

1974

Presidential Address

Kathleen Norris

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Norris, Kathleen. "Presidential Address." *The Iowa Review* 5.1 (1974): 6-7. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.1599>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.

You wanted to be foolish;
Everyone did. You wanted to be
So drunk.
"I'm no good," I hear you say.
"Life is hard." Delusion.

Children mimic the grownups
Chasing each other, sloppily.

Act as if you are good, that is all.

A mouthful of grass, an inverted scream
My stranger and companion,
The assorted pastel company, a parboiled
Bride and Groom.

We drink from the cup of the venom of shame,
The priest wipes it clean.
Nothing sentimental is true.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

from: *The White Slavery of Words*

The people hide nothing
Yet they want to believe: **nothing bad, nothing bad.**
The people express everything,
Yet the language grows away from them
Hardens around a television set, a bitter
Cold kitchen, screaming kids

There is no way now
To tell what happens,
No more word for failure,
Or words expressing doubt
The subjunctive: use it,
You'll be put in jail,
Your books and papers destroyed

The Mafia controls the word "protection"
Just as the government controls the word "defense"

Give us an image, the people cry
An immaculate, unimaginable house
The man in the house, his wife and daughters,
Who always seem to be going forward;
We want to be like them