

## Founders, All

*Founders Day 2009*

Do you ever feel it? Everything that holds us  
up? The oak roots beneath the quad long

as canoes, the fine hairs of myrtle entangling  
like the hair of the first girls, the groundbreakers,

the May Queen and her court spinning beneath us,  
a carousel of Persephones, their pink ribbons

twisting like sinew? Do you notice the gray,  
unremarkable mortar, the fingerprints of brick

layers, artisans of stone and cement, makers  
of the road that leads us here, blood-colored,

arterial? Do you feel them holding us in their  
cupped hands like the black filaments inside

poppies hold bees? Do you remember  
the remembered names? Stone and Lucinda,

Eldred and Perry, Brooks and Hicks and Stowe  
and Hoban. Light and Jones. Wilson-Oyelaran.

Wood, Arnold, Schmeichel. Griffin, Smith, Hilberry.  
Wickstrom, Balch. Diebold, Manstrom, Pattison.

Ashley, Cinka. VanSweden, Weathers, Maust.  
Stryker. LaChance. Williams. Crocket. Parfet.

Do you hear it? Stone, Maust, Weathers, Wood:  
Stone, Moss, Weather, Wood—what holds us up,

the elements we live by. Names dusted in chalk,  
in plaster, in flour, shimmering pollen, names

honeyed and buzzing. The quad, a river of entrances  
and departures, robes flowing continuous as water,

mortars tossed and flying above the current, dark  
angular birds. We who stay drink from that river.

We who sweep, type, teach, scour, subtract, plant,  
plan, mow, hoe, sow, reap, weep. Do you feel it,

the Foundation? Rock solid, then solidly rocking,  
then spiraling, a double-helix, a hive. Do you see it?

The foundling at the heart of it all, dreaming  
in her floating basket? Shall we, then, gather

at the river? Build a small fire? Bring our cellos,  
our sonorous bells? Our Petri dishes, our paints,

our pipes, our gold-edged pages? Our scissors,  
our seeds, our ink, our hands. We must, together,

bring the foundling of ourselves to shore. Us,  
as the oak leaves above us bud and green and fall.

We are Founders, all.