

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 just-ice  
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  
We the successors of a country and a time  
Where a skinny Black girl  
descended from slaves and raised by a single  
mother  
can dream of becoming president  
only to find herself reciting for one  
And yes we are far from polished  
far from pristine  
but that doesn't mean we are  
striving to form a union that is perfect  
We are striving to forge a union with purpose  
To compose a country committed to all cul-  
tures, colors,  
characters and  
conditions of man  
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands  
between us  
but what stands before us  
We close the divide because we know, to put  
our future first,  
we must first put our differences aside  
We lay down our arms  
so we can reach out our arms  
to one another  
We seek harm to none and harmony for all  
Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is  
true:

That even as we grieved, we grew  
That even as we hurt, we hoped  
That even as we tired, we tried  
That we'll forever be tied together, victo-  
rious

Not because we will never again know defeat  
but because we will never again sow division  
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 promise to glade  
The hill we climb  
If only we dare

It's because being American is more than a  
pride we inherit,  
it's the past we step into and how we repair  
it

We've seen a force that would shatter our na-  
tion  
rather than share it  
Would destroy our country if it meant delay-  
ing democracy

And this effort very nearly succeeded  
But while democracy can be periodically de-  
layed

it can never be permanently defeated  
In this truth

In this faith we trust  
For while we have our eyes on the future  
history has its eyes on us  
This is the era of just redemption

We feared at its inception  
We did not feel prepared to be the heirs  
of such a terrifying hour  
but within it we found the power to author a  
new chapter

To offer hope and laughter to ourselves  
So while once we asked,  
how could we possibly prevail over catas-  
trophe?

Now we assert  
How could catastrophe possibly

prevail over us?

We will not march back to what was  
but move to what shall be  
A country that is bruised but whole,  
benevolent but bold,  
fierce and free  
We will not be turned around  
or interrupted by intimidation  
because we know our inaction and inertia  
will be the inheritance of the next genera-  
tion

Our blunders become their burdens  
But one thing is certain:  
If we merge mercy with might,  
and might with right,  
then love becomes our legacy  
and change our children's birthright  
So let us leave behind a country  
better than the one we were left with  
Every breath from my bronze-pounded chest,  
we will raise this wounded world into a won-  
drous one

We will rise from the gold-limbed hills of the  
west,  
we will rise from the windswept northeast  
where our forefathers first realized revolu-  
tion

We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of  
the midwestern states,

we will rise from the sunbaked south  
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover  
and every known nook of our nation and  
every corner called our country,  
our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,  
battered and beautiful  
When day comes we step out of the shade,  
afire 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.

(Applause.)

Mr. BLUNT. Thank you, Amanda Gorman.  
Now, for our benediction, I am pleased to  
introduce the Reverend Dr. Silvester  
Beaman, pastor of the Bethel African Meth-  
odist Episcopal Church in Wilmington, DE, a  
friend of President Biden for 30 years.

Reverend BEAMAN. As a nation and people  
of faith gathered in this historical moment,  
let us unite in prayer.

God, we gather under the beauty of Your  
holiness and the holiness of Your beauty. We  
seek Your face, Your smile, Your warm em-  
brace.

We petition You once more in this celebra-  
tion. We pray for divine favor upon our  
President, Joseph R. Biden, and our First  
Lady, Dr. Jill Biden, and their family. We  
further ask that You would extend the same  
favor upon our Vice President, Kamala D.  
Harris, and our Second Gentleman, Doug  
Emhoff, and their family. More than ever—  
more than ever—they and our Nation need  
You.

We need You, for in You we discover our  
common humanity. In our common human-  
ity, we will seek out the wounded and bind  
their wounds. We will seek healing for those  
who are sick and diseased. We will mourn  
our dead. We will befriend the lonely, the  
least, and the left out. We will share our  
abundance with those who are hungry. We  
will do justly to the oppressed, acknowledge  
sin, and seek forgiveness, thus grasping rec-  
onciliation.

