

An Ode We Owe, Amanda Gorman

U.N. General Assembly Sept 19, 2022

How can I ask you to do good,
When we've barely withstood
Our greatest threats yet:
The depths of death, despair and disparity,
Atrocities across cities, towns & countries,
Lives lost, climactic costs.
Exhausted, angered, we are endangered,
Not because of our numbers,
But because of our numbness.
We're strangers
To one another's perils and pain,
Unaware that the welfare of the public
And the planet share a name—
—Equality
Doesn't mean being the exact same,
But enacting a vast aim:
The good of the world to its highest capability.
The wise believe that our people without power
Leaves our planet without possibility.
Therefore, though poverty is a poor existence,
Complicity is a poorer excuse.
We must go the distance,
Though this battle is hard and huge,
Though this fight we did not choose,
For preserving the earth isn't a battle too large
To win, but a blessing too large to lose.
This is the most pressing truth:
That Our people have only one planet to call home
And our planet has only one people to call its own.
We can either divide and be conquered by the few,
Or we can decide to conquer the future,
And say that today a new dawn we wrote,
Say that as long as we have humanity,
We will forever have hope.

Together, we won't just be the generation
That tries but the generation that triumphs;
Let us see a legacy
Where tomorrow is not driven
By the human condition,
But by our human conviction.
And while hope alone can't save us now,
With it we can brave the now,
Because our hardest change hinges
On our darkest challenges.
Thus may our crisis be our cry, our crossroad,
The oldest ode we owe each other.
We chime it, for the climate,
For our communities.
We shall respect and protect
Every part of this planet,
Hand it to every heart on this earth,
Until no one's worth is rendered
By the race, gender, class, or identity
They were born. This morn let it be sworn
That we are one one human kin,
Grounded not just by the griefs
We bear, but by the good we begin.
To anyone out there:
I only ask that you care before it's too late,
That you live aware and awake,
That you lead with love in hours of hate.
I challenge you to heed this call,
I dare you to shape our fate.
Above all, I dare you to do good
So that the world might be great."

Here's [a link](#) to a story about this poem that she recited at the UN last September.

