

iUniverse Publishes Powerful New Novel By Robert Crooke
***The Earth and Its Sorrows* Is One Man's Journey from Loss to Enlightenment**

(Bloomington, IN—June 1, 2010)—iUniverse, Inc. today announced it had published *The Earth and Its Sorrows*, a new novel by Robert Crooke. The book has received an “Editor’s Choice” designation, which is given to 5% of titles iUniverse publishes each year, and is highly regarded among booksellers. The iUniverse editorial board called *The Earth and Its Sorrows* “a powerful story about a man dealing with loss by coming to terms with his own past.”

The Earth and Its Sorrows begins in the mid-Hudson Valley of New York State, where Ted Devaney has gone to sell an old family cottage two years after the death of his son, Paul, in a car accident. Overcome by memories, especially a strong sense of Paul’s presence, Ted defers the sale and decides to stay a few days, confusing and frightening his wife, Diana, and their daughter, Beth. As days become weeks, old friends, neighbors, and estranged family members slowly gather around him. He meets Elena, his high school girlfriend, who has made her life in the place he left years before. His brother, Tom, arrives with bittersweet memories of his own about their boyhood summers in the valley. Slowly, Ted senses secrets and doubts plaguing his brother, his old girlfriend—all of the people he meets in the valley, where his forgotten past lingers. And, as he realizes the effect of his life on theirs, and theirs on his, he understands his fate—some questions the mind answers. Others, only the heart comprehends.

“When we first meet Ted Devaney,” Crooke recently explained about his novel’s protagonist, “a terrible tragedy has occurred in his family. Ted is caught somewhere between acknowledgment and anger in the stages of grief—still far from hope or even acceptance—increasingly plagued by a sense of personal guilt. Ted’s journey helps him accept the universality of grief, and the fact that tragedy and doubt bind all human beings to one another.

“I was struck as I wrote this story,” Crooke added, “by the way the old American Transcendentalist movement seemed to be guiding me. This was unsurprising, given the influence this philosophical movement continues having on American literature, education, politics and conservation—all of which are important subtexts in my story. But tragedy was my real theme, and I came to understand that someone like Hawthorne might be guiding me as much as Emerson and Thoreau were. Ultimately, I found, my story was built upon the spiritual and philosophical conflict between Hawthorne’s Calvinism and Emerson’s Transcendentalism—especially, regarding issues of goodness in man and divinity in nature, the importance of personal responsibility, and the limits of self-reliance.

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“In its conception of memory, history and time, my story is circular. The lives of its characters proceed with circuitry. Their doubts are questions of conscience rippling out to wider questions. Their journeys end where they begin, more in revelation than resolution. For deep within their own hearts, beneath protective veils of silence, sorrow, and hope, they encounter secrets they’ve kept even from themselves.”

About the author: Robert Crooke (www.robertcrooke.org) is a journalist, media executive, and teacher. His poetry has been published in the *West Hills Review*, the literary journal of the Walt Whitman Birthplace in Long Island, NY. He has lectured at the University of Connecticut, the University of Nebraska, New York University, and Suffolk County Community College. He began his career as a sports reporter and columnist for the *Long Island Press* and for 13 years served as North American press spokesman for Reuters. His two prior novels, *American Family* (2004) and *Sunrise* (2007), received generous critical praise. He and his wife reside in Bridgewater, Connecticut.

About the book:

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