

Devotion for Week of July 3, 2022
Rev. Jeanne Simpson

When President Biden was inaugurated, I watched in amazement as this skinny little Black girl in a bright yellow coat and a red hair band recited a poem she had written. Amanda Gorman is the youngest presidential inaugural poet in US history and the first-ever National Youth Poet Laureate. She recited a poem called "The Hill We Climb," and in this week when we celebrate our independence from Great Britain and our founding of a society based on democracy, I find these words from that poem fitting.

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.

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.

.....
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 promised glade,
The hill we climb, if only we dare it:
Because being American is more than a pride we inherit –
It's the past we step into and how we repair it.

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So let us leave behind a country better than the one we were left.
With every breath from our bronze-pounded chests,
We will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one.

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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.

Happy Independence Day, and may we be thankful for living in this country of freedom.

Jeanne