals. Anyway, each person's life unfolds in its own way. It seems we do what we can to help them with words, but they have their own destiny to follow and no one can really save them from it. Sometimes they push their luck and fate kicks back (or Krishna takes charge). Hare Krishna chanting is open to each of us. Try to improve yours.

* * *

2:50 p.m.

Balarama began to consider the reason for the increased affection between the cows and their weaned calves. He concluded that the change must have been caused by Krishna, whom Baladeva considered His worshipable Supreme Personality of Godhead. "Thinking in this way, Lord Balarama was able to see, with the eyes of transcendental knowledge, that all these calves and Krishna's friends were expansions of the form of Sri Krishna." (*Bhag.* 10.13.38) requested by Balarama, Sri Krishna explained the situation.

The *Brahma-samhita* describes how Lord Krishna can do this: "*Advaitam acyutam anadim ananta-rupam . . .* He can expand Himself into many thousands and millions but still remains one." (*Bhag.* 10.13.39, purport) After a moment of Brahma's calculation

(one earthly year), Brahmaji returned to Vrndavana on earth to see what had happened after his interference. He was afraid that he had been playing with fire. Brahma couldn't figure it out "he'd thought the boys he had kidnapped were still in the cave, yet he saw Krishna playing with His *gopas* and calves. "Thus Brahma's power was superseded."

* * *

3:25 p.m.

Soon it may become too cold to sit on the outdoor bench. The other day the house door blew shut when I was alone and I was locked out. Now I know where the extra key is hidden. I'll keep it secret. I'll also keep secret the obscene or sexual allusions I read in the old Dublin music paper where Madhu's band was described. Now I have to carry these dirty things. Let me put them down somewhere. Circumambulating the house, chanting mantras, I pray to Krishna to help me with all this. I don't want to remain sullied.

Bhurijana Prabhu keeps saying in his lectures that we have to stop acting for ourselves and act to please Krishna. That's the real pleasure "we're so selfish. Why don't I like to hear that? He said, "Gradually, or very soon, we have to stop acting for our own pleasure." Seems to go against my grain.

Blue flowers. I wrote to Hare Krishna dasi admitting that the garden isn't so great yet and told her what I didn't like in it: the exposed, brown earth. Why not grow grass? And the cement wall with no creepers on it. And the prospect of everything dying during the winter.

"President Kennedy was shot!" M. said yesterday when we were speaking of my own security. At first I thought he was announcing something that had just happened.

Don't mention so many things. Go inside and paint, and hope for a wholehearted, integrated, Krishna conscious expression. Yes, for Krishna's pleasure. If it will come. I have to keep trying while I have up-time. This will be my first time using canvas. Let's see what happens.

* * *

5:45 p.m.

When Othello goes mad (heart cracked after he killed Desdemona), he speaks nonsense and, I seem to recall, that nonsense consisted of a list of nouns, many of them animals. I don't write out of such anguish but more play and the fact that many things run in a stream over water and in the water and at the bottom.

I wasn't sure I had the strength to fill the water containers for tomorrow's bath and wash the dishes. I had to take a feverfew for the pain. Downhill gently toward my bed.

The work on canvas went well. I did a *mandira* with three domes decorated with Visnu *tilaka* and a man standing next to them. I put a little roof over him too. I couldn't follow all of Caitanya's instructions, so reverted to my own way. He called my art poster art; real artists appreciate more nuances of color. He said black and white have some of the richest nuances. I'm trying to pick them up. Maybe spend a little more time on each painting. But the most important thing remains how to express freely and yet express Krishna consciousness. I think it will have to come by practice and faith in the process.

Chose red and gold outfits for Radha-Govinda tomorrow. Let me do the equivalent now, at this time of the evening, to letting the cat out. Eat Trifalla, set the alarm, and wind down. Pray.

October 4, 12:02 a.m.

Srila Prabhupada is lecturing on *mayy asakta-manah partha . . .* (Bg. 7.1) This yoga system is to think of Krishna with attachment, devotion. We should, should love Him, be attached, as the river flows toward the sea. Nothing can stop it. It's natural and has no selfish motive. The only cause of love of God is the love itself.

This is different than praying to God for bread. Real love can't be checked by any material consideration. Don't think, "I'm poor now, but when I'm rich, I can take to Krishna consciousness." Make a *svaha* to Krishna. Otherwise you'll have to make a *svaha* to *maya*, illusion.

In a dream, a magazine arrived in the mail lampooning ISKCON's health journal. It accused it of being gibberish. I looked through it for an article lampooning me but couldn't find it. Awoke and imagined "they" would satirize my "mix." But my activities are not nonsense. Gradually they will all come to understand what I am doing and how it is service, just as I am gradually understanding.

It may seem a little strange, this demand "too pushy" to love Krishna and be attached to Him, but the premise is that it's our natural, eternal state. It's just covered. Prescribed acts like *tapasya* and charity are considered pious and will awaken our original nature in a preliminary way, but they don't substitute for real love of God. "Now we are addicted to all kinds of nonsense, but unless you stop all nonsensical activities, you cannot understand Krishna consciousness."

"You don't like to, but you think, 'I will rise early to satisfy Krishna.' And you may be lazy and not want to chant on your beads, but if you want to love Krishna, you do it." (See p. 219 of *Quest*.) These are important statements. From time to time we hear the *vaidhi* process challenged, as if it is worthless. Everything should be done without coercion, the critics insist, and no guilt if we fail. We should be allowed to chant sixteen rounds with love only if we want to. Again, no force. But here Prabhupada says that love has to be reached through the purificatory methods of pious acts (*yajna*, *tapa*, *dana*, etc.), and the regulative acts of *sadhana*. Thus butter comes from milk when churned, and fire comes out of wood when rubbed.

Also, develop love for Krishna through the six exchanges taught by Srila rupa Gosvami. Cook food and offer it to Krishna. Krishna gives us grains and other ingredients, and we can prepare them into a nice dish for His pleasure. If we do this simple thing, we will develop our love for Him.

I could add this to my prepared lecture today. I chose the *brahmanda bhramite kona bhagyavan jiva* verse, and I intend to speak about our many spot-lives on the greater journey of the soul. Let me add more about the yoga of developing love of God.

* * *

4:20 a.m.

This morning I heard Prabhupada giving an arrival address in Mauritius. You have to appreciate him in action as you listen to his words. Think of what he was attempting to do with the Krishna consciousness movement. Think of his constant dedication to convincing people that there's a soul beyond the body. Think of his awareness that ninety-nine percent of the people live in bodily consciousness and his incredible compassion to want to save them from that.

* * *

Someone was telling me about Beethoven after he went deaf. He was absorbed in what he wanted to give, the last music within him, but now he was cut off from the world. He attended a concert where he conducted his own music, but he couldn't hear either the performance or the applause at the end. He couldn't hear anyone's music except what was in his own head. He was hard to live with, so people tended to leave him alone. That last line, "They left him alone" (in his illness, with his fiery genius, and absorbed in the work of giving his last gifts to the world) "it's poignant.

I had something I wanted to say, but it has slipped from my mind. Anyway, it's good to think of Krishna by hearing about Him. Otherwise Krishna will slip from your mind. There are many ways to think of Krishna. It's good when you think of Him with love and intensity, especially when you are offering Him the service assigned by your spiritual master.

But when you serve, you will meet obstacles. The devotee regards such problems as a source of happiness, because it helps him feel a deeper dependence on Krishna, which makes him feel transcendental.

Admitting one's lack of surrender. Doesn't one feel regret? Don't I maintain a hope to improve? Rupa Gosvami says, "I have no qualification, but I maintain a hope of attaining Krishna, and that hope gives me pain."

There *was* something I wanted to write here, but . . . It came just before I decided to slip in that quick paragraph about Srila Prabhupada in Mauritius. Anyway, I am trying to go to Dublin to lecture. Yes, we have to admit we fall far, far short of total surrender. Most of us aren't such bold preachers. We could call it a falldown. "He's fallen," we say when someone gives up *sannyasa* or their vows, but the most fallen has lost the flame of Krishna consciousness and is no longer interested, really, in pleasing his spiritual master.

We may have to be daring enough to recapture the flame. Sometimes that means striking out on one's own in a way, finding one's devotion apart from what our Godbrothers may say. But be careful when you take the risk that you don't ruin yourself. Stay in a safe place while you discover yourself.

A full-color flyer sent as junk mail to every home in Ireland warns that this winter, we may become sick or die from the flu. The elderly are especially vulnerable. But how can anyone destined to die avoid it? Should I send a similar flyer to every home, telling them that they're not their bodies and that they should think of God if they want to escape sinful reaction?

* * *

9:58 a.m.

Another session with Caitanya-candrodaya. He showed me how to wet the paper with water with a sponge and then apply watercolor with a brush or water-based pastels. That was nice; I feel at home with the technique. I liked the way the colors stained the paper, then mixed and ran.

Then we did a small canvas. He insisted I use only a palette knife, "like the abstract expressionists" do. I didn't like that much. I doubt I'll do that when I'm working on my own. I'm not interested so much in "working with the materials." Caitanya suggested I not think of myself as a naive artist but something like a naive expressionist. He said naive artists try more for their own primitive form of representational art or get lost in the motion of making a beautiful figure, but I am more intellectual or Krishna conscious. Okay, so I'm not exactly primitive, but in my possessing almost no skills, I'm wanting to keep the drawing skill at the lowest common denominator. In that sense, my work is primitive.

Caitanya also suggested that I could meditate before I paint "perhaps read a *Bhagavatam* verse before painting. Look at the elements of the verse, he said, then paint the images that come to mind. Yes, that's possible. How about, "A man who renounces sense gratification can become eligible for spiritual life." But I wouldn't want to illustrate it as if it were a *Bhagavad-gita* "lesson" picture. How would I do it? With feeling. Let the feelings speak. To do so, I had better forget the audience.

The morning rolling along. Like it or not, he draws the heart as a papaya red, but please don't cut it out and eat it. The heart is actually a pump the Lord gives to His creatures. See this body either as a torture chamber or a wonderful natural creation. It can be either. But for devotees, it's a testing ground whereby they come out successful. It's an instrument to use in developing *bhakti*, if we let ourselves be guided by guru. The body allows us to feel we are using ourselves up in His service.

* * *

Meditation before doing anything: Allow me to serve You by this act.

(He also wants to "get off" by doing it, but he won't put that in his official prayer to God. He'd like to enter the reality of dreams, but in a Krishna conscious way and not always as a loser, down and out, lost, running afraid of the world's demons.)

Dear God, please . . .

He's so spaced out, his prayers are unfocused, just pious mouthings "what he thinks he's supposed to do.

O God . . .

(His mouth opens in an "O." He's not in the temple *kirtana*, business meeting, or *any* meeting. Can't hack it anymore. But he wants to be part of an ISKCON community. As I am here. *Lord, I thank You for that.*)

Grateful heart. He may hug me tightly or break my heart by not appearing before me, but He is always my Lord. No conditions. *Ahaituki apratihata* "no motive, completely pure, completely surrendered, on the front lines "but I'm not.

But I'm stubborn. I'll keep trying.

* * *

12:40 p.m.

M. just told me he's going to do a colon cleansing with Epsom salts, then starting with Karttika, October 5, take no sweets. He'll also increase the number of his rounds. I felt annoyed to hear it. Pious stuff. I won't be doing anything extra this year. These years it's been enough to get through a day with the head pain. More austerities I don't need. Or perhaps I'm just getting old and no longer see the value of these little vows. I will light a candle each night and sing "Damodarastaka" as autumn moves in and I attempt to increase my devotion. "The Damodara month is coming . . . from that day we'll observe Damodara-vrata for one month. The duty will be that in the evening you will offer a candle, a small candle, all of you, just before the Deity, not within the room, outside the room, and chant the Damodarastaka, *namamisvaram*. That is already printed in our songbook. So this will be *Damodara-vrata*. That Damodara is explained here." (Srila Prabhupada, lecture on *Bhag.* 1.8.31, Mayapur, October 11, 1974)

Developed fog in the head. I hope I can hold together long enough to give the lecture. A spiritual master is supposed to know and convey the Vedic knowledge. It's a heavy burden sometimes.

Tired eyes.

October 5, 12:08 a.m.

"The Art of Eternal Love." Thinking of love, it is difficult to understand another being. We can't ask someone else to do the understanding for us and then accept their opinion. Yesterday, I heard expressed the opinion of a loyal disciple of a fallen Godbrother, but I couldn't accept that opinion. At the same time, why should I condemn it? I'm not a manager who has to choose one opinion over another anyway. As a private citizen in this movement, I have the freedom to maintain my own opinion and then respect the opinions of others, especially when they are based on affection.

Trying to read Prabhupada's lecture on love. In it, the devotee reads aloud from the preface to *The Nectar of Devotion*. I plan to start hearing the NOD lectures he gave during Karttika in 1972, Vrndavana. This lecture was given after those ones, [deletion] in Bombay. The preface says that everyone has a propensity to love someone else, but our love is imperfect because it is not all-inclusive. "When one becomes Krishna conscious, however, he loves every living being because of its connection with Krishna." A devotee is not partial. He doesn't hate persons of an "enemy" race or species. He, like Krishna, tries to give everyone Krishna consciousness and thus "get them back home, back to Godhead."

Krishna recommends that we can think of Him as the taste of water, etc., in the beginning. Animals can't think like that. But we can use our lives to develop God consciousness. When I spoke this last night, somehow I was blocked from saying more on this. Maybe because I don't practice it myself enough. (The lecture went all right, except I felt that I was ranting a little. Half an hour into my talk, a woman walked out. She was dolled up, not a devotee. Still, it made me feel that I was overbearing. The

audience couldn't take it. I slowed down, then ended. The questions and answers were good.)

Prabhupada has encouraged us again and again to take advantage of our human bodies and to not become carried away with the affairs we have in this one lifetime. This is such a crucial point. Don't identify with this body or its designations. Pure love for Krishna is eternal and can be awakened.

"Without Krishna consciousness, everyone must suffer." Krishna says, "On your own you cannot avoid suffering the pains caused by My material nature . . . you can be happy and free of suffering if you surrender to Me."

Loving Krishna is like watering the root of a tree. We water the leaves so easily but become frustrated. Yesterday, during the question and answer period, I endorsed a young man's desire to travel around the world and meet people, but I said he had to do it in Krishna consciousness. People liked to hear it. That has become one of my specialties: to say that they can do what they want if they are so strongly inclined to do so, but they need to learn to offer it to Krishna. Through that activity and inclination, they should learn to give their entire selves and everything they love to Krishna. They should strive to purify themselves and their inclination-offering. Most people like to hear this, although some devotees will say that we must do only what Krishna assigns. Most of the people who say that, however, tend to also be doing what they want to do for Krishna, and living in that Krishna conscious context. It's a hard conclusion to avoid. Why deny it? Srila Prabhupada writes, "You may perform whatever loving service you can do for your society . . . but you must do it in Krishna consciousness."

