

AMANDA
GORMAN

THE
HILL
WE
CLIMB

AN INAUGURAL POEM
FOR THE COUNTRY

✦ FOREWORD BY OPRAH WINFREY ✦

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AN INAUGURAL POEM *FOR THE COUNTRY*

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VIKING

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FOREWORD

by **OPRAH WINFREY**



THEY DON'T COME very often, these moments of incandescence where the welter of pain and suffering gives way to hope. Maybe even joy.

Where a deep distress that has dogged our souls and shaken our faith—so difficult to articulate and even harder to bear—is transformed into something clear and pure.

Where wisdom flows in cadences that sync with the thrum of our blood, the beat of our hearts.

Where grace and peace in human form take the measure, seeing where we've been and where we must go, lighting the way with her words.

She was exactly what we'd been waiting for, this “skinny Black girl, descended from slaves,” showing us our true selves, our human heritage, our heart. Everyone who watched came away enhanced with hope and marveling at seeing the best of who we are and can be through the eyes and essence of a twenty-two-year-old, our country's youngest presidential inaugural poet.

As her words washed over us, they healed our wounds and resurrected our spirits. A nation, “bruised but whole,” climbed up off its knees.

And finally, a miracle: we felt the sun pierce the “never-ending shade.”

That is the power of poetry. And that is the power we collectively witnessed at the inauguration of President Joseph R. Biden on January 20, 2021.

The day Amanda Gorman, profoundly presenting her fullest, most radiant self, rose to the microphone and the Moment . . . giving us the gift of “The Hill We Climb.”

*Read by the poet
at the inauguration of
President Joe Biden
January 20, 2021*





**Mr. President and Dr. Biden,
Madam Vice President and 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,
And the norms and notions of what "just is"
Isn't always justice.