

## “The Hill We Climb”

A poem by **Amanda Gorman**, the *Youth Poet Laureate of 2017*, delivered at the Inauguration of Biden and Harris

"When day comes, we ask ourselves, where can we find light in this never ending shade?  
The loss we carry, a sea. We must wade.  
We've graved the belly of the beast.  
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace.  
In the norms and notions of what just is, isn't always justice.  
And yet the dawn is ours before we knew it. Somehow we do it.  
Somehow we've weathered and witnessed a nation that isn't broken, but simply unfinished.  
We, the successors of a country and the time where a skinny Black girl descended from slaves and raised by a single mother can dream of becoming president only to find herself reciting for one.  
And yes, we are far from polished, far from pristine, but that doesn't mean we are striving to form a union that is perfect.  
We are striving to forge our union with purpose.  
To compose a country, committed to all cultures, colors, characters, and conditions of man.  
And so we lift our gaze, not to what stands between us, but what stands before us  
We close the divide because we know to put our future first, we must first put our differences aside.  
We lay down our arms so we can reach out our arms to one another. We seek harm to none and harmony for all.  
Let the globe, if nothing else say, this is true.  
That even as we grieved, we grew.  
That even as we hurt, we hoped.  
That even as we tired, we tried that will forever be tied together victorious.  
Not because we will never again know defeat, but because we will never again sow division.  
Scripture tells us to envision that everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree and no one shall make them afraid  
If we're to live up to our own time, then victory won't lie in the blade, but in all the bridges we've made.  
That is the promise to glade the hill we climb.  
If only we dare it's because being American is more than a pride we inherit.  
It's the past we step into and how we repair it.  
We close the divide because we know to put our future first, we must first put our differences aside  
We've seen a force that would shatter or nation, rather than share it.  
Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy.  
And this effort very nearly succeeded, but while democracy can be periodically delayed, it can never be permanently defeated in this truth.  
In this faith we trust for while we have our eyes on the future, history has its eyes on us. This is the era of just redemption.  
We feared it in its susception.  
We did not feel prepared to be the heirs of of such a terrifying hour, but within it, we found the power to author a new chapter.  
To offer hope and laughter to ourselves.  
So while once we asked, how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe?  
Now we assert how could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?  
We will not march back to what was, but move to what shall be a country that is bruised.  
But whole benevolence, but bold, fierce, and free.  
We will not be turned around or interrupted by intimidation because we know our inaction and an Ursa will be the inheritance of the next generation.  
Our blenders become their burdens, but one thing is certain.

If we merged mercy with the mights into might with right, a night then love becomes our legacy, and change our children's birthright.

So let us leave behind a country better than one.

For there was always light. If only we're brave enough to see it.

We were left with every breath, my bronze pounded chest.

We will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one.

We will rise from the gold limbed hills of the West.

We will rise from the wind swept to Northeast where our forefathers first realized the revolution.

We will rise from the lake when cities of the middle Western States.

We will arise from the sun baked South.

We will rebuild, reconciled and recover and every known nook over a nation.

And every corner called our country.

Our people diverse and beautiful will emerge, battered and beautiful.

When day comes, we step out of the shade of flame and unafraid, the new dawn balloons, as we free it.

For there was always light.

If only we're brave enough to see it.

If only we're brave enough to be it."