

The United States of America *Nation's Youth Poet Laureate*, **Amanda Gorman**, read this inaugural poem, she had written to present on the occasion of the inauguration of the 46th US President, Joseph Robinett Biden, on the 20th of January, 2021, on the steps of Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C., 'The Hill We Climb', which the 22-year-old delivered after Mr Biden took his oath of office.



‘The Hill We Climb’

***Mr President, Dr Biden, Madam Vice President, Mr Emhoff, Americans
and the world:***

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 braved 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 a 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,
colours, characters, and conditions of man.
And so we lift our gazes 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 her 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've seen a forest that
would shatter our nation rather than share it.
Would destroy our country, if it meant delaying democracy.
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 at its inception.

We did not feel prepared to be
the heirs 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, benevolent,
but bold, fierce, and free.

We will not be turned around or interrupted by intimidation
because we know our inaction and inertia
will be the inheritance of the next generation.

Our blunders become their burdens.

But one thing is certain, if we merge mercy with might
and might with right, then love becomes our legacy
and change our children's birthright.

So let us leave behind a country better than one we were left with.

Every breath from my bronze-pounded chest:

we will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one.

We will rise from the hills of the West.
We will rise from the wind-swept Northeast
where our forefathers first realised revolution.
We will rise from the lake rim cities of the Midwestern states.
We will rise from the sun-baked South.
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover
in every known nook of our nation,
in every corner called our country
our people diverse and beautiful
will emerge battered and beautiful.

When day comes,
we step out of the shade aflame and unafraid.
The new dawn blooms as we free it.
For there is always light.
If only we're brave enough to see it.
If only we're brave enough to be it.

(Speech put to verse form: Helmut von der Lahr 20/01/2021)