

Free Write Journal #87

Free Writes

Writing

We are planning to publish and distribute two books at my July 4th meeting of disciples and friends. We already have one book printed and in hand. I hope the coronavirus epidemic will not threaten the printing of the second book and that the printers will stay open for business. Nitai-Gaurasundara told me that Rtadvaja Swami is reading from *Remembering Srila Prabhupada*, my free-verse rendition of Prabhupada-*lilamrta*. And Niranjana Swami, who is locked down in Mayapur, is reading from *Vaisnava Compassion* and *Japa Reform Notebook*. Vaisesika Prabhu also reads from *Japa Reform Notebook* in the morning before his devotees start their *japa*.

Prabhupada said that when he publishes a book he feels he has conquered an empire. For me, writing is my contribution to Prabhupada's vast mission. It is one individual devotee's service to his spiritual master and the world. Writing and publishing is the *brhad-mrdanga* drum. Mrdanga drum can be heard only a block away, but the printing press *mrdanga* can be heard all over the world. Prabhupada has written that the main duty of a *sannyasi* is to contribute literature in Krsna consciousness. I have taken this to heart and have made it my vocation as I try to

please my spiritual master. Baladeva has said that if I write 100 books and 50% of them are “winners,” then that’s a good average. But the fact is I receive letters of appreciation for almost all my different books. So each one is touching people somewhere, and it leads to their reading of Prabhupada’s books.

I recently received a letter from a lady in India who wrote that she has read the *Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta* three times, and she continues to read it at night. The *Prabhupada-lilamrta* is widely appreciated in ISKCON for connecting people to Prabhupada and enlivening their admiration for him even after 40 years.

Now in the 21st century, it is important that I write for the Internet. I publish a weekly *Free Write Journal*, and it has hundreds of thousands of readers. In my *Journal* I tell of my daily activities, realizations and the routine in our ashram. I also print excerpts of books I have written long ago. These books are long out of print, and by publishing them in the *Journal* they continue to inspire readers in different ways. Now we are planning to serialize completely unpublished books and novels which I wrote many years ago. I think this will provide fresh and interesting reading.

Recent Correspondence

Janmastami wrote me from Mayapur reporting his activities. He’s struggling with physical issues but staying active. He’s taking the *Bhakti-Sastri* course. He finds it strenuous but purifying.

Ishana writes me from Moscow that she’s struggling to raise money to pay the translator \$100 a month to translate my books into Russian. Ishana has a desire to

have my books translated, and she edits them, gets them published and distributes them. They are now popularly distributed on an Internet site where devotees can download them for free. Many devotees are using this facility. She has published thirty books but tells her translator that I have written a hundred books, so they have a long way to go.

A lawyer, Jan Potemkin, sends me pictures of his Gaura-Nitai Deities. He went to India, Vrndavana, and bought outfits in Loi Bazaar. He writes how he is dressing Them and getting great pleasure in Their *darsana*.

Sankirtana dasa from Dallas wrote me recently. He's a jazz guitarist, but now all his outside performances are cancelled because of the virus. He continues to practice the guitar in his home in order to keep in shape. He said he has committed to memory a composition by Bill Evans, "My Foolish Heart." The Dallas temple kitchen is now operating with the cook and the *pujari* practicing social distancing. Sankirtana does cooking for Radha-Kalachandji, which he hadn't been able to do for a month.

Many devotees are writing me and phoning, wishing that I am safe and healthy and advising me to stay indoors and not receive any guests.

I like to receive regular correspondence from my friends.

Satyaraj

I received an email from Satyaraj dasa:

“My dear Satsvarupa Maharaja—obeisance. Jaya Prabhupada. Thinking of you in these difficult times and praying you are practicing physical distancing along with your (usual) spiritual connecting. That is the combination for this trying period of our material sojourn. Stay well, old friend. My prayers and love go out to you.

“Your eternal friend and Godbrother,

“Dasanudasa,

“Satyaraja dasa”

I wrote him back, thanking him for his reaching out and offering my own prayers and love to he and his wife. His letter almost sounded like the last one he would write, since he is living so close to the epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic in New York City. I counseled him to stay in isolation, but I trusted confidently that he was continuing his prolific literary output at home. The last he told me, he was working on a memoir of Radha-Kalachandji, the Deity of Dallas, a biography of H.H. Jayapataka Maharaja and a book on the thirteen temples that Gopala Krsna Maharaja was instrumental in opening in New Delhi. The epidemic will not stop the flow of writing from Satyaraja dasa, so much appreciated by his followers and readers.