In the van on the way home last night, Caitanya-candrodaya asked me, "When you paint, do you do it as service to Krishna or as self-expression?" I referred to my answer to the young man and said, "I may do it as self-expression, yet I offer that self-expression to Krishna. The self-expression becomes a means to reach the further stage of doing it totally because Krishna wants me too." Something like that.

The supreme beloved is Krishna. "The mission of our Krishna consciousness movement is to teach people how to love Krishna. Only then will they be fully satisfied." I pray to do this myself "to become satisfied in my arts for His pleasure, to know Him, to feel His reciprocation. Then I'll know at least a drop of His love and will be more qualified to help others. Dear Lord, please help me.

* * *

4:32 a.m.

Saw on M.'s desk a TV guide open to a page "my eye was caught by a man behind bars. I looked at it. It was an ad for a film called "Midnight Express," which is about an American man named Billy who was arrested in Turkey for carrying hashish. Despite protests by the American Embassy, he was given a long prison sentence and suffers hellishly. "This is his story." I could see why it would hold people's interest. It provides a fantasy of what could happen to any Westerner while traveling in one of those strange, undeveloped countries. It would be moving.

Maya.

No, emotion carries some truth. Heard that that conservative, uptight *sannyasi* turned off a young man. We can actually abuse our teachings in our so-called "straight as an arrow" presentations. Emotion is meant for Krishna. We have to understand the language of love to get that.

Now play and produce pictures and poems
sashaying me and Caitanya-candro standing
side by side each with our own pages
mine different than his
of course and the message of Krishna
integrated.

We want to integrate it more, to blow sweet and light and
melodic because there will never be

another Prabhupada

Remember him and feel something.

Then use that feeling to
give your heart.

I came to Prabhupada, a happy child, him in a frayed *cadar*, and renounced everything I knew before. The Gaudiya Vaisnava's torn quilt and broken water pot were dear to him, and he told us that even in America, where disciples would provide whatever he needed, he missed that life. Juxtaposed with the harsh laugh of nighclubbers "feel that juxtaposition. We each weave melodies and each have to sing until the end. Where will we give our hearts?

* * *

5:26 a.m.

Madhu did his Epsom salt cleansing last night, so he had to sleep in this morning. I guess I'll prepare my own breakfast "just fruit. When Madhu gets up, he'll leave again to pick up one of his daughters, who's coming to visit him. She'll be carrying some medicine for me, which devotees gave her in London. This is my next to last day working with Caitanya. I have appreciated our exchanges, but I'll also be glad to get back to my own ways.

This morning I heard rain tinkling on the skylight, but now that I've come out, the sky is cleared. I can even see little streaks in the sky, or a smudge over there, of approaching light. Perhaps the moon is also hidden behind some clouds back there. Every morning there's one star that's prominent about half way up the sky. It would be nice to know its name, but even nameless I greet it and it greets me back.

* * *

I dreamt that Prabhupada came into an apartment, an old tenement, where I was the caretaker. Other devotees arrive, one of them a Godbrother who has misled many devotees. As we speak, I find myself heaving this Godbrother out the door, telling him how he has abused so many people's loyalties. But now what will that brother do? Prabhupada sits and listens to our exchange. As I was pushing him out the door, I told my Godbrother that he should try to recapture his initial sincerity. My Godbrother

insisted that we must fight "that his followers will stand up to ISKCON's followers and the "sincerity" will be decided by who wins. I thought he had gone crazy to say such a thing. As I spoke, I was aware of Prabhupada and hoped he approved of what I was saying.

* * *

10:17 a.m.

Finished the day's painting lesson with Caitanya-candrodaya. I don't feel I need more instruction on technique. I'm happy in my ignorance. (Today, Caitanya told me that I don't know how to use a paintbrush, and if I continue on in that way, I would "destroy the brush.") I appreciated his help.

Today is the first day of Kartika. M. will be gone, so I'll observe *urdhva-vrata* alone this evening.

Lord Caitanya liked to stay at a place called Imlitala. I mentioned that in *Dust of Vrndavana*. The American haikuists can't follow this at all. The capital "H" I used in the pronoun referring to Sri Caitanya will throw them. It doesn't matter. They are long forgotten and the book is still present. I went to Imlitala early, while it was still dark and cold. There's a Gaudiya Matha temple there now, so I felt somewhat welcome, although we will always be outsiders.

Circling in the temple,
Bengali cousins
and their shadows.

We stayed there until the sky lightened. We saw the place:
Open courtyard
the only roof "
sky and branches.

Maybe that's not a great haiku, but it provides an accurate and valuable description of the place. Hearing this little poem now takes me back there. Just think of that ancient, tree, the place where Sri Caitanya sat, and see what you feel. If you don't feel much, then at least feel the tree's ancientness, its history, and its faith. The Lord sat there five hundred years ago, and even today the place is honored with fresh tamarind leaves. Caress the divine details at Imlitala, and become Krishna conscious.

A monkey in the tree
fiercely shakes
the old branch.

That's good. No intellectual, abstract words like "cousins." Fierce monkeys! Since you already know the holy context (Imlitala), you can catch the juxtaposition of images. While we were there even during that brief time, I heard an emotion-evoking *bhajana* over the loud speaker. It was coming from the river bank somewhere, and we heard it while we stood inside the monastery enclosure, looking out at the river and the rising sun.

Then this:

Black Sanskrit script:
tamarind branches

against the sky.

Then it was enough "or maybe too much. We went home to the Krishna-Balaram Mandir. I was tired, cold, hungry, and duty was calling. We were ISKCON people in the end, and wanted to be back to attend the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* class and all that. On the rickshaw back, Baladeva suggested I call the book *Enchanting Sands*. I had already chosen *Dust Of Vrndavana*.

* * *

3:05 p.m.

Lord Brahma was confused by the two sets of calves and boys. Imagined Srila Prabhupada speaking this during his very last days. Someone says he should have been speaking about and reading *gopi-bhava*, but here he was, working on his literary mission on his spiritual master's behalf. He worked on his translations and purports until the very end of his life, even though I'm sure he realized he could never complete the *Bhagavatam*. We should all try to follow this example "fall silent only when we have no more life.

Srila Prabhupada said we shouldn't reject any part of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* "not even one drop should be neglected.

Lord Brahma wanted to mystify Lord Krishna, but he himself became bewildered. Srila Prabhupada says that the scientists are similar to Brahma in that they challenge God but become implicated in more suffering. Instead of surpassing Krishna, they become hopelessly entangled. Therefore, we should simply surrender to Krishna.

Inferior power is diminished in the presence of superior power. As Brahma looked upon the calves and boys playing with Krishna, they became transformed into *visnu-murtis*. Their forms had all the markings of Visnu mentioned in the *sastra*, including the *Srivatsa* and *kaustubha* on their chests. Their bodies were decorated with *tulasi* garlands "offered by devotees engaged in worshiping the Lord by the greatest pious activities, namely hearing and chanting." (*Bhag.* 10.13.49) Devotion flourishes when pious activities are performed.

Those Visnu forms, by their smiling and sidelong glances, "created and protected the desires of Their own devotees . . ." (*Bhag.* 10.13.50) The Lord's glances *create* desires in His devotees. The devotees then desire to serve Him in various ways. Otherwise, the devotees have no unfulfilled desires. This is encouraging because we may hope to have the Lord inspire us in ways to serve Him. Thus the creative impetus of the individual soul is purified and made perfect. "In Vrndavana there is a place where there was no temple, but a devotee desired "that there be a temple and *seva*, devotional service. Therefore, what was once an empty corner has now become a place of pilgrimage. Such are the desires of a devotee." (*Bhag.* 10.13.50, purport)

Lord Brahma saw that all beings were worshiping those *visnu-murtis* by dancing, singing, and other means of worship. Srila Prabhupada states that all *jivas* render some kind of service to the Supreme, "and the topmost position is that of direct service in Vrndavana."

* * *

4:34 p.m.

At last the house is empty. No one lingering. It's raining, as if to insulate my privacy. I painted a picture of a waterfall, forest, and small shed and titled it "Hermitage," which shows what's on my mind. When I finish writing this page, I'll go downstairs and turn off the dehumidifier M. likes to keep running. There is a place somewhere, right here. No, don't indulge in afternoon *prasadam*. remain simple. I might even chant more rounds. After all, it's Karttika.

I think behind Caitanya's enthusiasm to help me with my painting is an idea that it needs improvement. He liked to instruct me in how to create nuances of color, how to appreciate shape, etc., but I'm like Jada Bharata, who refused to learn from his father how to wash himself, chant *gayatri*, etc.

I can hear a seagull. "A cigarette that bears a lipstick's traces . . ." Ugh, think of it; *don't* think of it. Bring yourself back to Krishna.

I began noticing during *japa* what my mind was doing rather than concentrating on the name. I consider that awareness a gain. I don't even have to go further right now to force the mind to hear the holy name. Of course, I know that's the next stage, but even to notice *what* the deviation is, is good. It leads to an automatic correction, or at least a desire to correct it.

May I never be stuck in a Turkish jail. May I chant God's names and feel that He is with me. This is what I have always wanted. I want only to remember guru and Krishna. I pray for deliverance from forgetfulness.

In *Prema-pradipa*, the Vaisnava mentioned prayer as being in the category of lesser worship by those who don't know *bhakti-rasa*. But Rupa Gosvami and Narrotama dasa Thakura wrote many prayers. Of course, their prayers were within *bhakti-rasa*.

I asked Caitanya to consider overnight how painting can be *bhajana*. That will be our lesson tomorrow. I don't really expect him to teach me that. How can he? It's too personal. But it's the most important point. We are not trying to follow in the footsteps of Miro or Picasso. Caitanya suggested I could speak onto a tape my impressions of what I have painted and how I feel about it at the end of an art session. Perhaps I'll be too tired then. The idea didn't really appeal to me.

"Oh, how the ghost of you clings . . ." remind me, water is the taste of Krishna, and sound in ether, *japa* of *yajnas*, sun and all light, life airs, and He'll meet us at death. "We can be squashed to death in a moment," said Bhurijana Prabhu in a lecture.

* * *

6:22 p.m.

Caitanya told me that it's *rasa-yatra* today. Sweet rice on the roof? But it's raining. If I work at it, I could finish proofreading EJW 9 today. Let me clean the deck for that and other action.

Karttika-oriented: got the tapes of Srila Prabhupada's NOD lectures given in 1972 during Karttika in Vrndavana. Soon I'll be doing new rereadings in the *Bhagavatam* at midnight. Lit a candle and sat by myself to sing "Damodarastaka." Then I played Visnujana Swami's rendition of "Gopinatha." I may not live here all my life, but what does "all" mean? I should say, "For the rest of my life." *All* my life is something that's

already practically spent, so I shouldn't think of my life as something that's worth much currency. It's not like it's something I can choose to spend in one way or another at this point.

Gopinatha . . . Why would I think of living somewhere else? Is it getting too Irish for me here? Am I becoming jealous that M. has so many other things to do now and is no longer interested in our service relationship? Maybe. Maybe I could find a more monklike life elsewhere, without a servant who is constantly dashing in and out because he's got other things to do.

But I know that no place is perfect. And Ireland is *pretty* good for a monklike life, especially rural Ireland. I can't really get much better than this for quiet, freedom from fear (little crime in the area), the ability to communicate in English, being surrounded by loving disciples, and having a place of my own. And where else could I have an art room?

October 6, 12:00 a.m.

"Placing Our Love in Krishna" is the last article in *Quest*. Srila Prabhupada was lecturing in Seattle at the time this talk was given and often began by chanting responsively, *govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami*. Then this great opener: "Our program is to worship Govinda, the Original Person, with love and devotion. This is Krishna consciousness. We're teaching people to love Krishna, that's all." Where do we place our love? We can try expanding it from the body-self outward, or we can directly love Krishna. Love for Krishna includes everything else. Loving Krishna is like watering the root of the tree.

Everyone is subordinate to someone else; that's the *jiva's* nature. Be subordinate to Krishna (*aradhyo bhagavan*). "And if you want to worship some place, worship His place, Vrndavana." *Tad-dhama vrndavana*. If you want to learn this process of loving Krishna, follow in the footsteps of the *gopis*. Then Prabhupada tells us that the *gopis* loved Krishna. They thought of Him and how the stones might hurt His feet as He walked through the forest. It made them cry to think of His pain. Krishna admitted He had no power to repay the *gopis'* love.

As I read and write (quickly, pulling out words for an outline), I'm looking forward to two hours of *japa*. I hope to be able to enact what Srila Prabhupada is describing here "love of Krishna. At least I hope He will accept my attempt to place my love in Him, His holy name, by the act of sacrifice.

To learn the science of loving God, there must be some authorized book. Caitanya Mahaprabhu says that book is *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. The preliminary study is *Bhagavad-gita*. *Caitanya-caritamrta* is the postgraduate study.

Srila Prabhupada says the Krishna consciousness movement is "trying to serve you as far as possible. We are sending our boys into the streets to invite you . . ." The Krishna consciousness movement is not a bluff and does not mislead people. It has authoritative literature and is followed by many great saintly persons; "the vivid example is Lord Caitanya." Place your love in Krishna and you won't be frustrated. "You'll feel how you are making progress in peace, in happiness, in everything that you want." That's it, a simple yet profound introductory lecture delivered mostly to young people in Seattle in 1968. Present in the audience were those who were already following Srila Prabhupada on the West Coast. All elements of advanced Krishna consciousness are sown like seeds

into the talk, including Lord Caitanya's method of chanting and dancing, the elements Lord Caitanya prescribed, mention of the books, and even *gopi-bhava* and Srimati Radharani.

I woke at 11:30 p.m. and got up at 11:45. The usual unusual dreams. Feelings of physical peace during the night while I heard the wind outside. The peace came after subduing a headache at 8:30 p.m. I was warm under the duvet.

Offering candles in the evening. Words flow; don't be afraid of them or of the ordinary sameness you live from day to day. Live with gradual change, and don't be afraid of the erosion of time.

When I sat up in bed to turn on the light, I realized that death was approaching, and I imagined I wouldn't be upset by it. It has to be. Was thinking of something like that last night too when my candle was offered and burning down. I hope to surround myself with holy thoughts of Krishna at that time.

* * *

4:30 a.m.

List form.

1. Telling a confidant about being peeved that M. doesn't cover his duties. This is private stuff. I don't want to hurt him. I also don't want to expose how petty I can be. People are starving, homeless, at war, and I have a house to myself and adequate food and heat. Still, I complain that there is no one to massage my head and neck, no one to read with me, no one to clean or do the other tasks I ask to have done. I realize the pettiness, but I can't help but feel what I feel.

