Forward and Back  

*Commemorating the 250th Anniversary of the College of Charleston*

It started with barracks refashioned to hold students instead of soldiers. It started with water to halt the fires the city could not yet extinguish. It started with cornerstone, with brick built by black hands who were not allowed to enter the very halls they erected, not allowed to sign their own names, except by fingerprints in the bricks that adorn downtown markets and homes along cobblestone and herringbone. We built this college under Charleston’s eyes—

with her wreath and scepter, her promises to defend us. Her words, *Wisdom is liberty*,

as people decided who was allowed to learn and who was not.  

250 years later we’re still learning, still standing through revolutions and wars, hurricanes and floods, presidents and educators shaping the future for all of us who walk and sometimes stumble on these paths well-worn from years of use.

Let us look forward, let the Spanish moss fall as we trace our hands along the brick, mortar,

and stone that hold the bittersweet history of our ancestors who built towards a better world here, with all of us in it.