Resting at Mendocino

Anecdotes and Poems of a Patient at a Private Health Care Unit

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Chapter One

Hersch Hancock plays “Speak Like a Child.” “Out of the mouths of babes come gems.” I am the only patient here. Three caretakers endure as my nurses around the clock. They are my friends. Nara gave me a full body massage today. Otherwise, I rested and slept in bed, couldn’t take my walk. I asked him to read to me out loud from The Dark Cloud of Unknowing, but he had some trouble with it. He kept wanting to compare each point in the Catholic mysticism with the Krishna conscious siddhanta. The points did coincide almost identically, but I preferred not to play that game: “If you already read this, then why are you reading again?” It was nourishing, but you have to be confident in what Prabhupada says. I liked hearing some different angles that enliven you, refresh you in explaining mysticism. Sometimes some different words are used, but the goal is the same: always love Krishna and think of Him at every moment, no matter what you are doing.

Slow always man? No he’s not saying
that but don’t keep driving too long at it.
Just when I finished so many
big books in a rush, and then I’ve
thought what to do—thought of mysticism but then Doctor
said, “Stop all books and everything, just rest.”

No passion to plot no passion to shift plot, invent a
character twist a pretzel from the
sixteenth century to the eighteenth century and
push, push to prove you are a good
boy who gets 4.0 on
the exams even though he wore flashy
clothes.

Experimenting like Gertrude, and
"the story of how she bowed to her brother.
Who has whom as his.
Did she bow to your brother. When she saw him.
Any long story. Of how she bowed her brother.
Sometimes not.
She bowed to her brother. Accidentally. When she saw him
often as well. As not.
She did not. Bow to her brother. When she. Saw
him.
This could happen. Without. Him
everybody finds it in a sentence that pleases them
this is a story included in. How she bowed to her
brother. Could another brother have a grand daughter.
No. But. He could have a grand son.
This has nothing to do with the other brother of
whom it is said that we read she bowed to her brother
there could be (human?) and reading and
learning.”
(from Gertrude Stein’s poem *She bowed to her brother*)

#2

“If I told him would he like it. Would he like it if I
told him.
Would he like it? Would Napoleon and would Napoleon
would he like it.
If Napoleon if I told him if I told him if Napoleon,
Would he like it if I told him if I told him if
Napoleon. Would he like it if Napoleon if Napoleon
if I told him. If I told him if Napoleon if Napoleon if
I told him if I told him would he like it would he
like it if I told him.”
(From *If I Told Him: A Completed portrait of Picasso*, by Gertrude Stein1)

I am not writing like her
but use Krishna and Caitanya in
every poem and you’ll get a respectable
“pass” mark for sure. But do not be a
braggart or ladder climber.
Even if no one reads mine he said, and he really meant it.

Rest, a caretaker looks in the door taps
his wristwatch and chases me back to bed. Good I am glad.

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1 *If I Told Him: A Completed portrait of Picasso* Gertrude Stein (1923) Publisher Source Books, Media Fusion.
I think I should be elected president because I believe in the first person singular. Ultimately He is Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and His parts and parcels, primarily Srimati Radharani—are all His expansions. All living beings are His parts, first persons singular. I do not believe we merge into an impersonal void or Oneness. This is verified in Bhagavad-gītā: “Never was there a time when I did not exist nor you nor all these kings, nor will there be a time when they will cease to exist.” Patricia Hampl quotes Anne Frank: “I hear the approaching thunder that one day will destroy us too, I feel the suffering of millions.” Hampl goes on to state, “It was in the homeliness of her diary and the vision she achieved there that she came to be the voice of the holocaust—. Knowing the fragility of life as it faces the brutality of racial hatred and rigid ideology of all kinds, feeling the suffering of millions, intuiting one’s own imminent destruction—is this what the frail first first person pronoun can carry on its back? . . . We trust the first person now more than we ever did—more than we ever had reason to. It is not a trust literature will let us soon abandon. That singular voice—it not only has the evidence, it is the evidence.” (From the Introduction to “One Blood,” Alaska Quarterly Review)

We don’t forget weeds falling stardust I never never the dark I clear see in bed. I see leaves with me in bed we were outvoted. They said stay in bed, receive visitors.