California Search for Gold

John Endler has written an introduction to the proposed serialization of my big book, the unpublished manuscript of *California Search for Gold*. Leaving the traumatic situation in Ireland, I moved in with Saci Suta in his house at Stuyvesant Falls. I did writing there prolifically and had sweet exchanges with his family. I have related how one day while I was doing the *puja* for Radha-Govinda, Saci's seven-year-old daughter, Kaulini, came up the stairs and indicated that she would like to help. I let her pick out the clothes the Deities would wear the next day. She did it silently and then went downstairs. I had a heart-to-heart talk with Saci. He was having mixed feelings about my moving away from him and going to California, but we talked it out and he became satisfied. I mentioned that he and I were very different persons but that we had a bond of love and trust.

Although John has transcribed three chapters of *California Search for Gold*, I'm going to tell him to read the whole book before we begin serializing. Baladeva read the entire book many years ago and did extensive editing on it with a yellow marker. He says the book is "too long" and disjointed. A character appears with his assistant under different names, and there are other inconsistencies and long digressions. So John will have to read it first and consider doing his own editing. But since he wrote such a touching introduction to the serialization, I would like to post it here:

“In the wake of an emotional and physical crisis while living in Ireland in 2002, Satsvarupa dasa Goswami was offered shelter at the home of his disciple Saci Suta dasa in Stuyvesant Falls, New York. While staying with Saci Suta and his wife Keli Lalita dasi, he began a period of recuperation and recovery. During this period, Satsvarupa Maharaja composed his novel *Sanatorium* in a burst of the white heat of imaginative expression. Though this novel would subsequently be censored by institutional authorities, it stands as a work of creative and literary brilliance and serves as an artistic link between earlier free write publications and more recent work such as *Under Dark Stars*. One may hope that with the many years that have passed since its publication in 2005, this work might receive its due reception and appreciation as a milestone achievement.

“Satsvarupa Maharaja simultaneously began work on what would become his yet-unpublished (but what I consider magisterial) work entitled *California Search for Gold*. Upon its completion, the manuscript would fill three binders and total more than 1100 pages. CSG represents a literary achievement of the highest order, as it chronicles the life of a man seeking to rebuild, reconstruct himself from his disparate inner pieces scattered by the catastrophic effects of a personal breakdown. It is a work of relentless honesty and a fierce pursuit of an identity that is truly authentic whatever the cost. For Satsvarupa

Maharaja can only be himself, and there is a deep hope expressed within these pages that people might love him simply as he is. No more molds to be filled, those have been broken. No more masks to be worn, those have been scattered. Now, there is only himself, and a dialogue is cautiously yet determinedly begun between Stephen and Satsvarupa, as he searches for his identity here and now, as he pursues his eternal personhood, signified by the definition of his devotional name, aptly given to him by Srila Prabhupada.

“This is the story of a journey—literal and allegorical. The author is preparing to travel from New York to California as he seeks a place for further recovery. But like the seekers of riches in the gold rush of 1849 who traveled to California, so does Satsvarupa Maharaja pursue his own gold: new life, a fresh start, with a new sense of his own personhood, and new possibilities as a writer, and foundationally, a new life as a Vaisnava *sannyasi* and guru.

“To describe this work there is not a single genre with which it can be identified. *CSG* speaks in a host of voices with a host of styles. Prose and poetry. Humor and heartbreak. Hope and doubt. Sastra and literature. Like the astronomer, Satsvarupa Maharaja’s gaze is above and beyond. Like the archaeologist, he looks with care for the hidden clues of his life. Like the genealogist, he searches both the *parampara* and the culture of the arts for his home.

“I am pleased to share with you that *California Search for Gold* will appear in serialized fashion on this website in addition to the weekly *Free Write Journal*. This will be an extensive project and a labor of love for me as I transcribe these pages and with Satsvarupa Maharaja’s guidance, make them available to you. Weekly installments will be published here, and I invite you to experience what I view as one of the author’s several ‘Redemption Songs’ written during this period.

