Reading Excerpt B

_The Bhagavad-Gita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War_
Translated by Barbara Stoler Miller
Columbia Books, New York, 1986

**FIRST TEACHING, 28–31**

Krishna, I see my kinsmen
gathered here, wanting war.

My limbs sink,
my mouth is parched,
my body trembles,
the hair bristles on my flesh.

The magic bow slops
from my hand, my skin burns,
I cannot stand still,
my mind reels.

I see omens of chaos,
Krishna; I see no good
in killing my kinsmen
in battle.

**34–36**

They are teachers, fathers, sons,
and grandfathers, uncles, grandsons,
fathers, and brothers of wives,
and other men of our family.

I do not want to kill them
even if I am killed, Krishna;
not for kingship of all three worlds,
much less for the earth!
Arjuna

Krishna, how can I fight against Bhishma and Drona with arrows when they deserve my worship?

It is better in this world to beg for scraps of food than to eat meals smeared with blood of elders I killed at the height of their power while their goals were still desires.

We don’t know which weight is worse to bear—our conquering them or their conquering us. We will not want to live if we kill the sons of Dhritarashtra assembled before us.

The flaw of pity blights my very being; conflicting sacred duties confound my reason. I ask you to tell me decisively—Which is better? I am your pupil. Teach me what I seek!