

Free Write Journal #102

Free Writes

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Cluster: Deities

—Radha-Govinda are too small for me to clearly see Their eyes and facial features—I can see Navadvipa Mahaprabhu with arms upraised leading the *kirtana* at Srivasa Pandita’s house.—And I can see the painting of Mahaprabhu in the Gambhira fingering His *japa mala*—Srila Prabhupada *murti* is prominent and handsome on his *vyasasana*—Laksmi-Nrsimha are shining, golden, giving protection to Their devotees—these *arca-vigrahas* give me solace in *darsana* while I do *japa* and writing.

Altar Improvement

Baladeva just fixed the problem with the altar. He shifted it forward on the marble surface, and now I can see Radha-Govinda’s eyes and facial features without any difficulty. This is a great improvement. Now I can receive Their darsana fully, Their beautiful lotus eyes and Their delicate noses and mouths are comfortably visible to me now.

Out-Loud Reading

We allow Haryasva and another person to join us in the out-loud readings, speaking from Washington and Philadelphia. They speak through our two telephones. The addition is welcome, however, it creates a crackling noise, some sort of interference. Also, we only have two telephones. So we can't add more participants. But it's nice to have these two remote speakers joining us, increasing the bliss of the *Bhagavatam* reading. We are now on difficult chapters about the structure of the universe and the movements and size of the planets. The addition of extra readers is a relief from the potential tedium of the descriptions of the planets. Everyone takes part in a jolly spirit—not doubting, but just accepting the inconceivable, although it is over our heads and difficult to comprehend.

Journal and Poems, Book 1 (January-June 1985)

p. 160

“I remember one of my guru-Godbrothers lecturing to the devotees and saying that we should stand up for our love of Krsna. He said that if anyone tells us that we don't love Krsna, we should “punch him in the nose.” In other words, humility aside, we should recognize that a good loving sentiment has developed in our hearts through the mercy of Krsna and guru and through our regular practices. We *do* love Krsna and Prabhupada, but that love is expressed in different moods.

“Lord Caitanya said, ‘I do not see Krsna and therefore the whole world is void to Me.’ But those are the very highest sentiments of *maha-*

bhava. I would like to follow Rupa Gosvami, who humbly stated that he was ‘hoping against hope’ to become Krsna conscious. If I like to see the flowering bluebells or if I am attached to life itself, to living and breathing, then let me wed this to progressive Krsna consciousness. And if I am still only in the practicing stages, then let me practice more strongly. Let me be a sincere apprentice and work daily at the processes of devotional service. True humility for me will be to admit that I am still in the practicing stages, and yet to enthusiastically apply my energy to those practices, year after year.

“We should not demand to have love, or else we will quit our service. Love will come one day when we are actually deserving.”

pp. 199

“Seeing Cardinals

“The female has stylish plumage—
gray-tan and red, with a trim tail.

The male is red—sharp head.

They have discovered our seeds.

He comes and goes in nervous flits,
she stays more often.

Now if they will only try our feeder.

“I point out the cardinals
 to get relief from heavy news—
 a *sannyasi*’s getting married,
 a zonal leader’s invading our town,
 another quips, ‘I don’t like *Back to Godhead*.’

“‘Don’t you love your duties?’
 asked a brother
 when he detected in my books
 a love for writing, reading, and walks in the woods.

“But it’s not true:
 I love commanding and protecting,
 ‘tho I’m no *maharatha*.
 Somehow I’ve been given charge,
 and if I ever get my head free
 I’ll travel fast again,
 I’ll preach a storm,
 see everyone and try
 to solve a hundred problems.

“But even then,

while managing men and money,
 I'll rejoice in Krsna's artistry:
 cardinals on the lawn."

"May 17

"DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

"When Paramananda was pressed by a devotee to discuss the relative importance between the quality of one's devotional feelings and how effective or expert one is in one's service, he brought out some realizations. He said that we should appreciate a devotee who was clean and quiet and pure in heart, but that there is an even more advanced stage where a devotee meditates ambitiously to do things for his spiritual master. And there is an even further advanced stage where he is empowered to carry out those tasks. He gave the example of Srila Prabhupada, who is outstanding among all his Vaisnava contemporaries, even though some of them may have been pure devotees of Krsna. Only Srila Prabhupada was roused by transcendental compassion and invested with *krsna-sakti* to leave India and deliver Krsna consciousness to people all over the world.