“But my hand was made strong
 By the hand of the Almighty
 We forward in this generation
 Triumphantly
 Won’t you help to sing
 These songs of freedom?
 ’Cause all I ever have
 Redemption songs
 Redemption songs’

--Bob Marley

“Join this song and delight in the Almighty, who guides both the pen and the heart of this man so dear to us.”

--Rev. John Endler

Uddhava's Travels, Etc.

Before he left, Uddhava was in anxiety about all the legs of his journey. But the taxi to take him from Stuyvesant Falls to the train in Hudson arrived on time. After the train to Penn Station, he has to take a taxi to JFK. He was worried whether there would be any taxis, but devotees assured him that there would be *many* taxis waiting at Penn Station. At JFK he hopes to catch a flight to London. Six of the flights from JFK to London were cancelled, but only his reserved flight remained open. The airlines put everyone on that flight, consolidating them. It is an evening flight, and it's less than half-filled. As I write this *Free Write Journal* at 3:50 A.M., Uddhava should have arrived in London, and he has a three hour wait for his plane to Budapest. They may consolidate that flight also to fill it up with enough passengers to warrant the flight. We gave him plenty of *prasadam* in case he gets stuck anywhere. But he's on his own now. Back at Viraha Bhavan, we are streamlining operations so that with just the three of us we can still function. The paraphernalia for serving the Deities has been minimized, and Baladeva and Krsna dasi will have to cooperate in serving and cooking. Some of the hours are also being adjusted. But life goes on in quarantine, with Baladeva going out only early Saturday morning, when the senior citizens are allowed to shop. Both Baladeva and Uddhava wear masks and gloves. Uddhava is traveling through two of the worst places hit by the virus, New York City and London. So when he arrives in Hungary, he'll have to go into quarantine, preferably in his home.

Dreaming

Last night I had a bad dream and woke up with a headache, for which I took Excedrin. But although the dream was bad enough to give me a headache, I couldn't remember at all what it was. My dreams are usually scenarios in which I am in anxiety: I am late trying to get to a college classroom, but I can't find the room or the building; I'm trying to get home to my parents' house in Great Kills, Staten Island, but I have trouble catching my travel connections from Manhattan; on the Staten Island Ferry and the Staten Island train. The cast of characters in my dreams ranges from childhood, to college, to Navy years, to the majority of my life in ISKCON. But they're all usually anxiety-oriented. I very rarely dream of Srila Prabhupada (never dream of Krsna or Lord Caitanya). When I do dream of Prabhupada, I consider it a wonderful occasion. It's always auspicious. I am the main character in my dreams, but I exist in different periods of my life, with my sister, my parents, my school friends, Navy years and the many decades in ISKCON. Sometimes the personnel are mixed up and I'm mixed up also, sometimes wearing a Navy uniform and sometimes the dress of a devotee. All of these dreams from different periods of my life are usually tainted with at least some anxiety. I used to try to write down my dreams and collect them and share them with others, but I no longer find it profitable. However, I am a frequent, active dreamer. Prabhupada said that dreams are usually not important. But when pure devotees dream, it *is* important. Sometimes Krsna or a divine personality visits a devotee in dreams and gives him instructions or inspiration. I rarely have dreams like that, but I have had a few. I've had a number of

dreams in which I've experienced a strong desire to be a writer. I put a Dictaphone out by my pillow to capture these dreams. But after catching a few, they stopped coming. I still get small snatches in dreams of myself doing valuable writing, having papers that I've written on that are worth saving, discovering a new technique in self-expression. But on waking I can't retain any valuable details. These writer-dreams are a reconfirmation that writing is my devotional vocation, my dearest offering to Prabhupada, Krsna and the world.

Letters From Srila Prabhupada

“Mayapur

3 February 1976

“Los Angeles

“My dear Satsvarupa,

“Please accept my blessings. I beg to thank you for your letter dated January 23rd, 1976.

“Regarding the examinations, the idea is that anyone, after studying the books, who wants to gain the title of *Bhakti-sastri*, can take the exam. This is academic. Just like a *brahmana* with *sastriic* knowledge and a *brahmana* without. It is optional—one who wants may take. The real purpose is that our men should not be neglectful of the philosophy. The examinations will begin on Gaura Purnima, 1977, not

this year, so there is no reason why any of the devotees should give up their normal engagement.

