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“The Hill We Climb” Amanda Gorman

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
And the norms and notions
of what just is
Isn't always just-ice

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 a union with purpose](#)
[To compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters and](#)
[conditions of man](#)

Jonah 2:1-10

(1) The LORD provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah; and Jonah remained in the fish's belly three days and three nights. (2) [Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish.](#) (3) He said: In my trouble I called to the LORD, And He answered me; From the belly of Sheol I cried out, And You heard my voice. (4) You cast me into the depths, Into the heart of the sea, The floods engulfed me; All Your breakers and billows Swept over me. (5) I thought I was driven away Out of Your sight: Would I ever gaze again Upon Your holy Temple? (6) The waters closed in over me, The deep engulfed me. Weeds twined around my head. (7) I sank to the base of the mountains; The bars of the earth closed upon me forever. Yet You brought my life up from the pit, O LORD my God! (8) When my life was ebbing away, I called the LORD to mind; And my prayer came before You, Into Your holy Temple. (9) They who cling to empty folly Forsake their own welfare, (10) But I, with loud thanksgiving, Will sacrifice to You; What I have vowed I will perform.

“I Have a Dream” - MLK

[“I have a dream that one day on the red hills o Georgia sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brother-hood”](#)

37) See, I will gather them from all the lands to which I have banished them in My anger and wrath, and in great rage; and I will bring them back to this place and let them dwell secure. (38) They shall be My people, and I will be their God. (39) I will give them a single heart and a single nature to revere Me for all time, and it shall be well with them and their children after them. (40) And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them and that I will treat them graciously; and I will put into their hearts reverence for Me, so that they do not turn away from Me. (41) I will delight in treating them graciously, and I will plant them in this land faithfully, with all My heart and soul. (42) For thus said the LORD: As I have brought this terrible disaster upon this people, so I am going to bring upon them the vast good fortune which I have promised for them. – [Jeremiah 32:37-42](#)

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 we'll forever be tied together, victorious
Not because we will never again know defeat
but because we will never again sow division

Hosea 10:12

(12) “*Sow righteousness for yourselves*; Reap the fruits of goodness; Break for yourselves betimes fresh ground Of seeking the LORD, So that you may obtain a teacher of righteousness.”

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

Isaiah 54:9-10

(9) For this to Me is like the waters of Noah: As I swore that the waters of Noah Nevermore would flood the earth, So I swear that I will not Be angry with you or rebuke you. (10) For the mountains may move And the hills be shaken, But my loyalty shall never move from you, Nor My covenant of friendship be shaken — said the LORD, who takes you back in love.

Isaiah 2:4

(4) Thus He will judge among the nations And arbitrate for the many peoples, **And they shall beat their swords into plowshares And their spears into pruning hooks:** Nation shall not take up Sword against nation; They shall never again know war.

Isaiah 6:13

(13) “But while a tenth part yet remains in it, it shall repent. It shall be ravaged like the terebinth and the oak, of which stumps are left even when they are felled: its stump shall be a holy seed.”

Proverbs 6:16-19

Six things are thre that the Lord hars, and seven He utterly loathes. Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands shedding innocent blood, a heart plotting wicked designs, feet hurrying to run to evil, a lying deposer, **a false witness, fomenting strife among brothers.**

Micah 4:4

(4) But every man shall sit **Under his grapevine or fig tree With no one to disturb him.** For it was the LORD of Hosts who spoke.

Micah 4:3

(3) Thus He will judge among the many peoples, And arbitrate for the multitude of nations, However distant; And they shall beat their swords into plowshares And their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not take up Sword against nation; They shall never again know war;

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 force that would shatter our nation
rather than share it
Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy
And this effort very nearly succeeded

Proverbs 6:12-15

(12) A scoundrel, an evil man
Lives by crooked speech, (13)
Winking his eyes, Shuffling
his feet, Pointing his finger.
(14) Duplicity is in his heart;
He plots evil all the time; He
incites quarrels. (15) Therefore
calamity will come upon him
without warning; Suddenly he
will be broken beyond repair.

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 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

Rousseau, The Social Contract

The Social Contract, with its famous opening sentence 'Man is born free, and he is everywhere in chains', stated instead that people could only experience true freedom if they lived in a civil society that ensured the rights and wellbeing of its citizens. Being part of such a society involved submitting to the general will - a force that transcended individuals and aimed to uphold the common good (<https://www.bl.uk/learning/timeline/item126710.html>)

Ezra 9:6-9

"My God, I am too ashamed and mortified to lift my face to you, my God, for our crimes have multiplied over our heads and our guilt is great up to the heavens. From the days of our fathers we have been in great guilt to this day, and through our crimes we, our kings, our priests, have been given into the hands of the kings of the lands, to the sword and to captivity and to pillage and to shame as on this day. And now, in a mere moment, there has been grace from the Lord our God to leave us survivors and to give us anchorage to his holy place to give light to our eyes, O our God, and to grant us a bit of livelihood in our labor..."

"I've Been to the Mountaintop," - MLK

Now that's a strange statement to make because the world is all messed up. The nation is sick, trouble is in the land, confusion all around. That's a strange statement. But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough can you see the stars. (*All right, Yes*) And I see God working in this period of the twentieth century in a way that men in some strange way are responding. Something is happening in our world. (*Yeah*) The masses of people are rising up. And wherever they are assembled today, whether they are in Johannesburg, South Africa; Nairobi, Kenya; Accra, Ghana; New York City; Atlanta, Georgia; Jackson, Mississippi; or Memphis, Tennessee, the cry is always the same: "We want to be free." [*Applause*]

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 the one we were left with

Micah 6:8

“He has told you, O man, what is good, And what the LORD requires of you: Only to do justice And to love goodness, And to walk modestly with your God;

Every breath from 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 windswept northeast
where our forefathers first realized revolution
We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the midwestern states,
we will rise from the sunbaked south
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover
and every known nook of our nation and
every corner called our country,
our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,
battered and beautiful

“I Had a Dream” MLK

“Let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado....Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Lookout Mountain of Tennessee...from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.”

“Still I Rise”

By Maya Angelou

Just like moons
and like suns,
With the certainty
of tides,
Just like hopes
springing high,
Still I'll rise.

When day comes we step out of the shade,
afame 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

Psalm 72:16-18

16) Let abundant grain be in the land, to the tops of the mountains; let his crops thrive like the forest of Lebanon; and let men sprout up in towns like country grass. (17) May his name be eternal; while the sun lasts, may his name endure; let men invoke his blessedness upon themselves; let all nations count him happy. (18) Blessed is the LORD God, God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things;

Lamentations 3:22-24

22) The kindness of the LORD has not ended, His mercies are not spent. (23) They are renewed every morning— Ample is Your grace! (24) “The LORD is my portion,” I say with full heart; Therefore will I hope in Him.