"One of the devotees then made the point that Lord Ramacandra was equally pleased with the spider who flicked dust into the ocean as

well as with Hanuman, who threw in big boulders. Paramananda gave new light on this by saying that although the spider is praised equally by Lord Rama, nevertheless, he is not as exalted and has not been as glorified throughout the ages as the devotee Hanuman.

“Hearing this discussion, I was encouraged to aspire to do great things for Prabhupada. That is what he wants.”

p. 197

“While rowing, we saw four newly born ducklings vigorously swimming. I guessed their parents were hiding nearby. The ducklings were smaller than my hand and probably just a few days old, and yet by Krsna's inconceivable *sakti* they were able to float and stroke. One of the ducklings swam about twenty feet ahead of the others and then suddenly panicked, realizing that he was alone. Making frightened ‘cheeping’ sounds, he turned and with desperate leaps, swam back to the other three.

“They were pretty little babies, but pitiful to see, so small and unprotected. Almost any predator could have swooped and killed them. And even if their parents returned, how much protection could they afford them against the ravages of nature? Some of nature's creatures appear powerfully endowed and can even outdo man in their strength

and ferocity. But actually we are all as pitiful and helpless as the ducklings, and we are all being hunted down by the predator Time.”

Stanzas of Hope Against Hope

1

“Today it rained,
and we will be boating.
I will ask for hard news
while rowing.

“It seems to diminish
the worry
to cruise the creek
while hearing the unresolved—
friends fighting and distressed
and little progress for me.

2

“I wish I could hear
in my quiet room
the tape-recorded message
of Srila Prabhupada.

All I need is here:
 cabin, leisure, recorded speech,
 but my attention flits
 like a titmouse on a post:
 my inner ear is lacking.
 But I am determined not to deviate.
 Even if I progress little I'll be able to say,
 "I could not serve Krsna
 although I tried.

"May 16

"A short surprise visit to Gita-nagari by Giriraja Swami. He says he takes it as Krsna's desire that the government of India is not allowing him a visa to re-enter. He is using this time to develop his preaching skills in Mauritius, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Whenever Krsna desires, he will return to his assigned duties in Bombay.

"Hearing Giriraja Swami explain his difficulties in this way, I became encouraged to think that my illness is also Krsna's will. Just as Giriraja cannot return to India, despite all my efforts I cannot return to full action. Therefore, I must accept this as the will of Krsna.

"While Giriraja Swami was visiting, *The Worshipable Deity* arrived from the printer. We went to the noon *arati* of Radha-Damodara, and I

beheld the new book on the altar at the feet of Their Lordships. The cover photo is very pleasing and reveals the special mercy of my Prabhupada *murti*.”

p. 107

“March 29

“Diary accounts may pause when prayers arrive:

“Two Prayers

1

“Tired of me,
I am seeking Thee,
Lord of the universe.

“Tired of me,
I am seeking Thee,
guru of the universe.

“But You seem far away.

“God is in His book,
guru in his order.

Why can't I touch You?

How can You save me

if I'm so far away?

“I know:

it's my fault if I am distant.

You've given me the holy name

and I may serve Your devotees.

But I seem to need more help;

I can't lift myself.

2

“Saints speak to God,

sometimes joke with Him

like Sanatana Gosvami:

“Just take this dry *capati*, it is all that I have.”

“Do as you like with me,’

sings Bhaktivinoda.

And Narottama dasa cries,

‘I do not love You,

but now I will love You.’

“But what can I say,
and why do I insist on trying?
I tried being silent.
That won’t work.
And I’ve tried repeating others,
but still I want more.

“But I don’t own Rupa’s price—
the desire to attain You.

“I am praying for power,
patience, insight.

“Let me see You with inner vision.
But make me a soldier.
Give me what I need
to go over the top.
I’ve come thus far,
carried on the order

of Srila Prabhupada.

Now how further?”

p. 173

“I just went out with Sri Krsna dasa and Bhakti-marga dasi and learned the names of many different wildflowers and little plants and herbs. Bhakti-marga has a good knowledge of all these things. She pointed out that because of the early hot spell this year, many spring flowers have come and gone more quickly than usual. Lilacs, for example, which usually bloom in front of the *brahmacari* house and also by my cabin, produced only a few flowers and now are finished. Similarly, Virginia bluebells and dogwood usually last longer.