“So far your idea for teaching classes, this should be discussed at the GBC meeting. If it does not hamper our normal procedure then it is welcome.

“I hope this meets you well.

“Your ever well-wisher,

“A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami”

At this time, Srila Prabhupada explained that the *bhakti-sastri* exam was “academic,” and it was optional whether one wanted to take it. Nowadays *bhakti-sastri* exams have become non-optional. They are required for a person who wants to take first initiation, or second initiation, etc. It is interesting to note here that Prabhupada said the exam is optional. He does not want to force the exam on anyone. He wants that his devotees should not be neglectful of the philosophy, but he does not want the devotees to disrupt their normal engagement and cram the books in preparation for the exam. I think this spirit of Prabhupada’s 1976 letter should be preserved, and the exams not be demanded as requirements for recognition of positions in ISKCON.

Apparently, I presented to Prabhupada an idea for teaching the daily classes. I do not remember now what my proposal was. At any rate, he does not give me a green light to go ahead and teach the classes in the way I was proposing but said it

should be discussed at the GBC meeting. “If it does not hamper our normal procedure, then it is welcome.” As with the exams, Prabhupada didn’t want devotees to do something that would disrupt the normal programs. He was not in favor of whimsical changing or unnecessary additions to the existing programs.

Passing Places, Eternal Truths: Travel Writings, 1988-1996

“THE SUMMER MARATHON

“Let’s say I wanted (and still want) to write a book to capture the summer-end experience as I travel and write in Europe while living out of my van. Let’s also say that I have built up a context and achieved something in the chapters I’ve already written. Now I can use this achievement to allow me to go further. My reader (again, I mostly refer here to myself as the reader, the one who wants to sustain a book, to bring it into existence, and to read it) is sympathetic, willing to go where I want to take him. The reader mostly wants genuine experience. If I can develop, go further than I have gone so far, he is willing to adjust to changes in style, different kinds of reporting, and he is capable of it. It’s silly to think the reader can’t or won’t follow me and that I have to ‘dumb down’ my writing instinct to keep up his interest. What good is free writing if it’s not actually freer? And if I consider this a gamble—and that

it might fail—it’s still worth the risk. Better to be bold and go beyond—if my heart leads me there—than to keep a safe account, ‘because I promised us I’d write a book in twenty-one days of life on the road, a day-by-day until Janmastami.’ I don’t have to shape it; it’s already being shaped by time, by the fact that life occurs in divisions of days, and all the other factors.”

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“ISKCON, ISKCON. Remember the time a devotee said to Prabhupada that the *gurukula* building in progress in Vrndavana would be for ISKCON’s children? Srila Prabhupada said, ‘ISKCON, FISKCON.’ I don’t know exactly what he meant by that, but we needn’t be attached so much to any stereotyped or limited idea of ISKCON. It lives, it continues, it grows. Or it breaks down. It’s pure or impure. It’s *sampradaya* or *apa-sampradaya*. We cannot control it by uttering the word ‘ISKCON.’ Even the GBC (another word formula) cannot control the reality and destiny of what we mean by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. It’s Srila Prabhupada’s movement, a branch of Lord Caitanya’s tree. It’s our sacred cow. The institution. It has no written constitution. It sells pizza in Mayapur. It exists in the temples listed in *Back to Godhead* magazine.”

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“This marathon just passed the halfway mark. Outer activities will diminish when we reach Wicklow. Maybe I can write more or say more. Be happy and peaceful in all situations. This road life is bliss. Say it, mark it, and read it later as a true statement. Like now, reading by 12-volt light in back of van at Parking-stop in France—yet it's not really France. France is a huge nation with a culture all its own and great social and economic problems, its own chauvinistic language, etc. France also contains a few ISKCON places, but we are not visiting them on this trip through.

“We are in our *bhajana-kutir*, our tin traveling bubble, parked at a P-stop. It's raining, but we are dry. We are poised an hour south of Paris, ready to jettison ourselves through that metropolis and get out of it before the karmis start their passionate rush hour. I write to say I love this life of travel and study and writing.