I spun around and not knowing were I was neither did they did they only a few where they were in the Concertorium where they usually are more well behaved in classical music than at Oberlin.

Oh I’ll never get better. Maybe if I wore nice clothes. “You can’t wear a tie on the West Coast, that’s not the dress code here.” In a supermarket a boy bagger in NYC wears a clip-on bow tie. But California it’s open shirt.

No don’t doubt about it but she will. Bush will win and Heinz Kerry will be relieved to return to her billions.

Buy the country, cheat the voters and kill the countries who menace our stars and stripes.

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We have no flag but—ISKCON? Yes the flag
of our master Prabhupada who comes down from
the parampara on a misty or bright
night. He is pretty. He said there is enough
ugliness and pain in this world so he wants
to add beauty, Tad Dameron, picture of seabirds
on the beach but
no human persons—the birds are “soul mating.”

Soul mating is something different—I call
from atma
to Super-atma, I have been taught,
it can be transformed from the beautiful
as the most beautiful in this world.

The more jivas keep their talking forgetful
of God. Because if they
tell the wrong persons they will be killed.

Learn the secret and how to pass it on to—
first you must be qualified and then
pass it on from the silent speech to
inner speech of the one with adhikari how to learn these
slowly, I must learn to say NO. I learned to say no. I pray to learn
to say yes inside.

The first point is our recent major discovery that my headaches are due to exertion. The
second major recent discovery is that I agree to slow down now. The third point we are
working on in consultation is whether I should slow down on visitors.

I discovered, however, that if you slow down in bed, it doesn’t mean your mind slows
down. God no. It goes and goes and goes. John Barrymore, Jr., in the cowboy movies, can’t
race faster or the Japanese single’s error, or those who collect money for President Bush.
My mind goes round and round.

Last night I dreamt of girls I had romances with. In a surprise upset, the one I thought I
was supposed to love was the underdog and I didn’t love her. Suddenly one came forth
whom I hardly ever thought of, although she was the most beautiful. She was pining after
me, coming after me. But all my actual romances have been impossible in my life. That’s a
true story. I came to that conclusion. They’ve all been impossible for one reason or another.
Drifting, drifting on the boat, the huge boat where the mind tries to slow down on the motors, but they never slow down and therefore the headaches, which may still be due to being too busy, can’t slow down.

How can you slow down to meditate? How can you always think of Krishna? It is nice that the cat is in bed with you. I don’t think I’ll get up, although it would be good to walk, I suppose. Accentuate the positive. Accentuate. Overdo it. Extend. Don’t rush too hard, you’ll get a headache. You can do. We’ll be sorry with you.

But there’s no exertion that doesn’t bring on one.

Maybe practicing the presence of God. But I’ll have to read it again. How do you do that?

Bhima’s song, which he liked to sing to his Guru Maharaja. “It never entered my mind.”

It Never Entered My Mind
Once I laughed when I heard you saying
That I’d be playing solitaire
Uneasy in my easy chair
It never entered my mind

And once you told me I was mistaken
That I’d awaken with the sun
And order orange juice for one
It never entered my mind
You had what I lack, myself
Now I even have to scratch my back myself

Once you warned me that if you scorned me
I’d say a lonely prayer again
And wish that you were there again
To get into my hair again
It never entered my mind

Once you warned me that if you scorned me
I’d say a lonely prayer again
And wish that you were there again
To get into my hair again
It never entered my mind

(Lyrics by Lorenz Hart and Richard Rogers, 1940)

Just back off and don’t do anything. Maybe someone could read to me. But the sister in frilly dress, 1770s, after America became a free country. But then they had to fight the Civil
War around 1860, one of the worst of wars. Battlewheel ship on the Mississippi. Sister read to me the same book.

A friend said he was going to India in two days and bid me obeisances. We accepted the lowest bidders to do the contract.