“The large leafy plant I see everywhere is called May-apple or mandrake. It produces an obscure waxy flower which usually hides under the large leaves. These wildflowers are very lowly, and their blossoms are sometimes obscure—one could call them humble. They are not very beautiful or even noticeable. At the moment the most prominent, blossoming flowers are rockcrest—tiny, star-shaped flowers covering the rocks. Also prominent are bluets, or Quaker-ladies, a tinier version of the Spring Beauties. Some of the wildflowers have unusual shapes, like the fiddle-head fern and the jack-in-the-pulpit.

“These wild plants have a practical utility that I know little of. Almost every one of them has some use. I remember hearing Srila Prabhupada discuss this in a lecture—how knowledgeable people in India can go into the jungle and bring back large numbers of herbs and weeds to use as medicines. Around here we have blue violets (now blooming), which are sometimes used for headaches. And the yarrow and horsetail are filled with vitamins. The cleaver-weed, which adheres to the body and can be used as a poultice, has medicinal elements useful in kidney treatment. And the roots and leaves of the lobelia, dock, and ladies’ slippers also have various medicinal uses.

“Bhakti-marga made an analogy between one's knowledge of the usefulness of these humble plants and a devotee's attitude while out distributing books. An inexperienced *sankirtana* devotee may pass over unattractive or very unlikely-looking people, thinking they will never buy a book or give a donation. But a more experienced or determined devotee knows that somehow each and every person has some potential to give for Krsna. Similarly, the complete herbalist and knower of the wildflowers finds a use in every insignificant-looking weed along the path, and in fact some of the more obscure ones with unimposing little flowers have potent uses. Knowing and using these plants is part of the self-sufficiency program of a Krsna conscious farm community.”

Truthfulness, the Last Leg of Religion

p. 75

“Chapter 7: Honesty, The Good Fight

“Where am I in relation to the Absolute Truth? I tend to say, ‘I know the truth; the Truth is Lord Krsna.’ And thus I may think I am truthful. But do I know Krsna? If I admit that I don't know the Lord yet, then how can I claim to know the truth or to be truthful?

“But I do say confidently, ‘The scriptures and the spiritual master accept Lord Krsna as the Absolute Truth. They have given reason and evidence to prove this and I submit to it. I accept it, I yearn for it. I will accept no other truth.’

“As declared by Madhvacarya, ‘The Supreme Lord Hari is revealed throughout the Vedas, in the beginning, the middle, and the end, in all branches.’ And the *Brhan-naradiya Purana* declares, ‘Chanting the holy names is the only way to understand God in this age.’

“I have some realization of these statements and I would never be satisfied outside of Krsna consciousness.

“But on the other hand, Lord Caitanya says that as for Himself, He has no love for Krsna. But He says it with such fervor! As for myself, I'm tepid, not aflame with truth.

“Sri Krsna is all bliss, and only the liberated souls know Him. I am outside of that realm. I say ‘outside’ with no thought of theological doubt. Neither do I say it with great pain. I speak of tepidness, mediocrity, spiritual slumber. I am faithful but aware that Truth is distant from me. And yet the Truth is so beautiful and radiant, that even from a great distance, its rays warm my soul.”

Memory in the Service of Krsna

p. 88

“Is it possible to catch a glimpse of ‘our own’ Krsna even before we enter the stage of liberation? In the ecstasy of *samadhi*, Bhismadeva said he wanted to see Krsna coming towards him as an opponent on the battlefield, with the dust flying into His hair, Krsna’s strong hands on the reins, and blood showing from wounds. ‘I want to see that form,’ said Bhisma. But what of us?

“It is possible for us to develop a personal relationship with Krsna, even when we are still in the stage of practicing devotional service—even before we have reached the stage of total spontaneous love. The merciful appearance of Krsna, in His appearance in the *murti* form, makes this widely possible. There are other ways also in which we can perceive our unique relationship with the Lord.