2. Continuous thoughts of living in Vrndavana. I think of devotees like M. Swami and Navadvipa dasa "how they live through all Vraja's seasons and have left behind their Western mindsets forever, learning to speak Hindi. I can't get into it *that* much. Srila Prabhupada encouraged us wherever we were.

3. And so on.

* * *

It's Karttika, and I'd be better off forgetting the stuff about Madhu and rising on the wings of carrier pigeons or American Airlines with Srila Prabhupada as my master and me as *his* servant, carrying trays and stuff, doing whatever he wants as he goes to yet another city, where a small batch of ecstatic but innocent young disciples are waiting to receive him. They have pulled it together as best they can "maybe hired a limo "and called around to find out what they should cook for his pleasure. They have arranged their kitchen, the *vyasasana*, and his living quarters. They are fervently hoping it all works out to his satisfaction.

It's 4:45 and I've already had a beauty of a morning, so thank You, Krishna. I tried not to be selfish but to dedicate my breath and all else to You.

* * *

List.

1. Miss Whit.
2. The bad 20th Century jokes in art.
3. Do something real. Serve the Lord and His pure devotees, who are most purely manifest in Vrndavana.
4. That means the *bhava*. The mind fixed in Vraja even if I don't live there physically. My romantic version while apart.

I have to tell you that I'll be wearing rain gear as I circumambulate this morning. Will the white van be back in time so I can have breakfast? After those quick notes we exchanged, he's gone back to be with his daughter.

* * *

5:15 a.m.

There's a sensational full moon out. I didn't see it at all yesterday. While chanting *japa* earlier, I got a peek at it now and again through the skylight. The clouds were moving quickly over it. There are still plenty of clouds up there, but at least they're moving so quickly that the moon becomes uncovered enough to get a good view of it. I don't need a flashlight to walk around the building, the moon is so illuminating. This full moon signals the beginning of Karttika. It lights up the yard and lights up the senses and intelligence. If I can see the moon as Krishna's eye, then I will be fortunate. Just the fact that it's so unusual in this rainy climate to see the full moon makes it seem mystical. It's as if I were walking in a different place. It's as cold and windy as ever, though, with October hinting of colder months ahead.

* * *

9:50 a.m.

Finished morning painting session with Caitanya. Side by side, we painted as *bhajana*. First we outlined the sketches with brush and water. He started a kind of map of the Govardhana area. It seemed typical of his architectural background. I did a cliché or obsession "a man sitting to read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. It was fun to bleed the colors, then talking about our own and one another's painting.

Now that's over and M. has arrived with his daughter (the second oldest). She's smoking a cigarette outside the wall. Then he'll bring her in and show her where he lives. She asked him last night, accusingly, "How could a man leave his wife and children?" Not mine to answer.

* * *

I drew a man reading, so let me actually read. I showed a serpent coming down upon him like Doubt personified. There was a friendly dog at his feet. read in the light given by Vyasa and the Bhaktivedanta purports.

Lord Brahma saw various personified energies worshiping the Visnu *murtis*. Everyone is subordinate to Krishna. *Ekala iSvara Krishna, ara saba bhrtya*. Although in his last weeks on earth, in an apparently painful and debilitated physical state, Srila Prabhupada dictated a long purport to one of these technical verses describing the

various energies who were worshipping the Lord. I can't outline it here. He weaves a song of Narottama dasa Thakura through it, collaborating points about elevating a *jiva* to the mode of goodness and transcendence by radha-Krishna *bhajana*, *vasudeva-bhakti*, *bhakta-sane vasa*: "Our Krishna consciousness movement is meant to give people good association so that this change may take place, and we actually see that by this method people all over the world are gradually becoming devotees." (*Bhag.* 10.13.53, purport) If we fail to live with devotees and develop good habits, then our human life will be wasted. *Hari hari viphale janama gonainu*. "We are therefore trying to save human society . . ." Srila Prabhupada is defining his work and telling his followers what he wants them to do to continue it if they are actually dedicated to him.

* * *

10:29 a.m.

I have a little time and I'm not much in the Vrndavana mood right now, but I'd like to look at those haikus and say something. I'm a writer, and writing is my life. Say something.

I introduced a section with a quote from the *Bhagavata Purana*, where Krishna says all the residents of Vrndavana, including the animals and plants, "achieve the perfection of life by unalloyed love for Me, and thus they easily achieve Me." I'm glad I didn't compromise with the American haikuists on their very different mountain, even though I was trying to reach them. Their reason is offended when they hear that some *Person* says love for Him is the perfection of existence.

First dawn light
at Davanala-kunda "
a snouty hog appears.

That's quite a phrase to swallow, "Davanala-kunda." It takes at least two readings to get it right. The first time you don't like it. You criticize it. Then you turn and give it another chance.

But I remember being there in the autumn with Bala for the specific purpose of writing these haikus. Plenty of other things were happening in ISKCON, and I was still on the GBC. (Can a GBC man and ISKCON guru write haikus? Some thought not.) We'd start out hunting haikus in the predawn dark. I went out in the dark because the harsh surface realities at the sacred places were usually not so present. But this time, the first thing I saw was the typical black and filthy hog. This poem provides an accurate picture. It's as if the hog was smashing the romantic notions in my spiritual life. Maybe I thought if I went to the *kunda* early enough and chanted *japa* at first light, I'd see Krishna with His flute or something. Instead I saw a snouty hog. There was some irony there.

Sadhu
washing an old white cloth.

Don't dismiss this little poem as if it has no value. He was a *sadhu*. In Vrndavana, *sadhus* wash their old white cloth. We call that poverty, but they consider their personal cleanliness and especially their simplicity as part of their *bhajana*. Nothing but Krishna "*akinana*" no material desires. *Sadhus* are *tapasvis*. They don't

mind cold weather. *Sadhu*. The essence of that life "there he is. Of course, he was so different from me, so how could I dare to even comment, as if to approve or observe? But a haikuist is the camera's eye. I took a snapshot of Vrndavana. Maybe in another life I can become like that *sadhu*.

Light-footed,
a mangy dog
strolls around the *kunda*.

I admired the dog. Skinny by Western standards, its step was full of bounce. Another dog, like the one kicking Vraja's sand with its rear feet after defecating on the ground. But we hear they are advanced souls taking one last life in Vraja before returning to the spiritual world. The dog was patrolling, mangy, full of life. Such dogs live on the raw edge of nerve. They show no niceties, no affection, but cruise around, ready to fight and yap if necessary. But they are alive at Davanala-kunda.

A white cow
nuzzles my chest
and won't go away.

That actually happened. Baladeva was sitting apart, guarding my writing space. When he saw the cow, he came and intercepted her, then let her lick his whole body as she liked.

* * *

2:39 p.m.

"The *visnu-murtis* all had eternal, unlimited forms full of knowledge and bliss and existing beyond the influence of time. Their great glory was not even to be touched by the *jnanis* engaged in studying the *Upanisads*." (*Bhag.* 10.13.54)

We have to be favored by God before we can know Him even to some extent. As in all his purports, Srila Prabhupada here selected comments from a previous *acarya* like Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura. Lord Brahma thus came to know that all the forms of the boys and calves were complete Visnu forms, full of truth (eternal), full of knowledge, and full of bliss. Srila Prabhupada: "We should discuss *Srimad-Bhagavatam* daily as much as possible, and then everything will be clarified . . . Each and every verse is transcendental." (*Bhag.* 10.13.54, purport)

Lord Brahma was stunned. Lord Krishna then removed His curtain of Yoga-maya. Srila Prabhupada explains that the Supreme Lord has varied energies by which he performs His varied functions. For example, He has *samvit*, *sandini*, and *ahladini*. He possesses inconceivable powers (*acintya*), about which we cannot argue.

"Lord Brahma's external consciousness then revived, and he stood up, just like a dead man coming back to life." (*Bhag.* 10.13.577) Here Srila Prabhupada describes death, even as his own death was imminent. He writes, "We actually do not die . . . we return to our real life and attain perfection."

"The Krishna consciousness movement wants to stop *koti-janma*, repeated birth and death. In one birth, one should rectify everything and come to permanent life." (*Bhag.* 10.13.58, purport)

* * *

3:30 p.m.

In the room where my extra books are stored "Peter Matthiessen's Zen journals, the Christian books I don't read anymore, etc. I was just walking outside and chanting, but wasn't dressed warm enough to want to stay out there. Time to get out my winter coat. My editor just sent me the edited manuscript of EJW 10, so I'll begin working on that.

Want to hear something? Want to be Krishna conscious? What happened with Brahma after Krishna lifted His Yogamaya? I'll read it tomorrow. That will end that chapter, the last one Prabhupada wrote, and I will go back to the beginning of the First Canto. I hope to be doing that as long as I live "returning to read the various things he gave us.

My matchbook has an Irish saying on it that when translated means that a person's reputation lives on after he dies. Canakya says something similar. Within our brief lifetimes, we should live in such a way that our reputation is honorable. That is the real meaning of having one's reputation live on after he dies. If our reputation is based simply on some particular work we did that was not backed up by a devotional character, people's appreciation of our contribution will change. Through the generations, people are fickle. Make one's lasting reputation something solid and pure, and if no one but devotees appreciate it, then we're still successful. Ultimately, to create such a reputation means to live for immortality as Krishna's servant and then go back to Godhead. At least make progress toward it. This seems abstract for people who are absorbed in their one spot-life.

Madhu usually walks with his daughters or son to the top of the hill when they visit. When they get to the top, they usually ask him again why he left the family when they were so young. They tell him how much his absence stunted their lives. He takes their words and feels their pain, but says that all he can do now is make himself available to help them in the present. He also admits he was wrong. He doesn't dare preach to them.

I don't admit that I was wrong in leaving my family. Anyway, there's no one left who would be interested in accusing me of neglect. We have so long been dead to one another that there would be nothing to say even if we met. That's Krishna's mercy on me. Hare Krishna.

* * *

I started reading Sivarama Swami's book defending Prabhupada's *Bhagavad-gita* purports and the tradition that accepts Krishna's version of the *Gita* as aimed at devotion. Maharaja says he will prove his points with logic and analysis.

Also looked at Berryman's book and saw a reference to "The Bear." I got that out and read the first part. It's a powerful piece of writing. The author uses the bear to symbolize an unknown God who watches the boy while he is hunting in the woods. Only when the boy surrenders to the woods "surrenders his gun and compass "and wanders more humbly in search of the bear does the bear appear before him. The bear is as big as he imagined "even bigger.

I read it and thought I could draw ideas from it for powerful, Krishna conscious writing. This piece reads more like a legend than a poem, and of course, writing something like that requires an effective use of sentences "usually of the longer variety, although short ones could be used when necessary. This piece stops way short of education or soul direction. I could call it a kind of entertainment and even an education in the sense of higher values, because some of the characters embody and speak in a moral way "extensions of what Faulkner wants to say. But that morality has nothing to do with "Surrender unto Me" "which is what the Supreme Lord wants us to do.

We prefer Bhaktivinoda Thakura's novel, where two men from Calcutta visit a Vaisnava *babajis* and are converted to Vaisnavism through gradual purification and philosophical inquiry. I won't be writing any such novels, but I appreciate his.

* * *

5:02 p.m.

Xxx Sitting on the floor, thinking of Krishna conscious themes. God is God and I am alone with Him. If I feel pain but relieve it, that's good, isn't it? If it can't be relieved, then what do I call it? Divine? Is my acceptance of pain actually *tapo divyam*?

It could be. It depends on my attitude toward it.

And it's true that there will be certain kinds of pain in this world that I cannot avoid.

The English devotees sent me sweets along with my medicine. But we're talking about pain. I've carried this identity around with me since 1978. If I were not an ISKCON guru, my life would be quite different. Or, it might have been similar in essence, but the externals would certainly have been different. Perhaps I would have made less mistakes with less facility and responsibility. Maybe I would have gone more toward prayer and solitude. Or perhaps I would have gone less in that direction. Maybe I would have felt less constrained. Compassion has become an official obligation.

But not only. I feel it too. One advantage to carrying this identity is that I've had to go deep into self-honesty. I wouldn't have survived otherwise. I can admit that I haven't learned to fully control my senses and my mind, although doing so is a necessary prerequisite to practicing *bhakti* (or any yoga). Being quiet in the afternoon has become part of my virtue. It gives me time to be myself and to accept the services Prabhupada has given me.

Looked at a book on the techniques of the master artists. One scrapes, one pens, one paints a fresco on top of wet plaster. Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That's the message of *Bhagavad-gita*, and it is well argued. O Krishna, I trust in something called "flow." Van Eyk painted until he got it right. They can tell exactly how he painted because they have x-rayed his paintings. Time has corroded his paint or faded his colors, but still they can understand his technique.

Hare Krishna. No meat, fish, or eggs. No coffee or tea. Have a sweetball instead and think about the essence of life. But don't keep a stash of sweets in your room just because some ladies sent you two boxes from London.

The Krishna conscious man in me is tired. I have to meet with Caitanya one more time tomorrow. Back to complaining that Madhu is not here enough. Maybe I really do

need a new person. What about turning myself into someone new? The pure soul antiquates not.

Barbary Rubberband
analyze how he did it
his brain snaps a little
song from the 1960s
and his guru said, "I accept him
but he should really do his duties, wash the clothes, and
especially preach, preach, teach
people Krishna consciousness."

* * *

6:20 p.m., Night Notes

Pray to Krishna "to Krishna and my master "and flow toward their undertow.

October 7, 12:05 a.m.

They have assembled Srila Prabhupada's purports and the relevant verses to tell the story of Ajamila from the Sixth Canto. They mixed the purports with excerpts from lectures Prabhupada gave on the same verses. They titled the book *A Second Chance: The Story of a Near-Death Experience*. I tried reading this book once before; this too is my second chance.

Ajamila was born and raised as a *brahmana*, but he fell down when he married a prostitute. The regulative principles keep us at the level of proper human life. They are even more necessary when we have no brahminical upbringing.

It's hard to appreciate all the points being made here "the effect of the illicit connection with women, the need to follow what the *sastras* and spiritual master teach, etc. "so I ask for help from the Lord, who gives intelligence.

It's also hard to sort out the many thoughts that flow into the mind as I read. But I have pledged to write something while I'm reading, so I need to concentrate. I feel the urge to go deeper. That urge is often all we have. We should take advantage of it.

It's no small thing to become relieved of sin and its reactions. (Yes, there is such a thing as sin. Sin means you work against God and nature.) The regulative principles give us an opportunity to act differently. Sometimes devotees wonder why these four rules are so important. Aren't there more important sins than illicit sex with one's wife or taking a little intoxication? For example, we could be defying God in some very gross ways, expressing cruelty, pride, and hypocrisy. Srila Prabhupada once replied to this doubt by saying that the four prohibitions contain the seeds of all the other offenses we might commit. That is, the four activities prohibited by the regulative principles are the pillars of all sinful life.

