“The Hill We Climb” by Amanda Gorman

https://youtu.be/LZ055illN4

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 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 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 that 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 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 we’ll 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.
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.
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 we 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 the 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 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.  
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.