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Seniors, Don't Duck!

O. O. McIntyre, in his syndicated column for last Saturday, quoted the following extraordinary letter on the depression:

"I have watched this world zinging a gay way suddenly veer from its smooth course and ricochet toward no one knows where! At 40 I have been two years jobless, a zero in the world integer. I lost \$114,000 buying bonds a reputable institution assured me were safe..."

"....From a \$7,500 a year apartment, I am writing from a \$35 a month walk-up in Tenafly, N.J. Unless a relative of mine in Illinois pops through with a check by next Wednesday, we -- my wife and two small children -- will move again. Or hurl ourselves on charity's mercies.

"A fairly sour picture, but without exaggeration. Naturally we are dazed by these lightning shifts, but it's astounding how calm. A year ago we passed the crying and feeling sorry for ourselves stage. The resignation to our fate is passive, but not dumbly so.

"With myself as well as others there operates a compensatory law when one is squeezed dry of ambition. This long coast down hill was unpleasant, but we hit bottom with this bump: We would not want to return to the grandeur to us, that we left...It's something entirely physiological that has taken place in our makeup. As much of a mystery to us as it would be to our acquaintances of the night clubs, afternoon teas and theatres.

"I'd like to have a job, but one of those pace-killing posts with continuous terror of dismissal no longer interests. Something around \$2,000 a year would suffice our needs and pay for a little life insurance. Never again can the banking boys entice me with their philosophy of thrift.....

"....What I dredged out of a fairly successful career, now that we can view it in a cold analysis was far from a sense of happiness. I was more worried then with plenty than I am now with nothing. So I prefer the less traveled tobacco road. Out of many friendships three remained, and they have grown fluttery. Stanch friendship is not a thing I care to take up again very seriously.

"It took this walloping cataclysm to teach the fun of nights at home around the parlor lamp..... We are not troubled by those afterdark horrors of some one getting my job. We have no interest in what our neighbors think. My wife is quite happy in her 1928 nutria and the shine to my breeches is all right with me.

"So are mountains reduced to the biblical molehills by a depression. It's unbelievable how crushed we used to be when we were left out at a dinner party in our set. We were more dispirited when we felt our car would have to last another season than we are now by penny-pinching; we have to do..... We want comfort but not too much of it, if it entails responsibilities.....

"....Most of us were being forgorged with velvety nothings. When I used to enlarge and completely refit a sumptuous bathroom, it gave me only a single day's glow. I bought three suits of clothes at a crack. Yet those things do not give me the thrill of calling at a public library and finding a book we wanted was in... Often in other days I ordered a dozen books at a time from our bookshop and many pages were never cut.

".... What I'm drivin' at in all this preamble is this: Write a column some day tipping off those who see a sock comin'; not to duck. It doesn't hurt much and may knock them loose from such foolishness and into a contentment they'd never expect."