But the prohibitions are negative injunctions. By following them, we are not guaranteed to become purified. Therefore, along with avoiding the four prohibitions, we have to accept the positive principles of practicing *bhakti-yoga*.

Lord Caitanya taught the chanting of Hare Krishna to fallen souls. This is the easiest method for gradual elevation. Actually the whole story of Ajamila is meant to show the power of the holy name to counteract sin. But to benefit fully from chanting, we need to chant offenselessly. Therefore again, the four rules. "First of all, one should not indulge in illicit sex."

Nowadays, we hesitate to bring couples together and read them this text: "One is allowed to live peacefully with one's wife and have sex for begetting children. Other than to beget children, however, there is no need of indulging in sex." If we remain bona fide *brahmacaris*, we "become seventy-five percent free from material entanglement."

We could also attempt to read Prabhupada's books and torture out a meaning we are seeking regarding the freedom to have more sex within marriage beyond the desire to conceive a child. But don't go to the scripture to authorize something that does not help your spiritual life.

* * *

Wouldn't happiness be a cure for danger or regret? Is being able to make sense proof that we have attained the ultimate?

This afternoon I ate just a few mouse nibbles of those sweets and already wish I hadn't. Yes, my *sannyasi* Godbrother said that if we don't practice mental control at other times in the day, we'll never be able to control the mind during *japa*.

Let me then sit in the cockpit of my mind and try to steer this ship on a two-hour journey into *bhakti*. Our main duty when we chant is to hear "chant and hear "and through the sound barrier, to push a prayer.

Is that like sending a small bird up against the dark cloud of unknowing? You could say so. We have to have a naked intent to love, know, and serve Krishna through His holy name.

It's a bead game bead
name "don't speak obscure
but be obscure "humble *trnad*
api. God save us all.

* * *

4:30 a.m.

Krishna went to the forest and the boys "finally free of parental gaze "began to imitate and joke. They made fun (in a delightful, nonmalicious way, I'm sure) even of the coy *gopis* and of how they covered their faces with the corners of their *saris*. They also made fun of the faltering movements of Vraja's oldsters and of Krishna's parents. All this gave Krishna pleasure.

Krishna dragged His mind away from radha to be in the boys' company, but when He saw some peacock feathers, He thought of His beloved Radha's hair. Krishna is no ordinary man but the Supreme Lover and Beloved.

Clusters of musical thoughts,
where are we going with all this the joy?
Because men are happy best

when they can dance.

* * *

Mango in the kitchen "unripe "
Reminds me of that analogy.

* * *

'round midnight I ask myself if I am okay serving in Krishna consciousness. Yes, I am. I read my guru's books and remain a celibate monk. He's a fine leader, my Guru Maharaja. Just look at the miracle he achieved by converting the *mlecchas*. Don't worry about me "I'm among the converts.

'round midnight I ask myself why this unconventional ragtime. But to me it's not unconventional. "Unconventional" is a relative concept. Not only am I crazy, but everything is changing in this world, and none of us are keeping up, as far as I can see. We're still in material bodies, still hoping for the kind of happiness that will never be achieved. Even in ISKCON. Six months ago the epitome of conservative leadership was in place, and now . . . It's all changing. Until we stop identifying with the changeable, we're all doomed to be more or less crazy.

Use a strong hand on the bass line. Feel the thrum. This 'round midnight is meant to be a mood piece, a piece we feel. Think about it.

He looked at his watch and said, "So you're not going to read my book."

"No," I said, "it's too hard for me." I had a dream that contained the word Jacobin. Looked it up in the dictionary, then looked up at the skylight "the night all black at this hour "looked up to my father when I was a child.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

The moon is so bright this morning that I certainly don't need a flashlight to see my way around the building. The vision is completely clear to walk the plank. Cold enough, though, for my winter coat. The North American Indians had different names for the moon, depending on the season "wolf moon, this moon, that moon. The Vedic tradition does too. We just celebrated the Purnima of rasa-yatra and the beginning of Karttika. Now it's not perfectly full, but almost. It's mottled. As I look past the moon at a sixty-degree angle northeast, I see that tiny freckle of a star surrounded but not obscured by clouds. Looking back at the moon, I noticed that it seems to be bouncing like a ball. It must be something to do with the optics from this mortal world, and perhaps the fact that the treetops are swaying in the breeze.

See the chopped up sycamore? That and the other scars from our living in this place? The scars show the land's growing history.

I'm restless here sometimes in the early morning. A quiet and uneventful outer life doesn't mean that my spiritual life is underdeveloped, though, or even that I'm not preaching. Manu wrote me that while he was traveling through Europe with his family, he read *September Catchall*. He said that someone could criticize my confessional

writing as a hasty first draft, but he knows better. He said it takes a lot of dedication to be able to keep in constant touch with the inner self the way I do. I'd like to feel his confidence. Usually I do.

* * *

9:53 a.m.

M. going again. I don't actually mind being completely alone, as long as no strangers come. Someone comes (I leave the front gate and front door of the house open for them) at 12:30 to leave my lunch. I usually don't even see that person. Ideally, M. will have left me clean clothes for tomorrow. Someone will probably stop by with bottles of drinking water. That's it. Then I'm alone.

I had my last painting session with Caitanya. I did a watercolor of a large figure beside a diminutive one and titled it, "Protection." Caitanya will leave today. Then I'll revert to my old ways but also remember the techniques he taught me "especially things like wetting the page first, then applying the ink or paint.

Art as *bhajana*. He said he has now received an initiation in Krishna conscious free art.

Do I have a few minutes for *Dust of Vrndavana*? Please help me remember the *dhama*. One section starts with a quote from *Caitanya-caritamrta* regarding the inhabitants of Vrndavana: "They are all-auspicious because somehow or other they always chant the holy names of Krishna. Even when they pass on the street . . ." It's a fact that sociologists can confirm. There is no place like it in the world. "*Jaya Radhe*," "*Radhe-Syama!*" No place like it. Some Western devotees have given up everything to live there and never come back.

The click
of a walking stick
on courtyard stone.

These are ordinary impressions "anyone can pick them up "but they are all associated with temple visits. They hint at the esoteric meaning of radha-Krishna. Not "The cigarette that bears a lipstick's traces . . . oh, how the ghost of you clings . . ." but

An old woman
with cracking voice
Rushes to see Damodara.

Yes, if you can bear the austerities there, even the monkeys can remind you of Krishna. But it takes tolerance to live there, because sometimes the conditions are harsh. It may seem safer to recall the *dhama* from where you live in the West, from the comfort of your armchair, but you miss out on all those direct sensory impressions that draw the heart.

* * *

11:40 a.m.

Head pain. Took two feverfew tablets and rested in bed. Even when the pain is building, lying down provides a little comfort. At least for a while. The ups and downs of illness.

But I'm happy, because my life really is the way I want it. *Why* was I complaining recently?

Caitanya said I taught him "Krishna conscious art without pretension." He taught me to feel at home with watercolor, canvas, and other articles.

The disciples of that guru who went "off" "could they possibly be right to continue to follow him? "Mafia" followers with guns demand money and possessions from temples. Some of the women were told that they were among "the wives of Dvaraka." And he . . .

Be quiet about it now, since you have declared you are avoiding controversy. But perhaps I want to let off some steam after twenty years of hearing his propaganda and rhetoric that only book distribution and book distributors are any good as devotees, and that nothing else counts at all. It wasn't fair to the devotees under his care, or to anyone else. The devotees prayed before the Deities each morning, "Please send us more *sankirtana* devotees." This movement had already lived through such empire-building techniques. So suddenly it has all been dropped. Now what? We're all supposed to forget all that and take up the new motto: "If you feel like doing it, go ahead. If you don't love, don't love. Sex, *japa*, whatever "whether you do it or not depends upon how you feel. And by the way, Prabhupada was mistaken on quite a few points." Okay, let it go. Back to the treasure chest of quiet moments in Krishna remembrance.

* * *

12:05 p.m.

The heart test said I was okay, just a little mortality around the left shoulder and armpit from lifting too-heavy-for-him water buckets his faithful servant no longer has time to lift. But of course I understand that the servant is penetrating into the exclusive world of the rural Irish musical society. They honor him, my Maurice, "Best natural voice I've ever heard," someone said. All power to him. I can tolerate that he is absentminded and only here fifty percent of the time.

* * *

2:28 p.m.

"Vrndavana is the transcendental abode of the Lord, where there is no hunger, anger or thirst. Though naturally inimical, both human beings and fierce animals lived there together in transcendental friendship." (*Bhag.* 10.13.60)

Srila Prabhupada says that in the spiritual world there is neither envy nor malice. "Everyone is happy there by pleasing Krishna." They live in the forest. Sometimes it's not clear to me whether Prabhupada is speaking of Vrndavana in this world or Vrndavana in Goloka. He states, "Whether a *gosvami* or a tiger . . . everyone's business [in Vrndavana] is to please Krishna." Even the monkeys, he says. "The inhabitants of Vrndavana think, 'Whatever is given by Krishna, let us divide it as *prasada* and live.'" Some people who live in Vrndavana, India, today still have some of these Krishna

conscious qualities. In his purport, Srila Prabhupada then goes on to state how the devotees in Durban, South Africa, were appreciated in a newspaper article. This indicates that he wasn't necessarily more pleased by those who wanted to literally physically pass their lives in Vrndavana. He wanted us to live in Krishna consciousness and to distribute Krishna consciousness to others. "This mentality cannot appear all of a sudden, but it will gradually develop with Krishna consciousness; by *sadhana*, one can come to this platform." (*Bhag.* 10.13.60, purport)

"Then Lord Brahma saw the Absolute Truth . . . assuming the role of a child in a family of cowherd men . . ." (*Bhag.* 10.13.61)

Srila Prabhupada: ". . . he simply saw an innocent boy," not Narayana. But now he knew that this was the master of the whole creation (*govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami*). Lord Brahma realized his own insignificance, "to say nothing of 'four-headed scientists.'"

Lord Brahma then bowed down like a golden stick before Krishna and bathed His feet with his tears. "Then rising very gradually and wiping his two eyes, Lord Brahma looked up at Mukunda." Humbly, with faltering words, he began to offer praises to Lord Krishna.

Thus ends Srila Prabhupada's work on the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

* * *

3:04 p.m.

Haven't been able to sit on this bench for a few days because of afternoon rains. In cold weather I doubt whether it will be possible for me to come out here at all. Will these lovely blue lobelias fade away? Then I'll have to write indoors. But I won't give up the outdoor circumambulation as long as there are boards and I can get around on my feet and legs.

JG wrote me, "I hope your chest pain was not serious." No, I replied, it was not. I'm looking forward to a final surge today in the art room or words, therapy, and art release, all of which I hope to offer to Krishna. Caitanya asked me about inspiration. I said it comes when you start fresh each time, even if you don't feel the drive at first. Inspiration is not so different from enthusiasm. It comes from God. On further consideration, I thought that it's also whether *what* you paint or write is actually inspired, and whether it inspires those who see it.

Blue lobelias. M. singing *The Lady Of Loughrea* to the Irish society. They love him and they love him in a *dhoti*. At least *I* should support him and not mind a little diminishment of his personal attention. I want to encourage the devotees working at 26 Second Avenue too "anyone who sings for the Lord "just as I want their encouragement. We are all insignificant, so we should encourage one another to serve the Great.

* * *

4:50 p.m.

I just painted three pictures in the time I would usually paint eight. That's because I was employing some of Caitanya's techniques. I called one painting "Protection II." But the first one I did was an assertion of the way I like to paint "more impulsive, without so

much dawdling to find a particular nuance of color. I called that one "return to My Way."

When I finished, I turned the whole art room back to the way I had it before Caitanya came. Gradually he had moved the paint I liked to the rear shelf and placed the gouache tubes and the watercolors up front. He also emphasized working with a board at an angle on the desk while sitting in a chair, but I moved it back so that I could draw pages straight against the wall. The next time I'm in there "tomorrow I hope "I'll be ready to splash paint.

Two hours before bedtime. M. should be back tomorrow with the mail.

* * *

5:35 p.m.

I read quite a bit more of "The Bear" "how they got a ferociously brave dog named Lion trained to grab Old Ben, the bear, by the neck. They see Old Ben again and again, and they fire bullets at him year after year, but he never seems to die. Finally, Lion leaps for his throat and won't let go. Since they can't shoot, Boon goes in with a knife and stabs Old Ben in the throat, working the knife, probing. Old Ben dies. Sam Fathers collapses from shock, or perhaps exhaustion. A doctor fixes them all up and sews up the dog's entrails. There are many more pages to the story, but what could it possibly be but anticlimax? I've stopped reading. Now when I say to yourself, "Faulkner made this up; it's make-believe," somehow it doesn't seem to matter. Fiction has its own power, and I should give it its due. Which doesn't mean I can write it. I only hope someone can write good Krishna conscious fiction.

October 8, 12:00 a.m.

Srila Prabhupada speaks about Ajamila's attachment to his youngest son. Even animals feel parental affection. Such affection in itself does not raise one to the spiritual platform.

"Although Ajamila was nearly ninety, he was still enjoying the child's playful pastimes, just as Maharaja Nanda and Mother Yashoda enjoyed the childhood pastimes of Lord Krishna." (*Second Chance*, p. 9)

Worldly affection is a perverted reflection of affection as it exists between God and His *parisads* in the spiritual world. It's not that the Absolute Truth is impersonal or without variety. God has a spiritual form of *sat*, *cit*, and *ananda*, and whoever can understand it will go back to Godhead.

So ask Krishna to help free you from false attachments. Perhaps we think our attachments are harmless. Well, why gamble? If we free ourselves from material attachment, we'll be left only with the spiritual and the mercy of Krishna. We have to reason with ourselves until we are left with stark choices.

But what about the preaching spirit? What about the human aspects of natural propensity? What about using our attachments in Krishna's service? Often we can argue either way. Therefore, we should ask Krishna to help us sort these things out. He will

guide us. In the meantime, keep anything that appears a dubious attachment to a minimum.

Srila Prabhupada tells incidents in *Krishna-lila* where Brahma and Indra dare to test Krishna's potency. This means they didn't fully understand His original, transcendental form. Thus "*Srimad-Bhagavatam* warns us that even . . . Brahma and Indra can sometimes become bewildered by *maya*, the external manifestation of Krishna's energy, then what to speak of us?"

Srila Prabhupada is strong on establishing that the Absolute Truth is *janmadya asya yatah*. He is the source of all, and He knows all because He is perfect.

* * *

4:27 a.m.

