



# The Genteel Poor

*William Karl Thomas*

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The fourteen year old girl who appears on the cover of this book was Katherine, the person around whom all the other characters in this book revolve. Born at the turn of the 20th century, she faced the transition of being the daughter of a wealthy News Orleans doctor to being the single mother of three children at the height of the Great Depression. This memoir is told by the youngest child. Raised in a cultured environment, but driven by hunger to go to work at the age of eight, his world was shaped before he was born by Mimi, his witchcraft practicing maternal grandmother, and Dr. William J. Schmidt, his wealthy and talented grandfather. His survival was in part made possible by Dr. Horton, the cranky country doctor who played God and Robin Hood in this small coastal town; his Aunt Thelma who left the nunnery to become a successful executive in New York; his Grandmother Lola who lost the family fortune but gave refuge to her daughter and her children; and his millionaire Godfather, H. Grady Meador, whose wife prevented her husband from adopting his Godchild. This story of four generations of a colorful and talented family spanning the Civil War, World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II, deals with the social and ethnic evolution of this unique and colorful era of Americana, and culminates with the narrator marrying his high school teacher. Set in Bay St. Louis and News Orleans a half century before these areas were devastated by Hurricane Katrina, William Karl Thomas has written this memoir of his childhood with the same classic American prose style as his first memoir, *Lenny Bruce: The Making of a Prophet*, about his ten year collaboration with the most controversial comic of the 20th century. With it he has offered another very intimate and revealing slice of American history with all the good and bad, the agony and ecstasy of growing up among *The Genteel Poor*. Thomas' fiction includes "The Josan and the Jee," a Korean war novel; "Cleo," a civil rights era novel; "The Piano Man," a colorful collection of entertainers and hedonistic fun lovers in New Orleans French Quarter during the 1950's; and "Hollywood Tales from the Outer Fringe," an anthology of 12 short stories about the little people in 1950's Hollywood who serve the 'A' list celebrities. His non-fiction includes "Lenny Bruce: The Making of a Prophet," a memoir of his ten year collaboration with the most controversial comic of the 20th century, and "A Place For Us," the biography of a polio poster child who became a charismatic activist for people with disabilities. Thomas' work spans the high points of the 20th century and has been described as "His work sometimes reads like a Bogart script" (Manchester Guardian). Readers comment "He tells his stories through the eyes of strong women," "He champions the underdog," "He provides historical accuracy for my students," "a page turner," "I laughed and I cried." Thomas's works are all available in both print and E-editions for your Kindle, Nook, I-phone, or any E-reader. Both Amazon.com and the publisher's websites ([www.mediamastro.net/books.htm](http://www.mediamastro.net/books.htm)) offer full descriptions and excerpts from all his works. The publisher's website also offers signed copies.

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