“All right, all right

get ready to go and
 when you too have to die,
after the Centennial year—
 because we have to live through
 that, right?

Then after due consideration
of what's wrong in ISKCON
and being sufficiently worked
and smiling and laughing too
when you are ready to
die happy,
after hundreds more posters
colored by you,
loved and loving in return your
friends,
yeah, after Vrndavana-Mayapur,
after plane tickets—
exactly when I can't tell you
and it's not something M. and I can
plan or go to the travel agent
about (although in another
sense, death is something you
do plan for, as the karmis
with their insurance and picking out
a tombstone!)—after
the tea and biscuits and
the T. S. Eliot references

are done—or before—
 or anytime—death comes and that’s
 it. But the soul goes
 on, I pray dear Lord
 carry me, carry me as soul
 as I depart now from my friends and memories,
 blessing ISKCON with good
 fortune, if I have any power
 to bless,
 let me go in peace
 and honorably
 despite panic and pain and
 not as a mere stoic. Don't be tight-lipped but cry
 tears
 of joy
 and ask the Lord to
 let you remember Him and
 be with Him and His devotees
 in the next life.”

Here Is Srila Prabhupada

“You have to be sober to appreciate Srila Prabhupada's books. Even such a small book as *Message of Godhead* takes sobriety to understand.

“I noticed something interesting while reading *Message of Godhead* today: Srila Prabhupada is not afraid of repeating himself. This is not a defect, but evidence of his faith. He is not trying to come up with something new, he is trying to preach. Although he wrote with style and grace, it did not embarrass him to use the same examples and analogies over and over again. He does not feel the artist's compulsion to invent something new or to express the never-before-expressed thought. Prabhupada used to quote a Bengali saying, ‘Walk on your hands, do anything crazy—but do something new!’

“In *Message*, he repeats the same teachings about work and reaction that Krsna gives in the *Bhagavad-gita*. He informs us that karma-yoga solves the dilemma. If a person works, he will get reactions which cause him to suffer in repeated lifetimes. If he stops working, he will not be able to sustain himself. Prabhupada solves the dilemma by saying that one should continue working but should sacrifice the results to Visnu. Only then will one become free of karma. By 1947, Srila Prabhupada had written this basic instruction in many forms, and he continued to write it throughout his life. Because the solution to the dilemma of work and karma is Krsna’s explanation, and because it is

largely ignored by thinkers in the world, preachers make it their life's work to propagate these teachings throughout the world. Srila Prabhupada did this with infinite patience and love.”

Writing in Gratitude: Collected Poems 1992-1994

“Time in ISKCON passes fast because our whole time with Prabhupada took place in a little over 10 years.

Now 30 years have gone by in a flash.

“When Krsna appears it's always good.

A prisoner in Colorado detention wrote me,

‘At night I think over events of the day and I feel

grateful to Krsna and Prabhupada.’ I wrote him

back and said he was as good as a monk in a

monastery; the world of prison forces him to

find shelter in the blissful Krsna conscious realm

of Vrndavana, spiritual thoughts, *maha-mantra*.

“In ISKCON temples, in the evening,

only a few attend the last *arati*,
 when Radha and Krsna stand in Their night clothes.
 After the *arati* the *pujari* puts
 Them to bed. He may be tired,
 but if he's attentive and doesn't feel angry,
 ('Why am I on the altar at night?')
 he's grateful and moves,
 clean in thoughts and body, under the lights, his
 careful hands arranging for overnight,
 he says goodnight, recites prayers from the book,
 turns out the lights, locks up. By then he
 may be the only one awake, except some
 latecomer begging for *maha-prasadam* or a
sankirtana devotee returning from the streets.
 Maybe a mouse.
 I'm leaving this altar in the same way.
 'Good night, Lords. Please allow me to come back
 and serve You early in the morning.
 May it never end, from
 this world to the next. May You always enjoy
 Your pastimes in this temple, inconceivably.
 May I be worthy.'

The *pujari* steps off the altar and
 in front of the carved doors, bows and offers
 prayers for relief from offenses committed during worship.”