Get back in bed with three pillows. From there you can see his guru on the country-style vyasasana and the gigantic Gaura–Nitai on His own granite platform. Did you hear Them? Take care of her, take her home. Now you can empty the dumpster and knock on everyone’s door to sell *The History of Africa for Beginners*. Settle in. The main thing is to just accept the pain, do it for Krishna. Where is your clicker? Keep the stomach lubricated with water: care of the soul. We like nice pants, and some easy mystic approach:

1. Chant
2. Four rules
3. Live with good members
4. Show patience

I told him to correct the book blurb, *Calling Out to Krishna*. The poems are mostly a calling out. There is a word in Sanskrit that means the same thing, and you usually build bliss by calling out, like “O Radha–Krishna, Whose lotus feet are beautiful like the lotus flowers, O Radha–Krishna, please save me from this despair.” Or in Rilke, Whitman, Ginsberg, Haya-griva’s Chant. Found poems are when you just take something verbatim from Prabhupada’s lectures. How about those dreams? O, he’s Narada Muni, don’t think I’m loony, he flies around in outer space and tells us everything while falling asleep on his back. He wears no beard, saanyasa dress. The crowd rustles, doesn’t he take this? For $300 a day I can tell you, if we can both stay awake without too much exertion at the private health care clinic.

Bocce is an Italian game, England bowl game. All these games are men with balls wasting time. In some spiritual places, patrons—that is, those who give thousands of dollars—insist that there be tennis courts and basketball courts. They think the patients will go crazy otherwise. Once I was approached by such a donor at Gita-nagari, but I said that there was no need for basketball courts or tennis courts. We just needed facilities for our cows and normal programs. If they wanted to help us with that, then fine. They wanted swimming pools and television with expanded screens and satellites that could pick up the moon, watch the wrestling matches.

I wanted love of Krishna. But no pressure.

At least for now that’s our program. Yes, it even has to include the most important thing: striving for Krishna consciousness. We decided that any kind of pressure causes these headaches. Oh, you’ve been striving hard for Krishna. All I know is I have the eye stings all the time, so I must also be getting headaches, for *trying to be Krishna conscious*. No way to attain *prema* easily. *Bhava*?
Earlier today we mentioned that we were monks and were finished with various things of the material world. Sometimes the words go fast among the three of us and I can’t catch every word. I said end with women. We concurred very heartily. But in my mind I didn’t concur at all. Baladeva actually said that Nara is really cute-looking, and I joked and said something I heard someone say about Baladeva: “Yeah, you are not as cute, Willy Pointy-Head.” I was sorry that I had said that. I had heard a Godbrother call him that once and I thought it was a mean name, even though his head does come to a little bit of a point. You can call me Stevie Stick-Out-Ears or Stevie With One Ear Higher On One Side of the Head Than the Ear on the Other Side of the Head. But that’s not my point. They seem to genuinely think that they were finished with women and that they were a joke or a disaster and that they just like being with guys now and that was it.

But I really couldn’t ‘fess up to them that the dreams I’ve been having have been of beautiful women, women that I actually know, and women I may have seen recently in an advertising picture or an assistant to a doctor or dentist. There is nothing you can name that is anything like a dame. I don’t think that’s a very good sign of spiritual advancement. Women, beautiful women.

Poem #1

You were supposed to pull my toe at
8:30 P.M. to wake me up for common ground
from amid sleep. I jump up, but soon I’ll have
to go to bed again. I want to love all
the guys and girls and atmas,
by giving them as poems.

They may not like them but this is what
I have got. The plush sacred takes
I’m going to the Godhead if the hand to be
pressed, the Muse says, “I accept
this extension, I touch
your head.”

Poem #2

No I say I am the flowers I am
dropping on my dear ones, as Therese says
“once I get to heaven then I will bless my
closest friends.”

Give me a deep breath. O be can pray
that way and I can do it this way,
She was embroidering a beautiful trikeli Celtic blanket—
but the touch of my hand, yes—the ones
I love I desire to see, let them come
down the narrow rough road “no trespassers,
but I will get back.”

Poem #3

But you have to die and give back
the little you have received.
Just bow in waves. I read him the
history of the Africans. They did not talk and
when they began to talk the god
killed them and then spoke to them and said
they should not speak it’s unspeakable keep
it to yourself and I will keep secret ones like you
pasted in sacred dhutanas
who know the unspeakable.

The white doctors and professors will come in the future
and try to understand our original culture
an Arian and unspeakable look for slaves
and later skulls but they will
miss it completely yet you can keep
what I have told you and it will
last forever past present and in the future
this is Krishna’s secret also. Locked
in the Sanskrit against invaders.
We will reach the era where Lord Caitanya
will say now do not be silent, tell everyone you
meet what I have told—this simple
truth—He did come and I placed His feet
and spoke His words
answered His Goswamis
“Now tell everyone you meet Hare Krishna
Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare
tell everyone you meet.