Now let's listen to the silence and the sounds that come from our internal music. Now let us listen for accessible selections of *Govinda-lilamrta*. I just heard how Tulasi-devi then Lord Krishna both cheated Saibya so as to avoid Krishna's having to meet Candravali. He wanted instead to meet Srimati Radharani. I also heard this morning Srila Prabhupada in Vrndavana saying *varnaSrama* has to be instituted or human society is no better than animal society. The *varnaSramites* of ISKCON will be glad to hear that.

Nowadays, some people say Prabhupada was mistaken in how he set up *gurukula*, with the children staying in *aSramas*, and wrong in his instructions about no illicit sex even within marriage. And how many other things will we say he was wrong about? This is so painful to hear. It has also been painful to see things go wrong and perhaps to doubt whether we were given the best instructions. Was it always the case of our not following what he said properly "I mean, is that the cause of all our distress? But Prabhupada said if we think we are more intelligent than our spiritual master, we are fallen. Whatever intelligence we have, we are meant to use it in his service. If we attempted to carry out his orders in all sincerity and the project failed, can't we grow and change, be flexible, without accusing him of being mistaken? He simply wanted ~~that~~ Krishna consciousness to be maintained and to spread.

* * *

A *bhakta* wrote me to say that my books on *japa* and prayer have helped him. I don't need to be juiced up right now, but I appreciated this letter. I will keep writing through the terrible crunch we are going through in our movement. Krishna, Krishna . . . I expect . . .

I have a little life. You do to. There are particulars. right now I'm trying to escape them. That's another thing that drawing does. But then there are new particulars to be avoided "new wives or husbands and sets of parents and children, new cities or countries. That's the cycle of birth and death for you. New diseases. Imagine how many varieties of disease there are. You can get all of them or just some of them.

* * *

A poet doesn't always think of himself, you know. He often gets completely absorbed in describing birds. The poet's sensibility comes through, but he doesn't mention himself in one poem. He may describe a wide oak and how it dwarfs the barn. He gives a picture in words about starlings. They are important to him, so he chooses his words carefully. He presents a picture of a man whom he says is peeing, and another with a reddish, jagged face that somehow indicates "lack-love," and a woman holding chrysanthemums against her fatted bosoms, who has her back to the two men. I know this is true because I read about these persons in a poem by William Carlos Williams called "A Portrait Of The Times."

The man draws pictures of
hermitages and gurus because that's all he knows
the rest is a memory, a list of names
froth in the sea he doesn't see
the city, only knows the inside
of a house and says that view is advantageous
for inner work "Hare Krishna

* * *

Let's see him chant better, with love
then we'll believe him
or we will believe him anyway
if he'll just be ardent.
We will believe him.
He's all we've got, our
self to connect to Krishna.

* * *

Now you have been a good boy and have done your lessons. In a minute or two I will ask you to clean up and get dressed for the group walk. We'll take all the students out in a single line, the shortest up front, and march around the building chanting Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. This has been our Zazen. That is, we sat for so long despite the mind, didn't we?

Before we leave, let's have a quick show-and-tell by Stephen T.

He stands up in front of the class in his green sweater, gray flannel pants, and Italian shoes, and says, "I will draw on the blackboard the trajectory of a bullet."

No, I'm making jokes while showing you how simple household artifacts are put together. I will show you that the moon has gone a bit oblong. I see it looking down at me right through the skylight "yes, right down onto this page. If you don't believe me, go out and see for yourself.

He's got his mouth in a slightly distressed "O" and his head tilted to the right. All the money funding various programs has been stopped. They were dependent on him.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

Although the moon isn't perfectly full right now, it's brighter this morning than ever. It beams like a searchlight, and I can see everything clearly. The stars also seem brighter. The air is colder, too. Shadows on the wall. I can see the neighbor's house "something I can't usually see at this hour.

As I thumped around on the boards and crunched on the gravel, chanting my rounds and my *gayatri*, I heard Madhu's alarm clock go off. A few minutes later, he came out, like the bird in the cuckoo clock. He carried a bag with him (my mail), and that reminded me that I had better go upstairs and look at it.

* * *

9:35 a.m.

Quelled a headache with feverfew. One of the recommendations made to the GBC by a group of devotees is that all ISKCON gurus must attend the full "morning program" (presumably in an ISKCON temple) and chant their rounds in full view of the other devotees. A Godbrother who knows how hard that would be for me mentioned, "A full morning program "with all those boys and girls, loud *kirtana*, incense, and everything else "it's too much at this stage of your life." I'll try to educate them about migraine and migraine triggers. Gather up the doctor notes, everyone.

* * *

12:10 p.m.

Head fog. The hot/cold bath subdued it, but a strenuous letter-answering session brought it back. Maybe lunch will help. Am I so unwilling to endure any pain or disruption of my day's planned activities? Someone wrote me that he continually finds himself achieving only a few of the things he plans to do each day; he's always rushing and has no quality time. Someone else said the same thing "no leisure to wander around and reflect on what is happening to him.

The "fall" of my Godbrother, someone said, was like a stock market crash or the collapse of a big building. What to do now? What is Krishna saying through this? Devotees want to know, and also are free with their opinions. Some feel we are too much attached to outer things and that we don't concentrate enough on love. As a society we are afraid to start from the beginning in *bhakti*, a devotee wrote me. Bottom line: don't offend Vaisnavas, follow the essence of Prabhupada's teachings, and don't associate with teachers who minimize him.

We want to be sober and do what we can to prevent becoming casualties. Don't say we didn't warn you. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. This path is like a razor's edge.

* * *

2:25 p.m.

If you want to avoid falldown (in an age of falldowns) take to *Sravanam-kirtanam*. Trust in the process.

I'm back to the First Canto with no specific reading program. Maybe random selections, but read prayerfully. This edition of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* has a table of contents, but it appears to have been constructed after the book was completed, because the topic headings sound a little arbitrary. In Chapter One we find, "Glories of the Name of the Lord" on p. 71. (It almost functions like an index.)

"Living beings who are entangled in the meshes of birth and death can be freed immediately by even unconsciously chanting the holy name of Krishna, which is feared by fear personified." (*Bhag.* 1.1.14)

Srila Prabhupada: "There is no one in creation who is not afraid of the rage of the Almighty."

I feel a vise in my head, but probably should tolerate it rather than seek release through medication. But that will probably kill my day. At least I can chant, as I should if I am ever in the "greatest danger."

* * *

3:55 p.m.

I have opted for Esgic and recovery rather than to sit around and do nothing all day. Today's major work is to answer the mail.

Writing this on the bench. It's an unusually sunny day today. Arranging to get a harp for Madhu. Thinking over September's world news. Clinton keeps going despite the sex scandal and attempts to impeach him. At the very least he's got the attitude that, "If I'm out of office, the country may suffer greatly. I have to finish my programs for the U.S. and the world." Srila Prabhupada says that's illusion. Lord Rama quit as soon as there was doubt cast on his character by a *sudra*. But that Godbrother who was experiencing so many problems continues as guru. I can imagine me thinking it would be better to do so even though some people might have wanted to remove me.

Sigh. Planning the Christmas-through-January travels. Distant shout of someone "with the cows? A grackle sound. Echoes of what I read in letters and the news "India and Pakistan agree to ban further nuclear tests. A terrorist tries to build a nuclear bomb. Is methadone okay? What's Satsvarupa doing? What if we were to force him to attend a full house in the temple? Would he buckle under? Submit to tests by GBC doctors? Look in the pupil of his eye: "I don't see any migraine in there."

Me: But I read *ronda's Migraine Journal* and Dr. Robbins's books. I know the jargon. I suffer.

Not enough, not enough. Associate with us until you bleed.

* * *

6:00 p.m.

Waiting for M. to leave with the children for their Irish dance lessons, a regular Thursday night event. I'm holding off on lighting my Karttika candle until then. Let all my energies be consumed like the candle, in Krishna's service. Just be consumed. In Krishna consciousness. Krishna consciousness "you say it again and again, that's okay, either thinking or unthinking. I say I'm alone but I know and hear all the ISKCON issues. No shortcoming of news. Please don't let me chew on it endlessly. That's all I

want. I do respect those whose service is to manage crisis after crisis. I used to be one of them, but I couldn't continue. But I do respect them for it.

Apparently they discovered five new pages in Anne Frank's diary. It doesn't really seem to change anything, but there's a big legal furor over publishing it and who has the rights. Makes you wonder what they will do with my writing. Don't worry. But whatever you think of as private probably doesn't remain so. Or the opposite happens: writers and their writings are lost and forgotten. Monks and poets fall into anonymity. Some even desire it.

M. about to leave me for Donnard. I think I'll go ahead and light that frail candle and be at peace.

October 9, 12:04 a.m.

The time of death arrived for foolish Ajamila. Out of attachment he "chanted" the name of his child, Narayana. He wasn't thinking of the original Narayana, but the holy name is so powerful that he became purified. The Visnudutas would respond.

Our reaction upon reading this story should not be complacency. We shouldn't think our chanting is better than Ajamila's, so we can assume we are doing all right. Why try to concentrate on the holy name? Ajamila was fortunate in that he had a means by which to remember Narayana at the end of his life, and it could be said that his strong attachment to his son helped him. I don't have any guarantee that I have a strong attachment to remembering Krishna's names and calling out to Him at the end. For example, often in dreams, my persona and the entire dream have no reference to Krishna, His holy name, or the life of a devotee. Probably others share this experience. So we shouldn't look down on Ajamila as an inferior chanter. *Ante narayana-smrti*.

"If he has cultivated the mentality of a Vaisnava, a pure devotee of Krishna, then he will immediately be transferred to Vaikuntha." (*Second Chance*, p. 17) If he's a *karmi*, he will take his next life in this world. I also recall the *Bhagavatam* verse that unless we help others, we cannot go to Vaikuntha. We are required to live the all-round life of a devotee.

An aspect of Krishna's kindness is that He provides us with bodies in which we are absorbed at death "because we have indicated throughout our lives what we want. Krishna responds to our desires. "By chanting Hare Krishna, we can mold our thoughts so that we are always thinking of Krishna . . . Whatever you practice throughout your life will determine your consciousness at death." (*Second Chance*, p. 17) One who prepares for death is intelligent. One who thinks his material assets will protect him is in illusion. (How important this is!) *Srimad-Bhagavatam* warns us not to take shelter of such fallible soldiers.

I may encourage disciples, young householders, and others to dovetail everything in Krishna's service. For myself, I am in the last stages of my life. Better I practice renunciation.

"Ajamila then saw three awkward persons with deformed features . . ." Here I say, "Well, *that* won't happen to me." Boy, I sure hope not. It's painful "even though the soul doesn't die "to leave one body and be forced into another. Afraid of the Yamadutas, he called out in fear, "Narayana!" That attracted Visnu's order carriers.

Think of Krishna in any capacity. The *gopis*, SiSupala, and Kamsa all thought of Krishna in their different ways, but even the demons in that list were granted liberation. "Of course, it is best if we think of Krishna favorably."

"Krishna's devotees do not desire liberation, because their only interest is to be engaged in devotional service to Krishna, whether in the material world or in the spiritual world." (*Second Chance*, p. 22) Still, Krishna lifts His devotees up to Goloka Vrndavana.

* * *

4:26 a.m.

Here I am now, silent and trying to stay awake. Fourteen rounds done, *puja* done. I have to do something now that will keep me alert. Anything too demanding or too concentrated, anything requiring a too restful position, as in listening to a lecture, will send me off to sleep. Because I've been up since midnight.

Actually, I was awake most of the night last night, constantly glancing at the red numbers on the digital clock. The Library of Congress data for EJW lists as the first category for my book, "Diaries." The next listing is my name. They add, "Hare Krishnas." I asked if they could remove the phrase "Hare Krishnas," which is too undignified and assigned by nondevotees "in the same way they have created cheap names like Moonies, beatniks, Hippies, Commies, pinkos, etc.

Winos, tycoons, queers, politicians, pundits, whores, harlots, and so on. Pejorative names for all vocations and all humankind. Bums, bozos, clowns, guys, and dolls. The people, the conditioned souls. Walt Whitman, one of the roughs, or so he liked to think of himself "and what about the cosmological eye? The actual God. Instead of serving God, they want to be God. But they can't.

The cloud-tipped passage. Please stay awake for it. You have a voice in there, so why not come out with it? Listen to the waterfall in your ear.

Radha and Krishna wearing white with blue and orange patterns today.

Starting to listen to *The Silence of God*, by James Carse. He says prayer precedes theology. When we hear such things, it's important to know what we think about the general topic.

I am interested in prayer. When I was chanting and chanting, I noticed the nature of my distractions and found myself slipping in a little begging. Prayer means begging.

* * *

5:32 a.m.

Smaller moon and cloudier sky, but I can just barely walk the boards anyway. After chanting *gayatri*, I suddenly remembered a devotee to whom I just gave second initiation asking me what it means when we say, "As he enthused us."

The wall around this house, the amenities I have "my obligation to use it all in Krishna's service. Sometimes I get close to a wall and rub myself against it like a cat. Or I want to get down on my knees next to a table and pray. I want to place my body against some inanimate object and breakthrough to Krishna. Lord Caitanya rubbed His face against the Gambhira's wall until He bled. Hare Krishna.

* * *

9:05 a.m.

"Srila Suta Gosvami said, 'Let me offer my respectful obeisances onto that great sage [Sukadeva Gosvami] who can enter the hearts of all.'" (*Bhag.* 1.2.2) Accepting a spiritual master means taking a second birth. Suta Gosvami is offering his obeisances to Sukadeva Gosvami, his spiritual master, "who out of great compassion . . . spoke this Purana . . . the cream of Vedic knowledge after having personally assimilated it by experience." (*Bhag.* 1.2.3) He was compassionate enough to deliver it to the people suffering in darkness. Sukadeva Gosvami, who was already at the liberated stage of transcendence, realized it personally, then explained it. "By the mercy of Srila Sukadeva, the *Bhagavata-vedanta-sutra* is available for all the sincere souls who want to get out of material existence." I thought, "How did Suka deliver them, since he spoke it only to Maharaja Pariksit?" But his words are preserved and the book has been passed down. Those who preserve it and distribute it deserve credit. It's ultimately not Sukadeva's message but Krishna's, and different persons have a share in passing it along.

* * *

Share mare the big
bear was killed. I didn't
Read the ending. The hunter's
lore is far beyond me or
any street tale or power
politics and sex, how to get.

* * *

I can tell of my days
and the falling apart of the Krishna consciousness
movement. For example,
in "The Bear," the brave dog,
Lion, leaps at the bear and
the bear (Old Ben, who we
may compare to Maha-maya)
Rips out his entrails.
Still the dog won't release its
viselike bite.
Later, when Ben is killed
the doctor puts Lion's guts in
and sews them up.

* * *

So this may be likened to the
falling out of ISKCON's guts

and the sewing them back in
by the responsible members
of the movement.

* * *

9:59 a.m.

I don't want to write.

Then what do I want to do?