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

“Mahanidhi Swami gave me a poem he wrote, which he laughingly dismissed, saying, "This is the first poem I ever wrote!" He had written the poem while sitting in Prabhupada's room in the Mayapur building. It described the ritual that takes place every evening when the Mandir's *pujari*, Jananivasa, circumambulates the verandas of the building, ringing a bell. Another devotee accompanies him, blowing a conchshell, and they carry a large earthen pot of glowing frankincense. They go in and out of each room with bell and conchshell, the frankincense smoke billowing everywhere. We've all been told that one of the purposes of this ritual is to chase ghosts. It also functions to drive away mosquitoes. In his poem, Mahanidhi speaks of how impressed he is that eight years after Prabhupada's disappearance Jananivasa is very faithfully performing this evening service.

“A skeptic might inquire, ‘What is the scientific evidence that these procedures chase ghosts?’ But as Mahanidhi wrote, he's doing it ‘because

his spiritual master told him.’ I appreciated Mahanidhi's feelings evoked by the obedience of the disciple. I also began to think more about the actual function of that ritual.

“Vedic literatures assure us that such things as ghosts exist. They are unfortunate spirit souls who due to lust or other misconduct have not been able to take another material body. Usually mischievous, they move about in subtle bodies looking for chances to inhabit a living material body or to cause trouble. The Mayapur area especially is supposed to abound in different Muslim and *brahmana* ghosts. And so it's no wonder Prabhupada had Jananivasa perform this function every evening.

“Prabhupada personally used to like Jananivasa to enter his own room when Prabhupada stayed in Mayapur and sit beside Prabhupada until the whole room was filled with so much frankincense smoke that you couldn't even see another person a few feet in front of you. Prabhupada liked it for its purifying effect and for ridding the room of mosquitoes. As for ghosts, Prabhupada was always ghost-free.

“Last Night, Chasing Ghosts

“The sound of *karatalas* and singing
reach my ears,

but my heart is encased in steel.

Japa cannot pin down the mind,

not my *japa*, my mind.

And work and friendships

seem like great, insurmountable hills. All seems defeated

in my attempt for perfection.

“Ghosts of Mayapur,

now vanish at this bell

and this smoke of incense

aimed to banish you

from Prabhupada's sacred veranda.

Banish ghosts!

At the sound of Panca-tattva mantra

and Hare Krsna *kirtana*.

“Leave me, mental spectres,

Trnavartas, Putanas,

hags on sticks, and you lesser black-art *jinns*

assigned to attack me.

“I am ready to fight you

by turning away
 with attention to my duties,
 and wherever I go
 I'll chant and serve
 and keep you evil spirits off my back.
 In simple happy *kirtana* chorus,
 in learned philosophical exchange, in pure goodness,
 devotees serve carefree
 while Jananivasa dasa chases
 the last remaining ghosts of the Mayapur night.”

WRITING SESSIONS

The Faithful Transcriber (Part 1)

This free write project came about immediately on the heels of my completed
Geaglum Free Write Diary.

June 29, 1996

“They can take the flesh, they can take the horn, the hide, the
 hoof. They can take the cow after it dies a natural death. The *muci*
 comes and takes the cow away. So, let her live and the *muci* class will

come when the cow is dead and from that cow hide, they will make shoes...

“But no slaughterhouse.

“The milk is nothing but cow’s blood transformed. Take her milk but let her live.

“You ask yourself how dedicated you are to saving Mother Cow. It is one of the items of the Krsna consciousness movement. People don’t care about it. Witness the “mad cow” disease when they saw they had to kill cows. No one was concerned. Srila Prabhupada didn’t live with cows as a cowherd man, but he lived with them in Vrndavana. Every Indian knows the cow is one of your mothers. You drink her milk.

“So repeat these things and be confident. You first always admit your littleness and failures, your contrariness. And then go further beyond it. I too care. That means feel pain over infamy. Anger and action. But what action can you take in Kali-yuga? It seems to be a hopeless cause, like celibacy or the vegetarian movement. It doesn’t matter. Preach and be true. Advise people to chant Hare Krsna and hear about Krsna consciousness, to read Srila Prabhupada’s books and the rest may come automatically. Hare Krsna Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna Hare Hare.

“You may take her flesh, her hoof and horn after she dies a natural death. But no. They can’t wait.

