



## Poet's Note

The idea for *Mortal Thoughts* — not in name but in body — began taking shape for me in November 2015. I — like so many others — wade in the erratic waters of intellect and mortality and all of the precious cognitive and ethereal lakes, rivers and streams that congregate between. I have been blessed to hone those temporal thoughts into poetry over the years, an extraordinary written art form that for whatever reason arises in me during my most mystifying times. Why does poetry so readily lend itself to the essence of transcendental deliberations, stoic cogitations and silly musings? The riposte is as simple as dreaming and as complex as mud. It does. For me, the answer begins and ends there, unveiling the journey as in the title, “Mortal Thoughts.”

Staring skyward at night-light  
flickering stars yawn and wink  
royal blue canvas eclipses daylight  
moonlight on my bedspread plays. (1-4)

While the poems in this volume were written over a number of years — from the 1970s until the month of publication — the collection was compiled, edited and refined between February 2016 and June 2017. I hope you enjoy *Mortal Thoughts* as much as I did in its creation.

Also by Michael R. Lane

Poetry

*A Drop of Midnight*  
*Sandbox*

Fiction

*Emancipation*  
*The Gem Connection*  
*UFOs and God (a collection of short stories)*  
*Blue Sun*  
*The Family Stone*  
*The Butcher*

# MORTAL THOUGHTS

*~Poems~*

Michael R. Lane



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## A Writer's Hope Chest

That mailbox was my hope chest.  
Monday through Saturday,  
I insert my key with the fragile possibility  
that this will be the time someone,  
          somewhere  
will unequivocally, state in a letter,  
*"We want to publish your work."*  
This time there will be more than bills  
or unwarranted solicitations,  
          or air,  
or an SASE weighted with my forsaken material,  
accompanied by a brooding standard rejection slip.  
Maybe...  
          just maybe ...  
this one will click,  
uplifting the promise that I am a writer worth reading,  
and all of the reclusive years of creation and faith  
will not have been in solitary vain.

## **Rhyming Poetry**

What is a poem  
that does not rhyme?  
Does it lack the essence  
of pure poetic grace?

Has it no backbone  
Or the substantial will  
to exhibit the message  
of a people's plight?

Will there be futures  
for such a beast?  
Or must it tremble and die  
at one's calloused feet?

Is there credibility  
in poem absent rhyme?  
"The Vision of Judgment"  
is not solely mine.

Not all is lost  
when one stops to think  
iambic pentameters  
are not meant to be.

For balance and tone  
should in free verse exist  
like poetic bliss  
in a sunrise or a kiss.

Sedate as moonlight  
eyeing nature's breasts,  
poetry is not words which rhyme  
but what those words project.

## Channel Surfing

The game was over;  
our team had been vanquished,  
the random channel surfing begun  
in concert with our persistent  
bemoaning armchair breakdowns  
of our insightful pros and cons  
of the modern gladiator contest  
we had passionately witnessed.

No one was really watching the tube  
once the warriors had left the arena;  
no one was actually talking to each other,  
our foamy dialogues having washed away  
without the common blood ground  
of martial parties sparking  
our spirited competitive fires.

Our existence was independent  
yet dependent;  
void, yet immersed  
in an alcohol drenched, snack filled  
world of excess trash talking  
aboard a testosterone train  
that had ground to a halt.

The game was over.  
Our brittle union was swiftly dissolving  
like granulated camaraderie  
in a boiling lethargy brew until...  
another campaign loomed on the big bright screen  
a generous offering from the omniscient cable gods  
of blessed colorful sight and sound and conflict.



The invading ether of boredom evaporated  
the malleable epoxy of rejuvenation. Hardened,  
we leaned forward in party unison  
mesmerized by the beckoning siren call  
of delicious combat on the near horizon -  
the voices and scenes drew us into the clash  
like unfulfilled men into the arms of lust.

We hoisted our sails and headed for open waters  
upon a male bonding warship of modern sport.