“In one sense, because each of us is a unique self, we’re always having an exclusive, individual relationship with *our* Krsna and *our* Srila Prabhupada. We don't claim that we possess Krsna all to ourselves and that there is no Krsna left over for anyone else. No. But He has given us a tiny self and tiny free will to use in a God- conscious way. Whenever we properly use the *atma* in devotional service, we appreciate our selfhood as love of Krsna. When we are satisfied in servanthood, we will never accept the concept of merging into oneness. As individual spiritual selfhood is the essence of Vaisnava philosophy, so our own selfhood, although not yet fully realized, is the means by which we exchange in a personal way with the Personality of Godhead.

“Lord Krsna and the spiritual master give us a glimpse of our spiritual individuality from the start, and thus we are encouraged. Even when it is theoretical, the doctrine of eternal individuality is inspiring to hear. ‘The Lord is sentient thou hast proved/ Impersonal calamity thou hast moved.’ As Krsna says, ‘Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be.’ (*Bhagavad-gita* 2.12)”

One Hundred Prabhupada Poems (#37)

p. 58

“The individual and collective memories

of his disciples,
 I want them both.
 I must remember
 that he rubbed my back when he sent
 me to Boston.
 Years later I learned
 I was not a 'most-favorite.'
 We're all his favorites, and anyone
 can rise up in the transcendental competition.
 Or better yet, don't compete, cooperate.

"I need to know I was alone with him.
 He said and wrote things about me,
 didn't say of me, 'He's a first-class *gunda*.'
 But even the *gunda* has a place in his heart.

"Collective memories I need,
 Prabhupada nectar is everybody's.
 I will live in any memory
 and make it my own.

"It's not my fault that I favor

Prabhupada's statements that suit my way.

When he talks of writers and
how we should grow up and use our own
initiative. I like his rose-soft,
private expressions.

“Don't kill the ants,’ he says and
he doesn't turn the girls away;
he likes children, he remembers his
childhood, he sits with me in the
late-night plane terminal and when
a kid with a toy goes by he says,
‘I used to have toys like that.’

“I'm guilty of not loving him enough.
But I've stored up the memories.
We live in them
and in his books
in his service,
he leads us to eternal, youthful Krsna.”

Vrndavana

18 November 1976

“Los Angeles

“My dear Satsvarupa,

“Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter dated November 6, which has just now reached me.

“Your report on the library party is very encouraging, especially regarding the use of *Bhagavad-gita* as a text for College courses.

So far the professors helping us, take affidavits from them. If necessary we may ask them to go to court, but as far as possible avoid this if it is unnecessary.

“Regarding your coming to be the secretary in February, you arrange amongst yourselves. All of you are welcome.

“Thank you for sending the \$500 from Detroit. Yes, it was due.

“Regarding the difficulty at Chicago airport, my advice is to depend on Krsna.

“Hoping this will meet you in good health.

“Your ever well-wisher,

“A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Comment: As usual, Prabhupada's encouraging words about distributing books in the colleges are very enlivening to us who are doing the work while traveling from college to college in our vans. Prabhupada specifically asks that we try to get the students to read *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* as part of their courses.

I was always eager to go and be with Srila Prabhupada as his secretary for a month. But so many GBC men also wanted to go, so we had to arrange a schedule.

Prabhupada gives advice about trouble at the Chicago airport. The devotees had legal approval to distribute the books, but the police and security men were always giving the devotees difficulty. Prabhupada simply advises, 'Depend on Krsna,' and the devotees did so.

Japa Transformations

p. 30

"When you are actually chanting, it's not laborious. Sometimes thinking about chanting and how many rounds you have to chant gets laborious or worrisome. Procrastination or panic become negative factors. But actual chanting is smooth riding, and it's actually fun and enjoyable. You just have to keep moving along and take the responsibility for the larger number of rounds still to do. As you chant, they always gradually diminish, and quickly, too. The absolute necessity of chanting should not be a burden but a given factor. I actually like to chant and shouldn't forget that. I just get bothered when I run into

conflict with other things on my schedule, and the quality of the chanting is disturbed. On days when you are behind in your schedule, you may have to sacrifice other activities, and you should do that willingly. Quality chanting always comes first.

“Chanting behind, I
control my mind
and assure myself
there is nothing to fret.

“You’ll reach the goal
before the day is out,
so what’s to worry? You have to do it
so you might as well enjoy
the easiest practice
of the day.

“Oh well, let’s admit
it’s not always so easy
and you are not always so willing
but it’s do or die
so rest with that.”

