

# The Last Will & Testament of a Lame Duck

Written by Ruth Bryan Owen, 1933

To members in the coming session,  
We leave what's left of the depression  
With fifty-thousand tomes appended,  
Telling just how it can be ended.

To congressmen who'll draw our salary,  
We leave all gun men in the gallery.  
All communists who march and fight  
And threaten us with dynamite.

Those stalwart ones may have the onus  
Of laying hands upon the bonus.  
The currency—to them we hand it,  
To shrink, contract it, or expand it.

We'll let them exercise their talents  
On making that thar budget balance.  
And, pointing out, with no delaying  
A tax the public won't mind paying.

To make this simple as can be  
We leave to them technocracy.  
To them we're leaving the analysis  
Of beer producing no paralysis.

To them we leave, with stifled sobs  
All persons who are seeking jobs.  
Our pangs of exile 't'will assuage  
To know we have no patronage.

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To you dear ladies of the press,  
We leave unfeigned thankfulness.  
All you have done to give us pleasure  
Are memories we will always treasure.

While we roam that vast expanse  
Where lame ducks seek their sustenance.  
When happy days are here again,  
Please let us know just where and when.

**Note:** Ruth Bryan Owen, 1885-1954, was the daughter of William Jennings Bryan and Mary Elizabeth Baird Bryan. In 1929, Owen became Florida's first woman representative in the U. S. Congress. As Representative, she sat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and in 1933 was appointed by President Roosevelt to the post of U. S. Ambassador to Denmark and Iceland.

The poem, "The Last Will and Testament of a Lame Duck" was read by Representative Owen at a luncheon given in honor of women in congress by the Women's National Press club on January 31, 1933. The poem was written as a light-hearted piece of doggerel by Mrs. Owen, and she was taken aback when two congresswomen proposed to have the poem written into the official record for both the house and senate. When Mrs. Owen protested, saying such an act would be undignified, Rep. Florence P. Kahn, of California, declared "Oh, give the boys a good time before you go. They'll wish they had been smart enough to think of it!" [Feb. 1, 1933 "The Palm Beach Post" Florida, AP story]