“They can’t wait. I am up at 12:00 A.M. because I have promised. I wanted to come to the page and write before some inner organ makes a pain and one has to rush to the hospital and stop writing. Write and say, ‘Okay, I did.’

We did not milk the *sadhu*

for all we could and then

reject him. I did not. It is more complicated than that. They served and worshiped him sincerely and were forced to stop. When forced they also realized it is better that we worship our Srila Prabhupada and the exact emphasis he gives in Krsna consciousness.

“After Srila Prabhupada there is now a multiplicity of leaders and followers and camps. Splits. No splits if you are sincere, he said. Splits have occurred, like it or not.

“Tot, watchya got?” I got millions of tricks and rivets. I couldn’t sleep and went out on the roof. I met a ghost, a wrench, a wraith of London. He spoke of all evils, and a bad man held up a big monkey wrench to hit me, and I crawled back into the skylight, into my dreams.

And what were they? I put them aside, couldn't take them seriously enough to retain them.

“And was there a typewriter brought overnight by Sooty Santa?”

“No, nothing of the sort. Woke and by the strength of my thumb I am writing. Neck bent down and lamplight.

“Are you ashamed to write of yourself? No, why should I be?”

“The clock ticks. While the clock ticks I write. Drive, he said, a little after four through dark and wet streets to the Manor, mock-Georgian slats against cement outer walls, that friendly-to-me building because we saw His Divine Grace here.

“Oh, come, you don't love him so much. You are affected by the rosy 'all's well' sentimentality of that 1930s film you saw yesterday.

No, I ain't. I ain't. You blimey... I am truly a *sisya*, and that's the way it is. But I do appreciate your warning, Sri Gremlin, not to portray myself as a saint, as a faultless one. To London I also came in wrong moods too.

“Please bless us, please let us be pure.

“And write a little longer what the master says. From your tongue inspired.

“The sirens go on.

“Gathering in criminals from the streets. Now, instead of one Mr. Hyde, there are millions. Who knows the evil?”

“I’ve seen this during my times. I’ve drawn the fruit many times. I’ve ridden to the Manor many times. I’ve faked it many times. Outlived, lived through, stood in there on the same legs and subdued my flesh and head...

“And that’s just this one lifetime, American Joe.

“Then? They die one by one or sometimes more than that.

“Krsna, Krsna. Horrid deaths.

“Please be kind, please be intelligent. He speaks with *buddhi-yoga* given by the Lord. He serves in a chequered career.

“Did you really go on the roof in your skivvies, your nightgown, and see Lewis Carrol and Charles Dickens and ghosts of cities? No rats present, I hope.

“No, I stayed snug a few hours, and now I’m here splayed and failing.

“Recall a word when you were not British, recall a time when your mom loved you and you clung to her arm, her ample, fleshy arm and said, ‘Mom, I want your love, I am you little angel one.’ ‘I am Wimpy,’ the waitress said, ‘because I ate so many burgers.’ Gosh, you think that’s cute?

“What did we know?

“We were so ignorant. Take compassion on them by teaching Krsna consciousness. That’s what the pen is for.

“Mommy, if you pray to God...

“I am doing that. We know Him as Krsna and you worship His son (one of many) as Jesus Christ.

“Oh, please take it right, take it rightly. God the Father is pleased with you. I didn’t like the Sunday School version as a life of Christ.

“Now finish. I close out this one. Forgive. Forgive. Go forward. The dirty river, the Thames, the river Lethe, St. Lawrence, mixed with blood and filth. Mixed with purpose and porpoise and fear. We’ll get there, death day, of course. And as for remembering and loving Lord Krsna, He is present in our lives and it’s a fact and your Swami confirms.”

10:40 A.M.

“You’re going to have write here sometimes rushed, without feeling completely into it, if you want to write at all this month. The morning program at the Manor went well, but my head got weak. They let me go to the *sannyasi* room after *mangala-arati*. I lay my head on the pillow for fifteen minutes and overcame the first weakness. But then it came again.