Shack Notes--Moments While at a Writing Retreat

p. 98

“This book describes three weeks of my life. There is something very wonderful in trying to let go, in trying to quiet myself so Krsna can come forward. I am not saying it so clearly, but I think you know what I mean. I have allowed myself to become congested in spirit, insipid, and afraid over the years. To acknowledge that and let those parts of myself go is a blessing.

“This is an exercise in Krsna conscious abandon, meant for one who doesn’t know how to act with abandon in Krsna consciousness. I worry too much what others will think of me. Now my whole life is running out. Will I discover that I never lived it for myself—and that Krsna *expected me to live it to the full limit of self-surrender?*

“This is an exercise for one who confuses the body with the self. The body grows old and does not dance so nimbly anymore, but the self is as sportive as a new calf in spring grass.

“This is an exercise for one who confuses the mind with the spirit, whose mind has taken ultimate authority and doesn't know the soul's simple realm.

“I am just discovering that I *do live*, and I am scratching it down. I know these statements are oblique and indirect (at least they appear that way on paper), but this is all I can honestly do. I am so tied up in knots

by what is happening to me that I cannot speak simple instructions or of love for Krsna.”

p. 124

“11:30 a.m.

“I spoke of evasiveness and indirectness. It is yet another form of mental clutter. It prevents us from getting at our dormant love of Krsna.

“Speaking of mental clutter, Ananta just interrupted me in my shack to tell me he needed my passport. So I went back to the house to get it. I told him to wear it in a shoulder pouch and be very careful, because this passport is a replacement for a lost one. ‘Oh yes,’ he said, ‘if you lose a replacement, they don't like it. They think you are selling them. Ekatvam lost his, and they wouldn't give him a new one.’

“‘What? His own country?’

“‘Yes.’

“‘Oh . . . that's right. They don't have to. It's a privilege.’

“Then I thought out the ‘worst thing that could happen’ if I lost my passport, as advised by Dale Carnegie in *Stop Worrying and Start Living*. He says to think of the worst, accept it, and then recoup your losses as much as possible. Lost passport . . . and the government won't give me a new one: No going to India, no going to Europe in the new van. At least I am still free to live here. I could spend more time in this

shack or at Gita-nagari. I could live with it. Get plenty of Kusakratha's books, study Prabhupada's books, develop relationships with devotees in this country. And I could travel the U.S.A.

“What's worse than that? Death, inevitable death, the sure-fire worst scenario. It must also be a 'best scenario' because it has to happen. No Europe, no U.S.A., no passport, no head, no hat—no books, no lunch, no rest in this body. No appeals, no reprieve.

“But we are devotees, so surely something good will happen, even from death.”

Breaking the Silence--Selected Writings 1991-1997

p. 61

“Introduction

“It's interesting to think (1) that the poet's job is to write of actual things and persons in his life and to write of them truthfully, and yet (2) to discover an image 'large enough to embody the whole knowable world' around him. This image is supposed to be worked by the author to pull together isolated observations and to give 'profundity' to everyone's experience. Such an image (or theme or allegory) cannot be chosen arbitrarily. Once it has been chosen, it has to be worked with the poet's full heart and endeavor.

“For me, this means working in Krsna consciousness—or at least working while seeking Krsna consciousness—and it means it should inspire or instruct readers.

A poet usually discovers such an image in the course of writing, but he’s even more fortunate if he can discover it beforehand. Readers may not always understand exactly what the poet is doing as the poet enters deeper and deeper into his image until his work is fulfilled. For example, William Carlos Williams says that the city in his poem ‘Patterson’ is ‘imaginatively conceived just like a man.’ He then mixes different elements—early history of the city, his own experience there, his obscure poetic art, etc. I could never understand his poem except in a fragmentary way, but for Williams (and his sensitive, sympathetic readers), he achieves a holistic release from incoherence and gagged silence.

“When my Godbrother, Jayadvaita Swami, read the first volume of *Journal and Poems*, he commented that it served me the way a large house with many rooms serves a man with multiple interests: I could record all sorts of things all in one place. But I can’t keep writing volumes upon volumes of *Journal and Poems*. As William Carlos Williams writes, ‘Let him beware lest he turn to no more than/ the writing of stale poems . . .’ The process has brought me to my search for a grand metaphor.”

