
IN A NON-EARTHQUAKE TIME / Brooke Horvath

You will not want to run; you will not want to panic.
So learn to act appropriately. Practice for disaster.
When the earth does quake, extinguish all smoking materials
(gas may be leaking from broken lines).
Remember: the Red Cross will be there to help
with clothing and shelter and medical care.
Write or phone your relatives now while you have the chance:
just let them know you're all right.
We know you never drive unless it's absolutely necessary,
so you are already clear on this point.
Also: don't eat foods from the refrigerator (they may have spoiled)
or snacks that have come into contact with flood waters.
It will be important not to spread rumors
and to avoid entering or leaving buildings:
if you are outside, remain outside;
if inside, do likewise.
Although it is not usually crucial to report hazards to authorities,
it will be then, so learn whom to call
and how to present a credible persona.
If your VCR gets wet, throw the main power switch first,
then unplug your machine. Wait a few days
before watching the rest of *Rocky* (it ends just like you think).
Please refrain from sightseeing until the fires are out.
Forget what Franklin said about humility
and learn to imitate the Boy Scouts.
Keep this poem in a safe place.