Nothing much. I don't want to read or pray either. Maybe I'll just lie down somewhere for a while and the elves will do my work for me.

I shouldn't complain. My pain has been less lately, although it begins almost every day.

The van broke down. He's out seeing to it. He'll try fixing it himself. If not, he'll have to call the man in Hacketstown. It doesn't matter so much, because we have no plans to go anywhere in it.

* * *

11:20 a.m.

The dust of Vrndavana. The residents of Vrndavana are apparently engaged in ordinary household duties, but all their activities are actually loving service to Krishna. The haikus take us back to 1986 and the residents who laugh at the "white monkeys" "ourselves" as we pass by on rickshaws (with moneybelts strapped tight around our white bellies). As I write this, I notice my *kurtacuff* is black-ink stained. The price I pay. Now, back to Vrndavana and me and the residents:

Predawn townsmen:

Reading the cheap newsprint
by kerosene lamp.

I thought that was a good picture, what I saw as Bala and I hunted for poems through the bazaars before they opened. We were heading for a chosen spot, but the mind-camera-eye clicked constantly.

The residents include animals:

At the Yamuna:

a tan heifer wandering.

Some imitation there of what I had read in American haiku magazines. Now I packed them one after another without putting each poem alone on a page.

Pounding laundry . . .

But I don't have to repeat all the poems here, nor deride or explain them. I just want to recapture the mood of Vrndavana since I'm not going there this year.

Next year?

I don't know.

Vrndavana is the land of the exquisite and the plain. It's a place where you know somehow that the body is not the self. "It's not *you* who feels hungry or confused, Prabhu. It's just your body."

* * *

12:45 p.m.

Lunch for a devotee of Krishna means/ he honors the
undulating . . . I mean the *prasadam* prayers
Never veering an inch off the track? Sometimes.
Christ conscious may be different
Here's Krishna and Radha and we say
Everything comes from Them.

* * *

Lunch is also for the animal in me
"Unless You eat, You'll die," Mother Yashoda says.
I eat scones and *sabji* and *dal*
but all too quickly, like
a beggar giving thanks to all those
who support me so that I may continue
to exist.

* * *

3:30 p.m.

Pain in back of neck and foggy head preventing me. Sitting in the window alcove,
because the bench is too wet. It's sunny off and on just now, dappled sunlight coming
through the still-leafy trees. Many leaves have fallen onto my circumambulation boards.

James Carse says we beg when we pray. I'm thinking about that. And my slowness
today, my lack of begging or even desiring at all. This is the pattern of a day quickly
going downhill.

Is it true that you can't speak something you don't already know, and thus the actual
purpose of speech (and self) is only fulfilled when there is an active listener? If so, then
may the listener be Krishna, and may He create in me the desire to please Him.

But I also wish to say something I don't already know. Stafford and other writing
teachers seem to think it's possible.

Whooshing leaves. Grackly crow. Shadows in sun. Be bathed briefly in peace.

Carse is a college professor of religious literature and NYU. I'm a somewhat
retired *sannyasi* and guru of Hare Krishna members. A writer too. They take care of me.
I will live in these hills and go on writing as long as He wills.

* * *

5:20 p.m.

Unrelenting humanness page after page. I call it "little life." And it is.

October 10, 12:00 a.m.

Just remember, you have a lease on life. It won't last forever in this body or situation, but you have it now. It will probably see you through the rest of October and most of November, perhaps even a few weeks into December. None of it, however, will be perfectly undisturbed.

The chapters in *Second Chance* are short, and I like that. Each is based on a different *Bhagavatam* verse, purport, and lecture. Here's "The Visnudutas to the rescue." Hearing Ajamila cry, "Narayana!" Lord Visnu dispatched His assistants to give Ajamila shelter. They came without considering why he was chanting. The name of God "has the full potency of the Supreme Personality of Godhead "Narayana, or Krishna. That is the secret of *nama-sankirtana*, chanting the names of God." Srila Prabhupada briefly explains the location of the soul in the heart and the process of transmigration. In the case of a sinful person, the Yamadutas take the soul into a hellish life "in order to become accustomed to the condition in which he will live in his next body." (*Second Chance*, p. 26)

Surely readers outside the Krishna conscious *parampara* will take this account as mythological. The various ISKCON schisms and the Gaudiya Matha have at least this much in common "we all accept as fact the *Bhagavatam's* version. They worship Krishna and Lord Caitanya as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and they depend on the line of *acaryas* and the Lord's holy name. So although I want to be fixed in Prabhupada's exclusive shelter, I needn't expend a lot of mental energy or any venom when I see or hear of devotees leaving ISKCON for the Gaudiya Math.

The Yamadutas were surprised at the Visnudutas' interference. The Yamadutas addressed Visnu's representatives as "*siddha-sattama*," "the best of the perfect."

I know this story; it's been portrayed in skits, sculptures, paintings, dances, and poems. It's still relevant to me, so I will teach it to others. It is an eternal narration meant to impress us with the holy name's potency as well as the soul's reality. We also gain faith in the existence of Vaikuntha, the place where life is eternal, undisturbed, and blissful, and where the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the all-attractive Lord, loved by all. Vasudeva's servants questioned the Yamadutas, wanting their definition of *dharma*.

I'm turning quite a few pages and not always pausing to write. The two acts don't always feed one another. I also feel we know the themes well enough.

I say, "No comment," but Prabhupada would comment whenever the *Bhagavatam* was read before him in the class setting. He was always ready to discharge the lecturer's duty. He had life. A dead man can't preach.

* * *

4:40 a.m.

What's the difference between a genuine free-write and one that's too conscious and not effective? Maybe the less effective one writing is playing on words idly, pushing on its own steam, forcing. The other happens when it really happens, when you swim along. But I don't want to stop you regardless, because free-writing occurs, like art, as Dubuffet says, in unlikely places when you are not noticing it. It can contain ordinary thoughts that don't occur deliberately or absurd juxtapositions.

We prefer to say Krishna over God and Vaisnava scriptures over discussions about religion from the Western tradition. We prefer talk of Krishna in Vrndavana, especially when He's among the *gopis*.

Quink ink, by Parker. A bottle of it on the floor next to the pens and pad. Inviting. I could make collages for the nearsighted. Krishna, I pray to please You.

How sleepy you are, mate.

* * *

5:55 a.m.

4:30 - 5:30 a.m. spent in bed in the dark. Dreamt I was a devotee talking with other devotees, when suddenly, a security man who was walking among the devotees passing an electronic beeper over their bodies (as they do at airports) passed it over me and got a *beep!* I had to go with him to a separate room. The beep was coming from my money belt. I became afraid at what they might find "dreams are unpredictable "but I was cleared in the end. The security people then told me my health wasn't good and that I should take a "bona fide, chaste massage." The dream rolled on inconsequentially, and I awoke when Madhu came into the house at 5:30 as usual.

Want to finish hearing Carse so I can take in his influence, then let it go. I know it's best we remain simple and in *parampara*, but he has said some helpful things. What was it he said about philosophy and language? That if you are only talking to yourself, you are not saying anything and you don't even exist. You have to talk to *someone*. Then you'll learn what you said and who you are. What they say to you in their response is unpredictable. You have to wait to learn what you said when you hear it reflected by others. Well, I don't have to accept all of that.

* * *

9:30 a.m.

He said he'd come up in ten minutes to massage my neck. Why can't I do more? Afraid of a headache? Cringe tactics. I sat with my eyes closed and told myself to go ahead, just hear the wind.

What's this, I shouldn't talk to myself? Why not? Just because some philosophers say so? Maybe they can't talk to themselves (because they already know what they're going to say), but that doesn't stop us simple folks. Theologians and philosophers think that they are the only ones who know anything and that the less intellectual types are unaware. Sometimes I think it's the other way around.

Spinning wheels, he said, describing a person who talks to himself without a creative listener. God is the ultimate creative listener, he said, and He brings wonderful things out of us when we pray. Speaking to ourselves, we tend to merely recite the script "because (again), whatever we speak we already know.

I swear I didn't know this sentence until I wrote it. I wrote it to benefit humankind. It was veering off in their direction at least. I listened at the periphery and wrote down what came, right through the center of the pike.

* * *

10:02 a.m.

Srimad-Bhagavatam is for *paramahamsas*. Mayavadis are envious, so they can't gain access to the *Bhagavatam*, "but those who are really anxious to get out of this material existence may take shelter of this *Bhagavatam* because it is uttered by the liberated Srila Sukadeva Gosvami." (*Bhag.* 1.2.3, purport)

"O twice-born sages, by serving those devotees who are completely freed from all vice, great service is done. By such service, one gains affinity for hearing the messages of Vasudeva." (*Bhag.* 1.2.16)

"By serving the servant of God, one can please God more than by directly serving the Lord." (*Bhag.* 1.2.16, purport) That's because His servants risk everything for His service, so they are very dear to Him.

Go ahead, ask. Okay, when do you plan to start serving Vaisnavas? How about when you are seventy years old?

And hearing is vital. "The eagerness to hear about God is the first qualification of a devotee for entering the kingdom of God."

Srnavatam sva-kathah Krishnah. "Sri Krishna, the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramatma (Supersoul) in everyone's heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted." (*Bhag.* 1.2.17)

Krishna is present when we chant and hear. That's His kindness, "but unfortunately we have no taste for hearing . . ." Srila Prabhupada says taste is increased by serving devotees. That's my gloss of this section.

Back to thinking of travel plans. It just occurred to me that we could leave two days earlier than planned in late December, and that would make up for the tightness I saw in the schedule later.

Srila Prabhupada says in his purport that when the Lord sees a devotee is completely sincere in getting admittance into *bhakti*, the Lord helps him from within. "The Lord is more anxious to take us back to his kingdom than we can desire. Most of us do not desire at all to go back to Godhead." (*Bhag.* 1.2.17, purport) If we want to go, how much He will help us.

* * *

12:23 p.m.

Hearing Carse talk of God and life and death. His words seem profound and realized. He's quite a teacher, yet humble. I think about me and Prabhupada and the Vedic tradition "and about the way I'm living now. Carse spoke of some people he met who had ceased living in a vital way. I dared to muse whether I have given up the vital gift of life "out of fear of pain (headaches) and my growing aversion to society's demands. Why not go even further with aloneness if that's what I want? Just step out of the institution. No, I wouldn't do that. I think I have a good balance now, one that's not disturbing for my disciples but which allows me my space.

Life is so precious in and of itself, he says. We can't live only for what is beyond it. Given my choice, I've opted to write as my main service, which seems to combine the

best way to be alone and talking with God and His silence (I pray through writing), preaching. I exploit this medium for all it's worth. I haven't died to life.

Also, when I was musing, I wondered whether Srila Prabhupada would release me to learn from life beyond my identity as his *cela* and a follower of the strict Vaisnava way. Am I living in a cocoon? I ask that sometimes. Sometimes I wonder if our life isn't too confining. But I pray for Krishna consciousness to come to me and me to go to it "in dryness and in poverty. Where's there to go? I'm casting for Vrndavana from this house on a windy hill.

* * *

2:40 p.m.

"By regularly hearing the *Bhagavatam*" "got the guts to do it alone, with a part-time assistant, against the risk that I may be missing out on the action most pleasing to guru and Krishna? Yes, because I've been there (front lines) and don't see that it makes me better than I am here. Stick it out here. He will send me on my way whenever He wants. He's independent.

"Pray to Him" means that I should talk to Him. The subject isn't as important as the personal communication.

"By regularly hearing the *Bhagavatam* and rendering service unto the pure devotee . . . " Later this was retranslated as, "By regularly attending classes on the *Bhagavatam* . . . " all the dirty things get almost removed and loving service unto *uttama-Sloka* is "established as an irrevocable fact." (*Bhag.* 1.2.18)

"Human reason fails to understand how by serving . . . one gets promotion on the path of devotion. But actually these are facts, 'as shown in the life of Narada.'" Someone read this volume before me and underlined in pencil whatever they thought was important. I don't think I would have underlined the same things. Different minds.

* * *

3:20 p.m.

I don't have to bring up a hurt asking for more communication. Let it go. Let him not know what is happening with me. No one has to know except me and, of course, Krishna. And you, dear reader, (and Vyasa) may or may not know.

I may or may not be admitted to the circle of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* hearers, but it's crucial to my life that they allow me in. Keep reading to earn the privilege.

Listen to those trees. Which tree is it that is shedding all those leaves? How savagely he cut that sycamore. Its leaves have withered before those of other trees.

* * *

4:55 p.m.

After art room: One painting says, "Don't tell. I'm a man." Don't tell what? Don't tell means you don't have to break down and ask another man, "Please be kind to me. I'm lonely." Well, why not, if you feel like it?

That's okay, but if you don't feel like it, it's not incumbent. You can be silent.

What are the other paintings? One was of a strange, somewhat neurotic pink-headed guy, gloomy and mysterious, but after all, he was okay. What can you expect, dwelling in this material world and at the same time thinking of the spiritual world? There's a caption that reads, "*Vande rupa-sanatanau*." Srila Prabhupada was singing that as I painted.

He said, "The most notable thing about your paintings is that they have life." All right, let me make sure they're alive, if that's their strength. But actually, it's better not to even think about it.

Drew a crude peacock, but didn't title it, because peacocks are commonplace in Krishna's Vraja-lila. Another was of a chubby-bellied bear. I labeled that one "Balarama." He was blue, and somehow I connected the image of a bear to Balarama. I hope that's not an offense. It's not meant to be. This bear is strong and playful and loves honey, just like the original Balarama.

* * *

6:29 p.m., Night Notes

Read as much as we dared, recording accessible selections of *Govinda-lilamrta*. None of it is really accessible because we're so fallen. *When* we fell is not important (see purport to Bg. 13.20). What *is* important? That we're trying to get out of the material world. Then take the medicine, and I don't mean Trifala or whatever. Hear the *Sastra* and chant the holy name. Perform various services.

All right, all right.

Please, give me life and death in Krishna consciousness. I beg that from Krishna. I am thankful for all He gives. I am so fumbling and inept in receiving His gifts, but I am grateful.

October 11, 12:00 a.m.

Only the nondevotees can be punished by Yamaraja. Sounds sectarian. Do the scriptures say that to scare us and keep us in line? Regardless, it inspires me to surrender, because I don't want to be punished. I'd be surprised and disappointed if I was visited by Yama's men. Krishna says in *Bhagavad-gita* that even a little devotional service can prevent us from *maha-abhaya*, the great fear at the time of death. I want things to go as I expect. Perhaps I'll learn the news that I'm not going to Goloka, but I expect to carry on from where I left off in this life.

Everyone is forced to serve in the material world, but in the spiritual world they serve out of love. There is no disagreement. "Only persons who are totally illusioned refuse to serve God." (*Second Chance*, p. 36) Such persons become *maya's* slaves.

