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26 lines (+2 line epigraph)
poem, panegyric
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Amanda Takes the Stage

She arrives resplendent.

Her coat a radiant yellow,
a beacon of light promising solace after a time of darkness and sorrow.

Her hair, a tower of braids bound by a bold band of red,
a conduit for youthful energy linking the heavens to the Earth.

Amanda takes the stage.

A waif of a girl, yet intimidating,
imposing but for eyes radiating intelligence and kindness.

Quietly, she inhales.
We wait—our breath bated.

She speaks.

Her words flow with a subtle rhythm,
like a warm breeze meandering between the trees.

She speaks of danger,
but dangers averted.

She speaks of failure,
but failures acknowledged, illuminating a new path forward.

She speaks of division,
but divisions reparable.

She speaks of despair,
but despair relegated to a dark corner by a floodlight of hope.

With these words,
she lifts a nation reeling from years of lost optimism.

With these words,
 this cynic . . .
 believes her.

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On January 20, 2021, Amanda Gorman lit up the nation with her spoken-word poem, "The Hill We Climb," written and recited for the inauguration of the 46th president of the United States, Joe Biden (Washington, DC).

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