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Dear Pastor John

Aloe Corry

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Dear Pastor John,

The very fact that I am in a position to write this to you should alert you to the problem. At a time like this—or at the time it should be—I wouldn’t count on finding a functioning post office; in fact, I wouldn’t expect any form of communication to be reliable. However, here I am, sitting at my table writing this and quite sure that it will reach you.

This morning I woke up, jumped out of bed, and threw open the window. I was in a state—I don’t mind telling you. I was ready for anything. Except for what I saw next. Outside it was sunny and cloudless. It was quite early, and all down the block children were leaving for school with their mothers running after them, carrying lunchboxes. I saw Mr. Blake stepping off the curb on the way to catch the bus to work. Normally on a day like this, I would be doing something similar. Getting ready for the day, thinking about the vacuuming to be done or what I needed to get at the grocery store. Instead, I was in the window, geared up in my survival suit. I had put it on yesterday evening, just in case, because I thought that things might get started a little earlier than expected. I spent a
I figured I was extra prepared. I had the waterproof matches, the
American civilization—apocalyptic worlds, and all those novels about the collapse of
disproportionate action with tense stringing to survive in post-
copies of National Geographic Ben had found around the house,
broadcasts and everything else I could get my hands on—old
Sunday to Sunday I read all the books you mentioned in your
I did all the calculations, followed your radio station faithfully,
but I wanted to be prepared. I made sure to do everything right.
I mean, I thought that still was expensive and uncommercial.

'aint, waterproof and fireproof until you addressed us all to buy.
damp, waterproof and fireproof until you addressed us all to buy.
by happen. All discussed up, with everyone to go. Me in that stupid,
Anway, all the time I was still thinking that something was bound
company started sending letters Ben made me promise to do it
electric bill this morning. I had our few weeks, but once the
house, I couldn’t promise to do it. I would be done with the bills. All those mundane things that I was
for dinner. Paying the bills. All those mundane things that I was
he was mending things there. I was doing a call at the office and asking if he was having people over
washing the dishes from last night. Calculating my show on TV, Gay
so up in smoke? I was too anxious to do the chores I would usually do.
day before. I was just another sunny day. Sure, I kept my hopes up for
obvious. It was just another sunny day. Sure, I kept my hopes up for
hole in my seat; you might ask—why the company? Why’s that?
On such a lovely day, despite the fact that I was getting a little
low minutes. In fact, as it turned out, I was just a little overexcited.
could because he couldn’t handle me kicking off the sheets every
sweaty night, as you might imagine, and Ben went and slept on the
knee joints, those tiny freeze-dried packets of food stacked up and tucked away into suitcases. My bathtub had been cleaned and filled with water for hours—I had to make Ben use the shower we have down in the basement. He didn’t take it too well. He wasn’t enthusiastic about anything, truth be told. But I knew that come tomorrow I would be able to show them all. Ben, the stuffy people he works with in the office, Mary Robinson next door with her Birkin bags and Prada heels. She has a gigantic dog that her awful son drags all over the neighborhood. It has some sort of pedigree. I couldn’t convince Ben to get anything more than a few fighter fish, and then he wouldn’t even come out to the backyard to bury them with me when they died a few weeks later.

I can hear them all now, laughing at me. Me, shut up in the house all day, making calls to warn everyone, checking the news and waiting for it to happen. I had told them so, told them all for months. It wasn’t my fault that they wouldn’t prepare themselves seriously or take advantage of the great sales I found on your website and at Sportsman’s Outdoor Warehouse. I was so ready, for once in my life, so ready to be right. After that astrology disaster, the phrenology business, rock crystals strewn around the house that did nothing to improve the feng shui or harmonize Ben and me at all—the essential oil tinctures that made him sneeze and the holotropic breathwork that made me pass out a couple of times and made his mother go into cardiac arrest. I tried to tell them that it was just because our chakras weren’t aligned, but no one listened.

Anyway, all that had to stop about six months ago when the paper cut on my finger got so infected that Ben dragged me to the hospital before I could even try my latest remedy. The doctors thought about
amputation, but instead they just stuffed me full of antibiotics, and I kept telling them—you won’t solve anything with those pesticides you’re feeding me that you call modern medicine—and then my finger healed in a week, and it turned out that they were right, not me. About all of it. I was the one who was wrong. And this time, after listening to your broadcasts for so many months and feeling so good about being prepared, I just wanted to show them all. Make Ben wait by his office phone for me to call and let him know that everything was okay, that I put all of his electronics into the waterproof case just in case the floods decided to come down our street and would he please come home early because the subway system was going to shut down in the coming chaos?

I waited the whole day, tuning into your broadcast and checking, rechecking the suitcases to make sure that everything was ready. Nothing. Absolutely nothing. It could have been something small, a little economic meltdown or something, you know? An earthquake? Something that I could use to justify that bill I just got for that indestructible and inflatable tent you recommended.

I know that if I were to tune into your broadcast now, you would be saying to all of us over the radio, wasn’t that a good thing, isn’t it a miracle that we have all been spared, brothers and sisters. Anything to try and gain face. I understand. I’ve been through that sort of thing before. But this is what I want to know, Pastor John: if the world isn’t ending anytime soon, what am I supposed to do next?