The first person pronoun singular says you may be
a hundred percent consistent and I’ll always be wrong.
Bhaktivinoda Thakura speaks of the spiritual zigzag road of truth. He means it’s inevitable that you will veer sometimes to the right or uphill—detours appear, changing weather, yes, even changing mind, and that’s not always wrong. The main thing is to determinedly keep pursuing the truth and don’t give up. Follow the spiritual master, even after his disappearance. Even after new limitations you had not anticipated, new limitations. “As the crow flies,” like sixty miles an hour, he is almost always able to go in a straight line (except in hurricane) and cover those twenty-five miles in his top speed. But we nonwinged ground-coverers have to conform to the land topography. So when you say, “Joe’s place is twenty-five miles from here as the crow flies,” you mean it takes much more time to actually reach that place, unless you have an airplane.

I hadn’t thought of that, a spiritual airplane. Or Srila Prabhupada talks of the speed of the mind and says you can be anywhere in the universe as soon as you think of it. Subhananda dasa pressed me, “Does he mean that literally, in the body, or is it a metaphor only pertaining to the mind?” I wasn’t sure. I said, “At least the mind.” Speed of air. And soul speed.

But I am so down. Exertion to try pressure to move a block and another block and another to build even a tiny portion of the grand pyramid at Gaza, or to research how it is they say the first human was born in Africa, then the culture spread to Ethiopia, and then to Egypt. But Portuguese killed Africans.

We know from the Vedic sastra and the spoken line of masters that there were always souls. They kept esoteric knowledge locked up in the Sanskrit language, the absolute, and although the invaders—Muslims, Dutch, English, etc.—broke down many temples and cut thumbs and pushed the “Indians” to make trade with their masters, they could not conquer the spirit of the varnasramites. In other words, Indians became colonies of various empires, but they did not reveal their most valuable secrets, nor was there anyone much interested in anything other than taking from India silks, gold, labor, soldiers, food, material knowledge, etc. They thought the pious Indians were practicing ignorant polytheistic mythology. A few invaders saw the Hindu brahmanas as people very rare in manners and honesty, and fewer still saw something very elevated about them but couldn’t really understand it, something about the impersonal Brahman.

How to cook, how to form caste, how to appreciate the beautiful, long-braided, dark-haired, almond-eyed women and “You’re a better man than I am, Gunga Din”—“Hurry and bring the water”—“I don’t need a guru.”

From the halls of Montezuma and the shores of Tripoli, “counting dead bodies, our own and theirs, each little boy and girl gets a few chances. See the daffodils. Throw the stones. Is your sex dysfunctional? Now is it better? No gallbladder, but you have lost your mammy and the lettuce is sour. No job. You blow it in the 1960s, flip-flop. Warrant by the deathbed of dad or mom or sister or dog.

Print my books at least, the rest on computer line. Find the ancient wisdom in the palm of your hand where you had it until you forgot. As punishment for lust? No, don’t know, but it is His will, that I know. He is the Lord and I have got a country-style seat for Prabhupada and
a hip-hop method to traverse parampara in a fashion to everyone I meet. Witness the evidence. I is the witness. My mamma part black. It never entered your mind. We’ll find it for you.

Rest

I recommend The Practice of the Presence of God.
What right have you to
do that? And Theresa’s A Life of Love. Because they were so good for me. That dear friend Svasti dasi (no more in communiqué) said if she had read A Life of Love earlier, before “it,” she might have gone with her. Such a strong statement.
I was surprised, coming from her who doesn’t change her mind.

God I do still like to communicate with her. She probably did put a drop of poison in many an innocent and I cannot be open to that again.

You can’t love and exchange openly with one like that. Vibes and marimba, make an Ode to Lord Krishna, call Him by parts and parcels, sometimes. Krishna is even called an incarnation of Maha-Vishnu. It gets confusing. My toes feel good. I always have some med.
I have mortality. Another life. Vrndavana. He will come down closer to me. Your loved friends.
I’d like to be with you my dear.

I can’t sing to you as Mahalia Jackson sings but I saw an angel, and Gorky’s grandmother— "you’ve got to be very pure."