In discovering our humanity, we will seek  
the good in and for all our neighbors. We will  
love the unlovable, remove the stigma of the  
so-called untouchables. We will care for our  
most vulnerable, our children, the elderly,  
emotionally challenged, and the poor. We  
will seek rehabilitation beyond correction.  
We will extend opportunity to those locked  
out of opportunity. We will make friends of  
our enemies. We will make friends of our en-  
emies.

People—Your people—shall no longer raise  
up weapons against one another, who will  
rather use our resources for the national  
good, and become a beacon of life and good  
will to the world, and neither shall we learn  
hatred anymore. We will lie down in peace  
and not make our neighbors afraid.

In You, oh, God, we discover our humanity,  
and in our humanity, we discover our com-  
monness. Beyond the difference of color,  
creed, origin, political party, ideology, geog-  
raphy, and personal preferences, we will be-  
come greater stewards of Your environment,  
preserving the land, reaping from it a sus-  
tainable harvest, and securing its wonder  
and miracle-giving power for generations to  
come.

This is our benediction, that from these  
hallowed grounds where slaves labored to  
build this shrine and citadel to liberty and  
democracy, let us all acknowledge—from the  
indigenous Native Americans to those who  
recently received their citizenship, from the  
African American to those whose foreparents  
came from Europe and every corner of the  
globe, from the wealthy to those struggling  
to make it, from every human being, regard-  
less of their choices—that this is our coun-  
try.

As such, teach us, oh, God. As such, teach  
us, oh, God, to live in it, love in it, be healed  
in it, and reconcile to one another in it, less  
we miss kingdom's goal.

To Your glory, majesty, dominion, and  
power forever, hallelujah. Glory hallelujah,  
in the strong Name of our collective faith.  
Amen.

(Performance of "The Stars and Stripes  
Forever" by the U.S. Marine Band.)

(Performance of "Let Freedom Ring" by  
the U.S. Marine Band.)

(The Inaugural Ceremony was concluded at  
12:33 p.m.)

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you, Mr.  
President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr.  
BOOKER). You are welcome.

Mr. SCHUMER. A new politeness  
from the Chair.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The  
clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk  
proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I  
ask unanimous consent that the order  
for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without  
objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Re-  
publican leader is recognized.

#### BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, for  
this 117th Congress, the American peo-  
ple chose an evenly split Senate—50  
Republicans and 50 Democrats. With  
the election of Vice President HARRIS,  
that means the Democratic leader will  
act as majority leader.

So I want to congratulate my col-  
league from New York. His pride and  
emotion were palpable yesterday as  
this self-described "kid from Brooklyn  
[and] son of an exterminator and a  
housewife" became the first Jewish  
Member of Congress to lead either  
Chamber—a historic milestone.

Now, the Senate has handled an even split before. Twenty years ago, faced with the same scenario, the two leaders brokered a power-sharing agreement so the institution could function smoothly.

The Democratic leader and I are discussing a similar agreement now. I have been heartened to hear my colleague say he wants the same rules from the 2000s to apply today, because, certainly, 20 years ago there was no talk—none whatsoever—of tearing down longstanding minority rights on legislation.

The legislative filibuster is a crucial part of the Senate. Leading Democrats, like President Biden himself, have long defended it. Democrats themselves just spent 6 years using it, literally, to block bills from Senator TIM SCOTT's police reform to coronavirus relief.

And less than 4 years ago, when it was Republicans who held the Senate, the House, and the Presidency, 27 current Democrats plus Vice President HARRIS signed a letter insisting this longstanding rule should not be broken.

So if the talk of unity and common ground is to have meaning and, certainly, if the rules from 20 years ago are to be our guide, then I cannot imagine the Democratic leader would rather hold up the power-sharing agreement than simply reaffirm that his side won't be breaking this standing rule of the Senate.

I appreciate our ongoing, good-faith discussions and look forward to finding the solution together.

Our side takes a great deal of pride in the accomplishments that three consecutive Republican Senates have delivered for the American people.

In 2014, our majority was elected to check and balance the last years of a lameduck Presidency.