WRITING SESSIONS

Wicklow Writing Sessions

“Session #10

“8:35 A.M.

“Where do you get solace? Exchange with Madhu; start up the Examen again? We’re all vulnerable – how to handle hurt and anger; and more...I stopped noticing what.

“Where do you get solace? Wanted to tell M. to be more sensitive with me but I let the moment go past, then tried to find him. He was out walking in the rain, calling to his God in Hare Krsna *mantras* like the followers of Sanatana Goswami (whose disappearance day is today). So, I come to the shack to find solace in writing, the lonely act of writing.

“Where do you get solace? You are so sensitive, see? And when you defend yourself you get a headache. If I didn’t have to defend myself, maybe it would be better. So it’s actually me. A disciple wrote me the same thing. She was doing the 4 P.M. offering in the Berkeley temple, but a devotee complained about her and the temple president said, ‘You can’t do it anymore.’ She got hurt and angry but held it in until she saw her counselor and they discussed it. How not to feel that hurt and anger, or how to express it in a way that doesn’t harm you and others? I felt it a little myself.

“*Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am?* The cover of the book shows a worried girl. Slogans inside. Tell someone how you feel. The old Examen we used to do and confide in each other how we feel. There was good in it. I could ask him if he’d like to do that again. We watch the desolation in a day, but it is predictable. He will feel that way about the machines he’s working with, and I feel that way about the writing. And occasionally we feel we ought to say something more appropriate for a devotee and so we choose instead a high point about chanting and a low point about chanting and share it; we share the poverty of it. But in a way it breaks the solitude, and I don’t want to break it every single day. Well, you could still take up the Examen on your own in a little diary. You could just write on a high point of the day and try to think, ‘What is it?’ You could light a candle, or you don’t need to do that even. But find in yourself what it is. Okay, I’ll think about that.

“Dear Writing Sessions, I am sacrificing for you. I’m churning out the pages because I like to do it. On my walk I thought, ‘Oh, I could do something with an interesting art, an angle and theme to it and cast all my random thoughts into that.’ It’s odd that a reader read the whole book (*Metaphor*), and his only remark about it in his letter to me was that he found the prose in my other book (*Geaglum Diary*) to be more natural and exciting. Okay, but what about the attempt to find a metaphor? That’s an important effort on my part since mostly I don’t

seek the metaphor. One would expect him to at least comment on it if only to say I prefer the diary where you don't seek the metaphor. But no, he didn't.

“So, don't expect much direction that touches what you are looking for. On the walk that idea came, but I gently put it aside and said, ‘Wait. Wait until it becomes more imperative and clear.’ Yes, don't cut off the just-begun *yajna* of these WS. They have their own life. You can collect them. They grow like the wild weeds of this season on both sides of the road. They're not to be harvested. I mean they're not tended to or cut back by any man's hand. They're not altered to make a show for human beings to admire. You could say, “Yes, but they're not fit to offer to Krsna.” But they are that too. At every step is the attempt, or at least remembering that that's what I should do.

“You want to listen to that ‘September Song?’ I tell you you shouldn't bring that up here but only in your hardbound diary book of things you'd rather not put in here. But also try not to be so bashful. If you repeat a fear or desire again and again in a WS, even if it's petty, don't be bashful about it. Your typist isn't going to judge you.

“Yes, I thought again of getting the song ‘September Song’ to play for a theme for my *September Catchall*, '96 but then I rejected it as not KC. But when I didn't find solace in my dealing with M. I thought of it, and that's an absurd idea – that the singing should bring me solace. The

conclusion is that your solace comes in the Lord's service, and this writing is a good service.

“But I thought maybe this too is too much insisting on this kind of service. Just imagine a friendly but straight-shooting Godbrother or a literary one saying to you, “You really overdo this writing. You think Prabhupada would approve?” I don't think that it would be their place to tell me about my soul in that way. Remember Emerson telling Whitman how to write poems and telling him he was going about it wrong. And Whitman (they were walking on the Boston Commons no less) saying to himself that he was more determined than ever to go his own way.

“That's how we are. If my spiritual master came that would be different. I could re-channel the energy in another way. It might include writing.

