

**Fourth Grade Recognition
Head of School Welcome
May 26, 2021**

Welcome, fourth grade students and parents and Lower School faculty and friends. I am so pleased to be with all of you here today at this recognition of our wonderful MICDS Class of 2029 as you, students, complete your time in The Beasley School.

I am looking forward to hearing your poems this morning, and with that anticipation in mind I thought it would be fitting to share with you a favorite poem of my own by a man named Billy Collins. Before I read it, I will note just two details for your information as you listen to his words. First, a peony is a flowering plant distinguished by its big, beautiful pink or pinkish blooms. There are several peonies, in fact, who make a home right outside the Lower School Office where you meet with Mrs. O'Toole. And second, when Collins refers to a "glass paperweight," he is imagining a winter snow globe with a little house in it that one would shake to simulate snowfall.

Collins' poem is called *Today*.

If ever there were a spring day so perfect,
so uplifted by a warm intermittent breeze

that it made you want to throw
open all the windows in the house

and unlatch the door to the canary's cage,
indeed, rip the little door from its jamb,

a day when the cool brick paths
and the garden bursting with peonies

seemed so etched in sunlight
that you felt like taking

a hammer to the glass paperweight
on the living room end table,

releasing the inhabitants
from their snow-covered cottage

so they could walk out,
holding hands and squinting

into this larger dome of blue and white,
well, today is just that kind of day.

Our spring this year, more than that of any other year I can remember, is bursting with hope for the future. Aren't we all in this moment like canaries being liberated from our cages? Aren't we all like the residents of the little snow-globe house in Collins' poem, suddenly released not only from winter, but from the long period of isolation from one another and from our everyday lives that we have endured? The title that Collins gives to his poem is *Today*, and today is a day especially full of hope for you students—for the end of the school year, for the summer season that awaits, for your return to MICDS as fifth graders in the fall, and for the excitement of your Middle School experience over the next four years. "If ever there were a spring day so perfect," Collins says in his [poem](#), "well, today is just that kind of day"—and I agree! It is wonderful to be with you.