

2020-Early 2021, or How I Learned to (Never) Stop Worrying and “Love” Global Anxiety

Published in Winter Edition of Harbinger Asylum

“I don’t know where I’m going from here, but I promise it won’t be boring!” Before this commences any further, I would like to be selfish for a brief moment and set aside a few words for David Bowie. Earlier this month marked the fifth year of his absence from this planet, as well as what would have been his seventy-fourth birthday. We have lost many artists in many respected fields over the years, including Gil Scott-Heron, Leonard Cohen, Selena, Prince, Greg Lake, and countless others. David Bowie meant and still means a great deal to me as a creator, as well as a human being. The bounty of work and tremendous impact he left behind for his musical contemporaries and his descendants cannot be unmatched. Furthermore, and I hate to seem melodramatic, but if it was not for David Bowie’s words and aural pleasures, I would not be on Earth, existing in this physical life. Around the middle of my sophomore year of high school, I was ready to take my own life. By some stroke of luck, Bowie’s music was able to reach me at a time when friends and family could not. My inner voice heard the dulcet tones, became encircled by musical wonderment, and whispered to me, “You are *not* finished yet.” I owe him an infinite amount of gratitude for many silent gestures, including: introducing me to a number of gifted artists from around the globe, helping me to embrace the full power of diversity and eclectic nature within the arts, and breathe new life in me. This newfound breath of life added a dash of a unique sense of being, as well as a sense of self. David, wherever you are in the Cosmos, ‘thank you’ would be an understatement. As Scott Walker said to you on your fiftieth birthday, “I’ll have a drink to you...on the other side of midnight.”

Until last Wednesday, a small boy isolated himself in a toy store the size of a mansion. He remained as cloistered as humanly possible. His mother insisted that they leave and that he could not have the toy he so desperately desired. His mother tried every tactic that her parental skills could manifest, but to no avail. It was useless. The boy simply refused to leave. This situation was the only analogy I could concoct to describe D*****d T***p, the former President of the United States. So much is to be said about the ‘actions’ within his presidency, the lack of tact he blatantly showed, as well as the pomposity of his overall demeanor. My father gave the best description of T***p. He said, “He is a caricature of himself.” Even repeating that remark aloud brings me to tears induced by hysterical laughter. The truth is evident, as well as being stranger than fiction. It is worth noting that while I am unashamedly writing this way about the jive turkey that slightly over half of the country voted for, I am by no means glorifying the opposition, either. I daren’t bring up my explicit political views as an individual to the table, mainly because they are beyond jaded to begin with. While I have issues that I stand for and against, I see no reason for them to reach the public eye when the very country I reside in is more divided than united in more ways than one. I have not sided with either major party since I can remember, but I contribute as a citizen in any way possible. An individual votes with their heart,

their mind, and their gut instinct. If and when we become more united, I may feel more inclined to discuss said views.

Like numerous other political skeptics, I will be watching in the wings to see how this newfangled presidency unfolds. Whatever ensues, I am thankful that the T***p has officially left the building. After the insurrection, there was absolutely nothing that could salvage his title...not after every insignificant syllable that was uttered from his lips. I am almost envious of textbook writers and young schoolchildren in the sense that this particular chapter of American and world history will be taught in such a way that will never be forgotten. In addition to being an insult to the country, the name (and word) T***p will permanently instill terror into the hearts of many, as well as secretive and public elation for others. It was a horror comedy film with so many sequels that it became an internationally known franchise. I demand a refund for the loss of my brain cells. There is one beautifying factor of T***p's brief tenure as president, one that I will miss for as long as I live: the bottomless pit of free entertainment, as well as the entertainment value that followed. From the endless piles of memes and song parodies to the talented people who can impersonate him and his arsenal of mannerisms, wit knows no end. Fun fact: T***p was the only president who blocked people on Twitter. I am quite jealous of the few people I know who have earned that badge of honor. Then again, Twitter bestowed an even *bigger* honor on the Chief Blocker himself. Oh, digital glory! May this new chapter unify us in boundless fits of laughter. I also feel the need to remind you that everything displayed is merely my opinion. My words are not gospel, despite the outrage nation we live in where the attitude of one too many individuals is, "Everyone is entitled to *my* opinion, and your belief system is lower than dust."

After viewing the inauguration and the host of multifaceted artists who received the *genuine* honor of performing before Joe Biden, Kamala Harris (First Woman and First POC Vice President...absolutely incredamazing), their diverse team, and the entire nation, one person's distinctive performance stuck with me. It was not Jennifer Lopez. It was not Lady Gaga. It was none other than Amanda Gorman, the youngest National Youth Poet Laureate and the youngest poet to recite at an inauguration. I regret to say that prior to this reading, I have only heard her name being spoken during conversations about my literary contemporaries. After watching selected recitations and reading certain compositions, her piece 'The Hill We Climb' sent my cranium and third eye for a loop. Not only was her voice full of conviction and soul, but the words she expelled screamed truths we longed to hear. From moments of her history to the current state of affairs, 'The Hill We Climb' is the epitome and living embodiment of human sensibility, a wakeup call that not only belongs to this country, but the entire blue-green globe that we inhabit. We are but mere guests in this living, breathing sphere and it is our duty to preserve it beyond our abilities. After all, as the old adage goes, "The Earth does not belong to us. We belong to the Earth." Amanda Gorman's honor as an inaugural poet stems from a prestigious role that only a small handful of others have played. They are as follows: Robert Frost, Maya Angelou, Miller Williams, Elizabeth Alexander, and most recently, Richard Blanco. Besides the usual set of messages, musical performances, praise, and other inauguration rituals, the poem is said to exemplify who we are as a country and the actions we *should* be taking. It is a gentle, yet harsh reminder of the matters that are and the matters that will be. In this century, 'The Hill We Climb' is nothing short of needed, the jolt of electricity to shock us back to life after everything we have endured thus far. In addition to the multitude of medical staff members and frontline workers receiving the vaccines they so rightfully earned, Amanda Gorman is a hero

in my book. How she recited her piece will forever be ingrained in my mind. May this excerpt from her poem affect you the same way, Dearest Readers.

*“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.”*

January 21-23, 2021