In 2016, we were reelected to help ignite a real, all-American economic comeback, rebuild and modernize our military, and fight for the forgotten corners of our country. Together with the Trump administration and a Republican House, we did just that.

In 2018, we were rehired again on those strong results, especially the historic job market for American workers and our commitment to the judiciary.

And now, even as voters chose President Biden for the White House, they simultaneously shrunk Democrats' House majority and elected this evenly divided Senate.

The 2020 election was as far from a sweeping mandate for ideological transformation as any election we have seen in modern history. The American people stunned the so-called experts with the number of Republicans they sent to the House and to the Senate to make sure commonsense conservative values have a powerful say in the government.

So our side is ready to share ideas and work with the Biden administration, applying common sense to find common ground for the common good.

But if and when our Democratic friends depart from common sense, when they retreat from common ground or their proposals harm the common good, then we will use the power the American people have given us to push for what we think is right.

On the Biden administration's very first day, it took several big steps in the wrong direction. The President reentered the failed Paris climate agreement, a terrible bargain that would set us up to self-inflict major economic pain on working American families with no assurance that China or Russia would honor their commitments. In fact, the United States has already been reducing carbon emissions, while China and other nations in the agreement have kept increasing theirs. Rejoining will just set us up to kill American jobs while our competitors continue to roar on by.

The President also unilaterally canceled the Keystone XL Pipeline. The day-one priority was to kill thousands of American jobs, including union jobs, disappoint our strong ally Canada, and reverse some of our progress toward energy security. This is a project that the liberal Canadian Government and Prime Minister Trudeau support—an investment in North American energy. Even the Obama State Department concluded it would not harm the climate. But because canceling the pipeline project just feels like the green thing to do, the new administration killed all these jobs. This was not the day one the American workers deserved.

The new administration has also sketched out a massive proposal for blanket amnesty that would gut enforcement of American laws while creating huge new incentives for people to rush here illegally at the same time. This kind of failed approach will invite another humanitarian crisis on our border and privilege powerful interests ahead of American workers.

For all the talk about norms within government, last night brought a truly unprecedented move at the National Labor Relations Board. The President fired the Board's independent general counsel almost a year before the end of his term. Even leftwing activists called the unprecedented move "aggressive."

Now, it is still early. There is still plenty of time for President Biden to remember that he does not owe his election to the far left. The President can and should refocus his administration on creating good-paying American jobs, not sacrificing our people's livelihoods to liberal symbolism. Senate Republicans will be ready, willing, and eager to help make that happen.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The majority whip.

#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am happy to be standing here today on the Senate floor during an exciting week and one that really provides us with hope for the future. I welcome President Biden and, of course, Vice President HARRIS to their new roles and look forward to their leadership that they will provide in these difficult times.

We can never forget that America is still in the midst of a deadly pandemic. Tragically, we lost over 400,000 Americans. In my State of Illinois, we have seen more than 1 million COVID cases, and 18,398 of my neighbors and friends in Illinois have died due to this deadly virus.

As we continue to try to stop the spread of this pandemic, I am glad that the vaccine rollout has been able to help some in my State—537,000 people in Illinois have received vaccines. It is a refreshing and long overdue sight to have the President and White House fully engaged in addressing this pandemic with a focus on science and racial equity.

On his first day yesterday, President Biden signed several important Executive actions, including instituting a mask mandate for all Federal facilities and buildings.

Secondly, he moved to rejoin the World Health Organization. This was one of the most confounding decisions by the Trump administration. In the midst of a global pandemic, President Trump opted to remove the United States from the World Health Organization, which was focusing on the spread of this pandemic and its impact on nations around the world.

Finally, President Biden created an office to coordinate a national response to the pandemic. Today he is outlining a strong plan to provide a national strategy to liberate us from this threat.

I must say that I was disappointed in the transition when at first President Trump refused to acknowledge that he lost the election, and then his Agencies dragged their feet when it came to informing the Biden administration of the status quo in America. Thus,