

[Home](#)[My Books](#)[For Schools](#)[Biography](#)[Kudos](#)[Contact Me](#)

OUR WHITE HOUSE



To commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the White House, The National Children's Book and Literacy Alliance and Candlewick Press have published ***Our White House: Looking in, Looking Out***, a collection "created by 108 renowned authors and illustrators." I am honored to be one of those invited to contribute to the book. Below is the poem I contributed to this collection.

Mary Todd Lincoln Speaks of Her Son's Death, 1862

When Willie died of the fever,
Abraham spoke the words
that I could not:
"My boy is gone.
He is actually gone."

Gone.
The word was a thunderclap,
deafening me to my wails
as I folded over his body,
already growing cold.

Gone.
The word as a curtain
coming down on eleven years,
hiding toy soldiers,
circus animals,
and his beloved train.

Gone.
The word was poison,
but poison that would not kill,
only gag me with its bitterness
as I choked on a prayer for my death.

Abraham spoke the words
that I could not:
"My boy is gone.
He is actually gone."
And I am left
with grief that
when spoken
shatters like my heart.