“In one of his last poems, Paul Blackburn fantasized about the next life and mentioned that Jack Kerouac would be there writing the novel of *Golden Eternity* on typewriter with no ribbon in it and no paper and no revisions. I thought that sounds like a hellish punishment, like Dante might award to someone he didn't like. Is that my karma in the next life: ‘You so much insisted on serving Krsna in your own way. So, here's your karma, get a body where you go on doing that but you don't get intimate with Krsna.’

“Krsna Krsna Krsna, Lord Caitanya – I won’t be like Prakasananda who was unable to utter the word Krsna. I’m able to do it, Krsna Krsna Krsna.

“Fear of a next life’s karma. Give this a subheading if you like, but mainly don’t look back, write on.

“Krsna Krsna Krsna

“He has to dictate all this, and we have to read it, and they have to bind it for me. It takes so many hours. If you want to live in your own subjective universe, you’re entitled to see things from your own point of view. You want to express it and not have someone challenge you at every step. But the actual world, both spiritual and material, is not that way. You’re not the center of existence. And so, it’s a rude shock to keep finding that. One tries to get wherever he can for a little sense grat, still preserving the idea that I am number One. A devotee gains a broader vision, is *mahatma*. A partial dawning of this occurs in philanthropic and altruistic work where you sacrifice your interest for others but even among religionists, they are basically selfish when they’re not genuine and pure.

I said, “Now that you have a computer I will not be able to write the fax messages that I like to do (gave me solace).” He was quick to point out the facts. I didn’t want to live in the world of fact (which are also his

versions of the facts, or his presentation of what I shall be entitled to have and what I shall not be allowed to have. He thrust at me this version of reality. I then parried and thrust my own as the man that I am. I came away from this with the beginning of a headache and took pill number one of the day. It's that encounter that I want to tell him about. To tell him so that we can have a smoother relationship.)

"I'm thinking during these writing retreats that I am allowing myself to be in the illusion a bit that life is calm and quiet and I am free to express my versions of things. But if my close companions give me a rude awakening, it's not so good. You mean you want him to provide cushions? Not always, but be gentle and tender in awakening me to the realities that exist.

"Planning an art retreat at the end of the year. Splash on the canvases supported by hard surfaces. You don't always need hard surfaces. You can get ones that absorb paint too. You are a naïve artist. It's a laugh that we dare to draw pictures. Go ahead, do it to your full satisfaction. Ask Jimmy Thompson to show you his abstract paintings. But abstract doesn't express KC, so what's the use? That's how I tend to feel. I want to see some form.

"Draw Indra riding a horse

down to the Indian plains
 draw Siva in the material world although he may also
 be a *maha-bhagavata* when he's in the right position.
 He is inconceivably both.

“Eric Dolphy I long to hear again. Well pal, then you can get it in the next world. Ask and you shall receive. It is better to refrain from hearing a nice concert, the Christians call it crucifying the flesh. You give up something that is pleasurable for the higher purpose. But you have to do it with that in mind. By my not hearing this, I am serving Krsna. It is better for me as a devotee to keep my consciousness clear. I must follow the *sad acara*, the right expected behavior of Vaishnava. The opposite is *namna sad acara*. The worst of that is not following the four rules. I would never indulge in that and say, ‘I need it. It helps me to be an artist to smoke a cigarette once in a while. Others might not understand it, but this is good for my service.’ But then don’t indulge in in in subtle varieties. Besides, you don’t even like it. You get tired of it in ten minutes or an hour. You run back to the shelter of pure Vaishnavism. So, why even try anyway? Work this vein of marble or gold. There’s plenty here.

“I read that a thing that has been dirtied can never be made as white as something that was never dirtied. So, I am struggling. But

consider that many persons have become great devotees. It is possible.
All glories to the Lord of the Universe ,who allows me to write.

“In the afternoon I will pick raspberries. The rain is good that way.
Let it rain. Pound out your truth.

“The Lord of the angels proposed a toast and said if you want to
write Writing Sessions, you have to be ready to let it all out and not even
look at what you say.

The Lord of the devils didn’t say anything—we don’t believe in
Satan—so I couldn’t have him speak except in a fiction. And I don’t
write that. Oh, he sent a demo tape of a rock opera, but I don’t dig it.