Srila Prabhupada compares himself to young Prahlada Maharaja, who stood up on the bench during tiffin hour and addressed his schoolmates: "My dear boys, this life is not for enjoying sense gratification. It is for realizing God. Do not forget this." (*Second Chance*, p. 37) Krishna is so kind to us that He gives us more than a second chance. He gives us as many chances as we need.

Now we will hear the discussion between Visnu's representatives and the Yamadutas. The Visnudutas asked the Yamadutas to explain their process of discrimination in selecting who should receive punishment and who should not. In a word they asked, "What is *dharma*?" The Yamadutas replied that the *Vedas* teach religion. "This we have heard from Yamaraja." religion is summed up in the laws given by God to man and as contained in the lawbooks (*Vedas*) and taught by the Mahajanas (authorized persons). religion cannot be concocted.

We ought to believe and teach these tenets enthusiastically, as Prabhupada did. We tend to avoid repeating too much of this to the assembly of devotees, because they already know it. They'll think we are presenting an unoriginal, too-basic lecture. There'll be nothing to stimulate them to grow. Yet the lectures Prabhupada gave in the 1970s are preserved for us and can stimulate us past the basics. We turn to him to receive instruction.

One has to accept a spiritual master. There are three principles to be followed in taking shelter of guru: *tad viddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya*. "We must surrender to the spiritual master, we must inquire from him, and we must render service to him. Then we will be understand real spiritual knowledge." (*Second Chance*, p. 41)

I seem to recall that I did these three things joyfully and innocently when I first met Prabhupada. It has been hard sometimes trying to find my way to surrender in the company of devotees and against the world's resistance, but we are always sustained in the end by trust and love in the absolute position of Srila Prabhupada. Faith in his absolute position "something we once took for granted" is now something to be dearly won, something to be fought for each day. Our faith is challenged from within and without. Sanatana Gosvami set an example about how to inquire from the spiritual master with faith. He didn't worry that he already knew something. He simply went to Lord Caitanya and said, "I don't know who I am."

* * *

4:28 a.m.

Jaya Jagadisa. May Lord Nrsimhadeva protect us. Who? All devotees, the devotees on the right side of the controversy, ISKCON's card-carrying members. And the others? Well, they can be protected by Him too, but not as nicely.

Hare Krishna. You are a writer, so get serious.

He said a devotee like Arjuna doesn't understand violence or nonviolence but he just wanted to please Krishna, so he killed for Him. The *gopis* didn't know morality or immorality. They too just wanted to please Krishna, so they acted immorally according to the standard of their society and left their families to be with Krishna in the forest. Because we are not yet pure devotees, the teaching that nothing matters except pleasing Krishna must be applied with discrimination.

The wind sounds strong out there. I'll be glad to get outside. I'm sure it will wake me up. You can't fall asleep walking around the house in a brisk wind.

I've begun listening to tapes made by the devotees from Gita-nagari reading selected chapters of *Krishna* book. They did it at my request.

* * *

The words are a little below the surface today, as usual. I'll have to work to get at them. Srila Prabhupada says that as long as we live in the material world, we have to work to live. Devotees shouldn't get into any huge enterprises. Krishna will provide for us, just as He provides for the monkeys of Vrndavana and the birds in the trees.

Krishna conscious bath, Krishna conscious silence. The telephone pole in the dark. rings and washers, nails and screws, and whatever Dr. Bronner writes on the side of his soap bottle about "Carpenter Jesus and all-one mankind. Don't get it in your eyes. Dilute! Dilute!"

Swami is the chief controller
when his senses dictate he says yes
ask in the name of God, otherwise not.
Mention the name of Krishna and he'll speak
in ecstasy a one-hour lecture.

* * *

Swami is also unto himself
wants to be alone to chant and hear
ascends in silence to that place
minding his business, avoiding the crowd.
I like him that way.

* * *

Swami is valid when he
wishes to serve his guru with his
whole heart and performs austerity
to attain that gift. A *cela* is a man with
a soul.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

Rain splashing and gale-force winds in our yard. Rathdangan is living up to its name as the place of strong winds. It's clean and somehow conducive to a solitary spiritual life. But I don't think it's good for the plants. They are buffeted and torn, and some of them are knocked over or uprooted completely. I see leaves and small branches flying around. I'm holding my own against the wind, going around and around on the boards, chanting and occasionally noticing the distraction that prevents me from prayer. Krishna, please help me. It would be nice if I could come to understand that I am praying not only when I chant these mantras but at all other times "whenever I can recollect myself and understand that Krishna is with me. I'm totally dependent upon Him.

The half-moon is mostly covered by the constantly blowing, smokelike clouds. No stars at all right now, although a little earlier I saw one or two. The clouds shift like

persons moving low over the hills on a hurried mission "some cloak and dagger business? I refuse to think of it as sinister.

* * *

9:10 a.m.

"Therefore all transcendentalists have been rendering loving service with great delight to Lord Krishna, the Personality of Godhead, from time immemorial because such devotional service is enlivening to the self." (*Bhag.* 1.2.22) All incarnations are Lord Krishna's parts or plenary parts of the Personality of Godhead. Various religions make their own claims. Islam says Mohammed is the last prophet and that there can be no more. A Catholic priest calls his Church the mother of all institutions. Protestant fundamentalists say Jesus is the only way. Zen claims that all gods are false. Krishna consciousness says that Krishna is the source of all incarnations and the "last word in transcendence."

It's best I don't compare religions. It only agitates the mind. I already know how to defeat the attempts to minimize the importance of Krishna's words. Those who disagree with us are not really our enemies but have different views of the Absolute Truth. The Vedic science accommodates them all.

"In other forms of the Personality of Godhead, except Sri Krishna and Baladeva, there is no facility for intimate personal contact, as in the case of the transcendental pastimes of the Lord at Vrajabhumi." (*Bhag.* 1.2.22, purport) These forms are eternal and are manifest once in every day of Brahma, just as the sun rises every twenty-four hours on the eastern horizon.

I pray to Krishna Himself, the Lord to whom I can pray, to whom I have been praying for most of my life, to please help me become His loving devotee.

The material world is created, maintained, and destroyed by the *gunavataaras*. If we want to enjoy material facilities yet remain in prison life, we can approach the various demigods, but if we want to become free of the prison house, we must please Lord Visnu. He is worshiped only through devotional service.

* * *

10:25 a.m.

In the room, this typist pounds away. He didn't write much today. He's living more alone, keeping things more to himself. His assistant's other engagements are helping him turn more toward God. Listen to your own inner voice. God is in everyone's heart. Someone says (someone is always saying something) that unless we listen closely, without distraction, we may miss what the voice is saying. O Krishna, how can a limited fellow like me turn to You, and what are You asking of me?

In the end, my prayer always comes down to begging from Krishna. I'm not like Lord Brahma, who shook Krishna's hand.

Another devotee was told by his therapist that he had had no strong male influence in his life as a child and should therefore develop more his relationship with me, his guru. But I too didn't have my father when I was young. He was away in the war. Later, we weren't very close. Of course, I met Prabhupada and, it's true, I accepted him as a father

figure from the spiritual world. Please take me with you to Krishna's abode, Srila Prabhupada.

Yes, he sankirtanas and to taste ecstasy, but . . .

We really had no idea what was in store for us as we took to Krishna consciousness. No idea at all what ISKCON would become. Krishna used Prabhupada completely to further His movement, but now it is unraveling, changing, no longer the walled-in fortress we thought it was. At the same time, it's tough. The roots have been planted deeply, and even while it dies in some places, its growing in others, and being reborn in still others. That's the way Krishna consciousness moves through history, influencing people according to who they are but not losing its purity. Lord Caitanya's movement will remain rooted all over the world in some form or other.

* * *

I don't remember how you wrote when you didn't have a boat.
We say that you just begin to wade
but when it was too cold what did you do?
I stayed at home and waited until 11 a.m.
then got the paper towels ready and
the cloth towels and the warm water and
the new clothes (although I didn't iron them).

* * *

Asked Prabhupada to come sit on the *asana* on the desk and there I removed his worn clothes and began his massage just as we used to do "now an everyday event.

* * *

This October I have
been listening to him narrate
"The Kidnapping of rukmini."
Krishna, Balarama, and
Their soldiers are prepared
to steal her, to rush off
and fight to the death anyone who dares
pursue them.
All this, of course, has been masterminded
by rukmini, the
gentle princess who
is also a king's daughter.

* * *

That's what I do around here every day "
move through *Krishna* book and try to hear
with faith. But the steady factor
is that Srila Prabhupada is willing
to accept my message.

* * *

Do I worship him frozen in time?
Should I accept life as it is now and
leave him behind or seek him in another guru?
Some say it's the message, not the person,
that we should worship. It was different,
they say, when
he was here.

* * *

I want to keep some things as they were, the
truth of Krishna's eternal *lilas*, the *maha-mantra*,
and faith in my eternal guide.

* * *

12:23 p.m.

She should be here soon from next door with lunch "probably those small but good scones. I really am a lunch man, even though the pleasure is brief. What is it, the high point of my day?

Hurricane George didn't reach Ireland, and neither did any nuclear fallout or the fall of the ruble or the new wars in Bosnia. I did get a little news, however. As spirit soul, I'll have to take another life, which could be right in the path of a future hurricane or war. Do I think I can keep out of harm's way forever? No, no.

* * *

2:33 p.m.

The Supreme Lord wants the suffering living beings to go back home, back to Godhead. Imagine saying this on the radio while being hosted by a neutral interviewer. The word goes out and people hear it. Someone becomes annoyed by it, someone bored, and that rare person finds it an intriguing concept, similar perhaps to something he or she has already been thinking: God wants us to return to His kingdom. That place from which we'll never have to return. Here our radio friend advises us, "Hang in there. It takes a little concentration to get there." And "hang in there" in this world, too. Things will definitely get better when we move to the spiritual world. Imagine spontaneous happiness.

I'm reading mostly *Bhagavatam* verses rather than verses and purports and seeking out my favorites.

At lunch, Bhurijana Prabhu was speaking on tape about Lord Brahma, who didn't know the source of his own creation but accepted the sound "*ta-pa*" and practiced austerity for Krishna's sake. Here in the First Canto we meet the *purusa-avatars* and, from them, a list of prominent incarnations beginning with the four Kumaras. Narada comes to teach how our present activities become *bhakti* and thus "non-fruitive action." On pp. 154 - 155 of this volume, I found a brittle-brown leaf. Is it from Vrndavana? See its veins, made by nature, by God? It had been placed between the tortoise and Dhanvantari incarnations. "In the 19th and 20th incarnations, the Lord advented Himself as Lord Balarama and Lord Krishna and . . . removed the burden of the world." (*Bhag.* 1.3.23)

Lord Krishna and Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu are original. From Them all incarnations flow, as numerous as waves in the river.

* * *

3:17 p.m.

More fallen leaves. The wind stronger and louder, like an aeolian harp. The wind washes the countryside clean. Here the hills are being washed constantly either by wind, rain, or sunshine. They've been polished bare.

M. gone to make phone calls. He left the gate open. It's warm out on the bench today, and it will warm me up for going into the art room to seek Krishna consciousness without pretension.

When I'm in there, it makes me feel immature, boyish, like I'm grappling with very basic things in spiritual life again. The wind becomes part of me in a way "that polishing nature. Maybe that polishing is part of growing up. When you polish off *anarthas*, you develop a grateful heart.

* * *

4:57 p.m.

I got tired of being in the art room by the end of the session. I was afraid of becoming "artsy." Still, I got in some good shots. Changed a background that wasn't clear. Did one of a shy swan talking to a shy *brahmacari* (instead of Lalita). Titled it, "Talking To A Swan." Thought of *Sri Hamsankirtana*, softly." Some people in brilliant colors. Two other figures full of brightness. Words repeated: "Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu," and "Please help." So that's it "the usual simple faces with *tilaka*."

* * *

5:53 p.m., Night Notes

Let's be grateful for everything. Know that Krishna already forgives us for our alienation from Him and that sooner or later, He will bring us back to Him. All prayer is gratitude.

Dressed Radha-Govinda in light green night outfits while the last of the Karttika candle burned down and Prabhupada watched. We can't understand why things are operating the way they are, but we can know that Krishna is in control.

Sounds like M. returning from making his phone calls. Perhaps we will be able to spend some time reading *Govinda-lilamrta* together aloud. Even if he doesn't come, I will read it aloud myself, just as I offered my lone candle. I have a new resolve to do things more alone without feeling resentment toward him.

Krishna, Krishna "I say the word dryly, but at least I know it's Him. He is all-attractive. Devotees should have no tinge of impersonalism. He's inconceivably great, yet a person with whom we can play. *Govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami*. We belong to the sect of the Absolute Truth.

I don't get such great insights, actually, and besides, people other than Krishna devotees don't want to hear them. Also, when you lecture (or write) *frequently*, then how can you keep offering your super-exciting insights to your audience? That's why preachers travel. If you speak again and again to the same people, they start to notice how repetitive you are, the limits of your repertory, and also how ultimately little you have to give. Anyway, we keep going despite these obstacles.

The weather is repetitive too. I see the same old-new sunsets and live through the same Irish autumns. Still, I feel the freshness of the cool and the rain, and change as I chant Hare Krishna.

October 12, 12:03 a.m.

The Yamadutas declare that Lord Narayana is the Supreme cause and controller. We have many witnesses for our activities, including the Supersoul Himself. "Everyone engaged in fruitive activities is suitable to be subjected to punishment according to his sinful acts." (*Second Chance*, p. 44) Sinful acts are inevitable for those under the modes of material nature.

Last night I was trying to fall asleep in an empty house. I had in my earplugs. At first I was waiting "either to be disturbed by noise or reassured that M. had returned with the van. Then I turned to reassuring myself that God is in my heart. I repeated that phrase: God is in my heart. I recalled Prabhupada saying at the beginning of the sixteenth chapter of *Bhagavad-gita* that *asannyasi* is *abhaya*, unafraid; even if he's alone in a jungle, he knows he's not alone because God is in his heart. If I could keep this remembrance up and intensify it, I could have a significant breakthrough.

Everyone has to suffer or enjoy his karma in the next life. Atheists refuse to see that Lord Narayana is the supreme cause behind all activities. "Deluded by the three modes, the whole world does not know Me, who am above the modes and inexhaustible."

The Yamadutas next explain that everyone is compelled to work. A Vaisnava's work is *dharma*. Work should be done under the jurisdiction of *varnaSrama*. Thus we may all satisfy Krishna according to our natures. Then we are saved from sinful reactions.

Since we are all Krishna's servants, we should engage in the nine principles of *bhakti* while accepting the regulative principles for spiritual life. In forgetfulness we act as if the body were the self "as if we were animals. This is the "darkness of ignorance." Vedic knowledge advises us to free ourselves from darkness and to come

into the light of transcendental knowledge by following the spiritual master in acts of devotional service to Krishna.

