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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.

—

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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