“Send me another relaxation tape to ease me off into Elysian
Fields. Imagine you are going to the happy hunting grounds and it’s
nice. You hear the birds in the trees and the sound of the harps and the
rivers and the symphony without percussion. Imagine it is Krsna Krsna,
and Srila Prabhupada is playing the harmonium with no drum or
karatalas and sings

“Jaya radhe jaya Krsna jaya vrindavan

“Yes, that’s nice. Got anymore like that? He’s singing it, and
you’ve got to slow down your communication and stop sending faxes. I
am telling you about that. He called me up short. ‘You are spending too
much money.’ I wanted to say, ‘Yeah but if it’s something you consider

important, you use it to get some nuts for a Ford rear window or something that I may not consider important.’

“Living so closely together. *Maryada* means you have to respect the elder. The spiritual master pulls rank. They have to back down. It’s a way to get your way. But the rest of the world does not care for your guruship.

“‘You are nothing here’— didn’t a police officer tell me that when I was in their precinct? They had seen that I thought I had rights, I thought I was not under their control. I felt good about myself and my protection by Krsna, and so they abruptly warned me, “You are nothing here. We don’t care about your God or your so-called rights.” And so, I cooled it realizing that temporarily they were right. I was under their grips, and that’s the way it is. I will finish this and then I will have to go inside to get the Dictaphone which I forgot to bring out.

“It is raining here and that is hard on the flowers, which are being smashed. HK dasi gets depressed when she sees it. But has hope and keeps growing other flowers. Hardy ones, and so the garden survives one way or another. You have to be positive.

“‘We didn’t sell many books because we didn’t have a good location,’ so our seller says. ‘Okay, next year I’ll get a better table.’ I think that way too. I have to make the best of the situation. Turn the sow’s ear into a silk purse. Make a suffering condition into a bettering of

yourself. Suffering is good for testing oneself and improving oneself. And as a writer, it may make a more interesting story. So, always be in that way ready to improve the way a businessman makes money in an up or down economy.

“Let less than ten minutes left. O Hare Krsna, come straight...I am a dope, you are a dope. We are both dopes. But I don’t tread on your space if you don’t tread on mine.

“I will try to be tolerant. I must protect myself in that way. I can remind you gently that you tread on me but the main thing is to find your inner reserves of strength, so that I don’t get agitated by your laying a trip on me. I see it as a natural misery, as your own failure and shortcomings. But I won’t let it disturb me. That can be done by chanting the holy names. You can have the ideal state here. Don’t be brokenhearted, don’t hope for the better state here but just be in tune with the real solace, which is the holy names of Krsna. In shortcoming situations, you might turn to your diary and say quick in short form what it is that just happened: ‘I was hurt in this way. Dear Lord, You are the only recourse for these things.’

“That’s a good suggestion. Now rounding into the finale, the homestretch. All good to you and your troops in the battle. Rupert Brooke and Wilford Owens wrote poems in World War I.

“Dairy Queen and queer man and father and his son. No hope there. Srila Prabhupada told me that he is my real father and that the other is ephemeral. It is true that he is the real father. My fingers dance on the typewriter keys.

“In the third verse of the *gayatri* mantra it is that you always feel Krsna’s bliss, and I cannot make out the rest of the English of that mantra. But it’s something about *dhimahi*, I meditate on you and your being always in bliss. I hope to know your blissful form and I hope to give you service that pleases you. And I wish also to taste the bliss of Krsna consciousness which you are teaching us. I am thinking nowadays of you in separation.

“And I’m listening to your Mayapur lectures of ’75. You urged us, O lord and master. I think of you in separation, not exactly in the memories of each year up to ’77, but they are nice also. And the lectures are nice, and the service is nice. Krsna Krsna Krsna.

“You are allowing me to write this way and you are sending me workers to publish my books give me the privilege to render you devotional service. We pray to Tulasi-devi, ‘I wish to be the maidservant of Radha and Krsna.’ It will be realized automatically. By serving the spiritual master.

“But there is not enough time to do all the things I want to do in devotional service. Now I must dictate this. I’m not so detached to write like he said Kerouac was doing on a typewriter, with no ribbon, no paper, for eternity. I want to save it and share it later.

“(One hour in a downpour, but I am dry inside the hut in Uddhava’s backyard, almost eleven pages. Grateful gravel, the rain smashes the flowers but more will come up, July 30, 1996.)”