* * *

The pigeon holes in my four-tiered desk file are empty. I may paint, read, and write today "if my head stays clear. I can find something to say through the act of saying it. I don't know beforehand what I will say. But I'd like to say that God is in my heart. I'd also like to feel more grateful for receiving the Hare Krishna mantra.

A light bulb broke last night when I foolishly tried to dust it with a wet tissue. Then another blew when I tried to replace it. Broken glass everywhere. Don't mention it. Just write about profound ideals.

A devotee I know seems to be the spokesperson for implementing *varnaSrama-dharma* in ISKCON. Her followers say this will solve all our problems. For myself, I'm so far gone, definitely *asannyasi* in the last quarter "the last eighth "of my life, that it's hard to care too much about it. I don't want to get involved in controversial rearrangements because things keep changing anyway. If you're young enough, maybe you are willing to see a social reform through its various stages and can therefore feel hopeful about it. When your energy is as limited as mine, however, you start to think you should save yourself. That also seems to be the most exemplary (or socially progressive) thing I could do. No matter how they designate or wish to organize us, we have to be responsible enough to chant and hear on our own.

* * *

4:26 a.m.

I don't feel like writing. I'd prefer to go back to bed. But I have this human body for a reason "so I can advance toward love of God. Sleeping might help my body, but I'd rather stay awake. Partly it's the drive I feel to write my quota of pages in Krishna's service. Aside from that, Prabhupada used to call sleep a waste of time.

Sometimes we sleep through our service because we don't think our service has any real value. But our service is life itself. We have to receive mercy to feel its worth. Pray to Krishna and anticipate His giving us His mercy. Thank Him even if He doesn't give us what we want. Whatever He gives is best for us. Everything is going on like that, not only in our own lives but in all things. Krishna has our best interest in mind. We have to pay attention and see this.

What do *I* say about *my* service? My free association muscles flex, but I don't always trust them. I could take a word like "Henry" and start listing the Henries I know "Henry Adams, Henry Katz, Berryman's Henry, and so on. Then I would steer that to Krishna.

And then?

I'd be a Krishna conscious sport of some kind and exult in that.

Karpanya-doso upahata-svabhavah "Arjuna surrenders himself to Krishna, saying he was perplexed. He wanted Krishna to become his guru, He was Krishna's *Sisya*.

That's worth staying awake for, isn't it? Before me on the wall is the picture of peaceful Nrsimhadeva after He killed HiranyakaSipu. The Lord is touching the demon's

torn-apart chest with His lotus feet. HiranyakaSipu is relaxed now. Prahlada is on the Lord's lap.

A calendar for October, the month of acorns falling from North American oaks. I know of some oak trees there, one in Pennsylvania and one on Staten Island, unless they have fallen due to old age or blight.

* * *

Children in *gurukula* "I didn't understand that it was so bad. We thought we were doing a good thing. Then what else happened? On Inis rath I saw that young boy following his mother, and they were picking wildflowers. When he grows up, will he remember the moment?"

Lamplight spilling over the bottles of ink. I don't care how this comes out right now. The startling looks on the two people I painted. I put it in the hallway where they can be seen upon entering the house. There are bold streaks of orange and blue on their bodies from the background, which I put down first.

A Swissair plane crashed over Halifax. They don't know exactly why these things happen. Again and again they say it's mechanical failure. Over two hundred people met instant death "no one was spared. Their relatives went to the place where the plane went down and grieved, but the souls have already moved on. We could say dying in a plane crash is a horribly painful death, leaving no time to think things over, set affairs in order, or to pray. There you are, on your way from New York to Zurich, and suddenly your life is over.

That's another reason not to sleep during that precious time between 4:30 and 5:00 a.m. We need to be awake if we want to pay attention to the moment. Pray to Krishna in the heart and remember how He is in Vrndavana for pure devotees whose eyes are anointed with love of God. Get rid of the spikes of *aparadha* in the heart, the dust and the grime. I am disgusted by the way he leaves the kitchen and bathroom, but what about the condition of my own heart? rodents could feast on all the dirt and crumbs I leave there. Better get to work. Chant the holy names of God: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna.

* * *

5:28 a.m.

Last day for this volume. The half-moon is bright, but on one side of the house it can't illuminate and I need the flashlight outside. This morning is clear, but the moon is at half-power, like when you only have one headlight on your car. See the stars? Light is falling on the thatched roof. Silhouettes. The artificial light from the electric bulb outside the building casts its light into the garden, creating more shadows. What will I write next in EJW? There are various themes in our lives. I'll try to bring some of them together in the next book. But I hope to especially address the topic of gratitude toward Krishna for giving me this little life as it comes to me "the sea of my life filled with Krishna conscious breath. Everything has been a gift, and I can now turn around and make what I have been given a gift in return.

* * *

5:40 a.m.

Walker bilious, no music except *bhajana* floating through his head this morning. No food except *prasadam*, no travel except on Krishna's business. We restrict ourselves. As soon as I heard of this principle from Swamiji in the summer of '66, I accepted it.

Battling to stay awake and on my own rather than to be carried by someone else's energy.

* * *

9:05 a.m.

Janma guhyam bhagavato: "Whoever carefully recites the mysterious appearances of the Lord, with devotion in the morning and in the evening, gets relief from all miseries of life." (*Bhag.* 1.3.29) We are each pure soul, of the same quality as the Supreme Lord. We realize this when we get beyond the gross and subtle coverings over the soul.

Hear and inquire. read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Many of these terms refer to the sankirtana. After listening sufficiently, we should explain what we have understood to others. That can be done by lecturing or writing. That's also *kirtana*. The concept of devotional service to guru and Krishna can then be expanded to include almost any activity that is sincerely offered. I want to stay within this jurisdiction in whatever I do. The quality of these acts is determined by our consciousness.

"This *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is the literary incarnation of God, and it is compiled by Srila Vyasadeva, the incarnation of God. It is meant for the ultimate good of all people, and it is all-successful, all-blissful and all-perfect." (*Bhag.* 1.3.40)

Dreamt of being with various people who, despite their promises, got me into trouble. The man who rented the hotel room, the women who sat outside each room, the ISKCON leaders who appeared in the dream "each led me on in friendly ways and later cheated me. I had to escape from all of them. (But being alone in the city provided another danger.) There is something in these dreams that I need to understand for my life. Are they some kind of parable? Anyway, those who wish to help me will help me maintain my seclusion, at least as a base. I want to come out of seclusion from time to time to lecture. But my books are my preaching.

"This *Bhagavata Purana* is as brilliant as the sun and it has arisen just after the departure of Lord Krishna to His own abode, accompanied by religion, knowledge, etc. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of knowledge in the age of Kali shall get light from this *Purana*." (*Bhag.* 1.3.43)

* * *

9:32 a.m.

For me, Vrndavana haikus consisted simply of noticeable things. Auden wrote a poem dedicated to the body's senses, "The Precious Five." He indicates that they should be happy and that making them happy is the purpose of life. A futile endeavor. We are not the enjoyer. The material body will betray us through those very senses. Yet the senses, when engaged in Krishna's service, will satisfy Krishna and bring us happiness. The haikus reported through the senses, directed by the intellect, in the hopes that they would be accepted as devotional writing.

In *Dust Of Vrndavana* a longer section was dedicated to *parikrama* around Vrndavana during Karttika. I tried to collect visual and other sensual moments. My working premise was that anything I perceived in Vrndavana was beyond the ordinary. That is, it contained the sacred. Vrndavana itself is like that, whether we experience it or not. Each particle of sand is *cintamani*.

On *parikrama* I noticed: "The curve/ of the vulture's neck/ as he readies for flight." The vultures are large birds. They sit high in the trees. There was something horrible about their appearance, but they too . . .

Parikramers stopped at a *kadamba* tree and threw seeds to a chipmunk. Good acts. I remember being there, the cold entering my body on one hand and the heat of social pressure on the other, one kind from disciples, another from Godbrothers, and yet another from the Hindus. My haikus don't tell much of the human stresses. rather, they're a bit ideal. I turned to those ideals to help me escape a little of my reality.

Chilly morning "

on the path,

a cow with a burlap. Kaisori - this still needs to be checked

* * *

Acrid whiff

as he passes:

cigarette smoker.

Walked thurgh the *sadhu's aSrama*, where they were bathing at the pump in their *kaupinas*. A *pujari* gave us little pieces of sugar, and we gave him money. Do you remember how much? I was self-conscious. I was the only one in shoes.

Thoughts wandering:

the dirt trail

gradually includes me.

I thought voidists would like that one, and it's true. You have to lose your screaming false ego and become as insignificant as possible, at least for a while. It's a march. You have to keep going. We would only stop when the sun became too brilliant. Wanted to put Krishna's name in at least a few of the haikus.

I talk too much

sun reflections in a pond.

A widow passed us on the left, like a car in traffic. She called out, "radheee-Syama!" as if she were honking her horn. She was alone, making better progress along that path than we could in our big group.

* * *

2:15 p.m.

Some spray paints came in from our stash at Geaglum and I put them on the art room shelves. As I tidied up a bit in there, I felt good about the art process. Then Madhu came to the doorway and sprang a surprise on me "I mean, the details of a controversy I could have lived without. So-and-so Prabhu thinks women should not be initiated at all. It undermines their relationships with their husbands. He adds that men have different

biological needs than women. They need to go all the way in sex and can't survive with only a hug or a kiss. Oh? Do I really have to think about this? I mean, is he serious?

Well, yes, I am his initiating spiritual master. What will I advise my female disciples?

But I was just about to choose a jar of peach paint to go with the magenta. Imagine how I could use those colors together. And I wanted to hear at least a little of that Brother David Steindl-rast and his New Age prayer. If these controversies fill my mind .

..
Anyway, how can I solve these dilemmas for people? No matter what I say, it's inevitable that I'll leave out some important sociological consideration. No, I don't want to put my energy into debates. There's no way to debate and not end up lopsided.

* * *

2:35 p.m.

Sitting here waiting for the *kicchari* to arrive. Lean forward over this 18 x 24 sheet and write, supported by a stiff left arm. Or lean forward without it. Brother David says that prayer means accepting everything as a gift from God. Gratitude. He has the right words to express himself, but somehow he doesn't know the Krishna that we know. Krishna is hidden from the New Age exchange. They see His Prabhupada followers as alternative fundamentalists "just more sectarians. Aside from that, someone like David could never accept Krishna's own words in *Bhagavad-gita*; give up all religions and just surrender unto Me. That would really be too much.

So we worship Krishna in our little grove at the Krishna-Balaram Mandir. The grove has a stone bench with trees growing over it and branches reaching up overhead, forming a trellis. We go there with friends. We come out only to preach.

* * *

2:40 p.m.

Regarding hearing *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, "One should hear with rapt attention from the real person and then he can at once realize the presence of Lord Krishna on every page." (*Bhag.* 1.3.43, purport) We should be pure in our practices if we want to "hear with rapt attention."

When we speak with realization, it doesn't mean we should try to surpass the previous *acarya*. Have confidence in what he presented, yet present your own experience of his teachings, making your words suitable for the time and audience. Saunaka Rsi said, speaking on behalf of the sages at NaimiSaranya, that he trusted Suta Gosvami to faithfully represent the teachings of Sukadeva Gosvami.

There are repeated references throughout the *Bhagavatam* to becoming free of sex desire. One who speaks *Bhagavatam* especially should be free. Those who hear *Bhagavatam* should be "pure in mating." remember the liberated soul Sukadeva Gosvami and that he was able to walk past the naked women without even a glance. A householder like Vyasa was expected to see a distinction between male and female, but a *sannyasi* should be transcendental to it. "As long as such attachment is there, one should not try to become a *sannyasi* like Sukadeva Gosvami. At least theoretically one must be convinced the living entity is neither a male or female."

Here at the beginning of the *Bhagavatam*, the sages ask how Maharaja Pariksit gave up everything to sit and hear from a renounced sage like Sukadeva Gosvami. Suta begins by telling them how Vyasa, at the beginning of Kali-yuga, edited the *Vedas* so that they could be understood by less intelligent people. "O twice-born *brahmanas*, still his mind was not satisfied, although he engaged himself in working for the total welfare of all people." (*Bhag.* 1.4.26) Hearing this will lead us to Sri Krishna and the need to focus on Him. Keep Him in mind even when we discuss spiritual topics, such as gratitude, prayer, His silence, and so on. Sometimes we speak about the topics surrounding spiritual life and forget the center. We shouldn't do that.

* * *

3:26 p.m.

Last afternoon of this volume. Maybe only two people in the world know that one volume is ending and another beginning. Other than that, everything else in my life seems the same.

Yet tomorrow I'll begin a new book. The book may seem the same to some, but it's not. Each one is a milestone in my life, and allows me to feel a new theme in a *sadhaka's* life. Even if no one else sees it, I feel the power of inner change and the accumulation of my devotional service.

Each volume lasts twenty-one days. I don't know what will happen in the next volume. While writing *Beloved routine*, I developed pain in my chest and had to face the idea that I might die at any moment. Later I discovered that the pain was not caused by a bad heart but by muscle strain. That's how this book got titled *A Lease On Life*. I still have chest pain and I'm still mortal, as we all are, but now I'm trying to face the next segment of my life, which will last twenty-one days.

It's quiet out here in the yard. Even the wind seems subdued, only ruffling the treetops. As Madhu moves more into his own interests, I feel myself having to become more and more alone. He's gone at least half the time now. I'm getting used to the increased solitude. Perhaps another devotee has summed up Madhu's attitude by his own. He said he had attended a college lecture and now wants to go out and preach himself. If he doesn't preach, he feels stale. I don't preach in college classrooms anymore, so perhaps Madhu, seeking his own version of "college preaching," is feeling stale. He is probably tired of living alone, like a monk. I pray that never happens to me.

* * *

5:17 p.m.

Nobody's around. I want to speak to a sympathetic ear and tell my version of why I repeat what Srila Prabhupada says regarding "no illicit sex" in marriage. Some devotees feel cheated by how I stick to that line.

And so on.

But right now there *is* no sympathetic ear. No one answers the intercom. The urgency to speak fades. That's all right.

* * *

6:24 p.m., Night Notes

Yes, I painted earlier this afternoon and only finished three. One was left with a blank face. I'll fill it in later, maybe. One had a beard and seemed to be wondering whether or not he should join the Hare Krishna movement. One was a purple-hued guru, and his disciple was there too, physically younger and taller. He was saying, "Please, master . . . " What was I thinking when I did that one? O Krishna, I want to be a lover, not a withholder. But not a skin-lover. Soul to soul. The Supreme Soul, Krishna, dances with the *gopis* in the spring, and we'll need more candles to get through Karttika, which will last another twenty-one days.