“So, when I was sitting on the *vyasasana* and the room full of devotees was bowing down during the recitation of *prema-dvani* by me, I gulped down my headache pill. It carried me through and I am still going strong. But I have two appointments for the afternoon. I’m going to visit the old original Syamasundara dasa at 4:00 P.M. I told them I could spare him half an hour. Then I’ll come back to this house and meet with my disciples. If my head is weak, I’ll take another pill. This is called coping with allopathic medicine. I hope it doesn’t build up. I won’t let it. And one hopes that it does not have side effects. But it is better than canceling a whole day at the first waves of head weakness. That’s how I felt about it this morning. There I was, with rows and rows of devotees sitting before me. Sacinandana said that more devotees came than usual on a Saturday morning. So, I was going to lecture to them with pain, and therefore not be able to exert myself on the vital topics (cow killing and descriptions of the *yavanas* in *Cc.*)? No, I decided, go ahead, your doctor said it is not excessive.

“I wanted to report that to you, dear diary, dear Manu.

“You mean there is one person to whom you would like to address this whole book? How about to your Doctor Alexander? Or how about to Poof, the Toof? A fictional mentor or shoulder to cry on? How about a

New Age writing teacher or to Robert Bly, and you try to preach to him?
No, please be serious and don't josh around.

“But this going to be a joshing month in writing. It's one of our main themes. We feel we can be more serious by joshing sometimes. I think you've heard that enough from me. As for addressing someone, you can do it sometimes. Don't set up binding rules that, “This shall always be the way we do this from now on.”

“So, I was saying it was a good morning. Next week they have their victory celebration, which is actually their Ratha-yatra. They are celebrating the awarding of permission to build the access road to the Manor. I congratulated them on this. I spoke my speech. I mouthed my piece, I showed up in the old flesh. I walked out during the *kirtana* and got some fresh air. Saw the ducks and the black-necked geese on the lawn. The tall pole with the flag of Hanuman on top, a symbol of the fight to keep the Manor open. Noticed mostly young devotees and very few Prabhupada disciples, typical of most ISKCON temples. What does it mean? Oh Sats, you did okay and didn't eat too much for breakfast. Refused the pancakes and took just mango slices and creamed almond nuts and hot apples. This is one busy day and then tomorrow travel, travel in the van. Hare Krsna Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna Hare Hare.

“I lay down for a few minutes on my back before lunch. I heard a heavy thump, thump, thump. I thought maybe it was an electric bass,

music maybe coming from a car in the street or an apartment. At the same time, I relaxed further into the soft bed. Then the thump, thump reminded me of a bass drum like you'd hear in a marching band, live, not recorded. I thought of such bands and how you'd hear them a block away when you are waiting for a parade. Then I thought of marching bands and how they played peppy tunes like, 'Poppa loves Tango, Momma loves Tango.' Perhaps that's not the name of the song. Was it, 'Momma loves mambo,' or Momma loves something? Then I hummed a tune to myself. Then my train of thought went to Pearl Berly and that pop song of hers, 'It Takes Two to Tango.' I remember the words: 'It takes two to tango, two to tango, two to really do...let's do the tango, do the dance of love.' I thought how Pearl Berly really conveyed lust in her singing. She was not, I think, an esteemed jazz singer or blues singer. Taken advantage of by the whites and their idea of a black singer, lusty and comical.

“I wanted to record these thoughts in the chain they occurred. Manu dasa said that my books seem to be in part an attempt to give evidence that I'm not a pure devotee. I'm chipping down any pretense or false image. So, there it is folks. That's what I thought of when I rested and relaxed. And it is not so much due to a lusty or evil intention on my part, but my background. Memories. It is also the environment – if you

lie down drowsily and start hearing ‘Radhe-Syama, Radhe-Syama,’ maybe the train of thought goes somewhere better.

3:10 P.M.

“Write something nice. Vasudeva Datta prayed that all living beings be liberated from their sins and made eligible for love of God. He was willing to take all sins upon himself so that others could be saved. He was universal love personified. This is the spirit of a great Vaishnava. Lord Caitanya said to Vasudeva Datta, ‘Because you desire the release of all conditioned souls, it will be done, because My will is to satisfy My devotees.’ He said Vasudeva Datta was the incarnation of Prahlada. (Cc. *Madhya-lila*, 165-171)

“Care for others. Sacrifice for them in some way. Go see an old devotee who asks you to do so. Then meet with those who have taken initiation from you. Remind them of the goal of life and how to attain it. The goal is not eating-mating-sleeping-defending. Get free of this world.”