

Instructions Found in an Empty Can of Coffee

by Christian Bell

If it doesn't stop snowing, ration your coffee. If someone's rationing your coffee, show them the bleary eyes, the shaky hands, the frayed beast lurking just underneath the skin. If a certain someone's rationing your coffee, choose better next time.

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If the age of superheroes doesn't arrive, sell your investments in spandex and buy into fast food. If the honeybees keep dying off, revise your birds and bees lecture that you'll give to your malnourished adolescents. If you find a lone, sad honeybee, buy a Habitrail cage and make it your new pet. If the apocalypse comes, stock up on water and beer. If the apocalypse passed you by, well, good for you.

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If you bring a knife to a gun fight, bring more than one and make sure they are huge. If I bring a knife to your gun fight, go easy on me, I beg you. If things get tough and I beg you, please, use the gun.

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If coffee gives you anxiety attacks, cut back and remember fondly the caffeinated winter mornings of twenty years ago and that person nearby that made the room warmer. If cutting back on coffee gives you anxiety attacks, turn off the world and look for monastery openings. If monasteries give you anxiety attacks, look to the sky and the alien ships that will surely take you far away any day now. If I give you anxiety attacks, turn me off and let me down easy.

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If life deals you lemons, throw them back with extreme velocity and fuck the lemonade. If she sees someone else on the side, revise that "greatest love" poem you once wrote and rent a storage space

in your name only. If you rent a storage space, see if a twin-sized bed will fit inside it.

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If the stories leave your brain and don't come back, find someone you can twirl in a dance and create new chapters. If finding a dance partner scares the hell out of you, don't fear, everyone's having the same issue.

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If death comes calling, scurry out the back door and run toward the vibrant fields, the lush music. If you can't hear the music, let me be your ears. If I die a premature death, you can have my coffee but please, take care of my honeybee like it was your own child.

