

GUEST ESSAY

Hymn for the Hurting

May 27, 2022

By Amanda Gorman

Ms. Gorman is a poet and the author of “The Hill We Climb,” “Call Us What We Carry” and “Change Sings.”

Everything hurts,
Our hearts shadowed and strange,
Minds made muddied and mute.
We carry tragedy, terrifying and true.
And yet none of it is new;
We knew it as home,
As horror,
As heritage.
Even our children
Cannot be children,
Cannot be.

Everything hurts.
It's a hard time to be alive,
And even harder to stay that way.
We're burdened to live out these days,
While at the same time, blessed to outlive them.

This alarm is how we know
We must be altered —
That we must differ or die,
That we must triumph or try.
Thus while hate cannot be terminated,
It *can* be transformed
Into a love that lets us live.

May we not just grieve, but give:
May we not just ache, but act;
May our signed right to bear arms
Never blind our sight from shared harm;
May we choose our children over chaos.
May another innocent never be lost.

Maybe everything hurts,
Our hearts shadowed & strange.
But only when everything hurts
May everything change.

Amanda Gorman is a poet and the author of “The Hill We Climb,” “Call Us What We Carry” and “Change Sings.”

The Times is committed to publishing a diversity of letters to the editor. We'd like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some tips. And here's our email: letters@nytimes.com.

Follow *The New York Times* Opinion section on Facebook, Twitter (@NYTopinion) and Instagram.