

# We the Peoples|

**AMANDA GORMAN**

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We the Peoples – Global Leadership Awards 2024

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Thank you all for that very warm welcome. Thank you to Her Excellency for her heartfelt bio, truly the peak of my career, and to the United Nations [Foundation] for this esteemed honor. It is truly an honor to be here, amongst some of the most impactful leaders and advocates of our time.

Many of you may know me as the poet from Joe Biden's inauguration four years ago, but one of my proudest accomplishments in my entire career was that in 2021, I was fortunate to partner with the Estée Lauder Companies to found Writing Change. Writing Change is an initiative designed to advance literacy as a pathway to equality, access, and social change, by powering young voices.

Today, Writing Change proudly supports ten non-profit organizations across the United States: 52nd Street Project; American Library Association; ArtStart; Girls Write Now; Latinx KidLit Book Festival; Make Way for Books; MIGIZI; WriteGirl; We Need Diverse Books; and Wide Angle Youth Media. I want to personally thank my friend and colleague, Anna Klein, who is here tonight as my guest, who was the mother and shepherd of this entire initiative— it wouldn't be possible without you.

I would also like to dedicate this award to young changemakers in the world, some of which I know are here tonight. In a time that is filled with so much fear, mistrust, and doubt, it's more important than ever that the people in this room lead the way. When I think about uniting our strength, I think not just about allying around what makes us strong, but having compassion for where we're vulnerable. Only then can we be the light, if only we're brave enough to be in. Thank you again to the United Nations Foundation for this honor, and a big congratulations to my fellow honorees.

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