1. a : something that is inscribed; as on a monument or book
   b : epigraph
   c : the wording on a coin, medal, seal, or currency note.

2. the dedication of a book or work of art.

3. a note, as a dedication, that is written and signed by hand in a book.
When I volunteered to put this zine together, I wanted to find a way for alumni to show the graduating class some love, to pass on some knowledge, and to give some hope as you leave Macalester. I had a clear vision, but I didn’t have a name. Thinking through the name, I choose Inscription.

This name speaks to the monumental moments of the LGBTQ heroes we know. The words, thoughts, and ideas that they have inscribed on our lives and our futures as LGBTQ people. The ways they have dedicated their work, their lives, for the betterment of LGBTQ people.

This name speaks to the loves notes we have inscribed for you, the words we have dedicated to you. All of these words here are filled with so much love. Congratulations and I hope you enjoy.

- Raynise Cange ‘14
DON'T BE AFRAID TO BE YOURSELF EVEN IN THE MOST HOSTILE ENVIRONMENTS. IT'S SHOCKING JUST HOW MANY ALLIES YOU'LL ENCOUNTER.
I have a friend who receives gifts of anatomical hearts from her love.

I am convinced it's because they know the secret to thriving as queer people is knowing where your heart lies.

Sometimes in your pocket as a shiny piece of metal, other times it's the communities you build that will be there for you giving you all the love you need for your heart to beat.
Your Handy Queer/Trans Future-Making Graduation Questionnaire

As you graduate, some of you know what you’re doing next, some don’t. Either way, none of us know what’s going to happen in the next ten years, or twenty or more. But by imagining great futures, we can give ourselves the energy to create them.

When I graduated in 1993, I couldn’t have imagined a lot of the things that happened in the 25 years since then; most of them good, some of them pretty complicated. On the whole many things are unimaginably better and the issues we still need to work on have been highlighted.

In 1993, Kate Bornstein’s *Gender Outlaw* hadn’t been published yet. And we still have Kate! But now we also have Janet Mock, Laverne Cox, our two wonderful black trans Minneapolis City Council members: Andrea Jenkins and Phillipe Cunningham. Prominent non-binary people like Amandla Stenberg, Roes (Angel Haze), CN Lester. (There are way too many people to list here, but, hey, now we also have Google so you can go find people really easily!)

When I graduated from Macalester, some of my future wants and needs included: having a girlfriend and a career in writing and being comfortable in my body. As a person who’d helped to run the (then) GLBU (gay, lesbian, bi union) for two years, I wanted all my LGBTQIA+ friends (including those I’ll never meet) to be treated fairly, kindly and with love.
Now, 25 years later, I have most of that and a lot more. Same-sex marriage happened. California added a legal nonbinary option for driver’s licenses and birth certificates! This spring a U.S. District Judge ruled that transgender people are a protected class. Despite that, violence against trans people is still shamefully high, especially violence against trans women of color, but now we’re tracking it, reporting it, and creating more resources for trans youth and people of all ages.

I don’t know what’s going to happen in the next 25 years, but I suspect it will be a wild journey. As you embark on this, here are some questions for you to keep you dreaming and designing our future world together:

Who are a few role models you want to grow up like? (Yes, fictional characters are very much included!)

What do you want for yourself in these areas of your life?

Creativity
Play
Love

Contribution
Embodiment

What values will keep you on track?

If things get really hard, what will keep you going?

If things get great, what will keep you grounded?

Once you’ve filled this out, you might choose to keep it in front of you or file it away so you can discover it 25 years from now and be filled with joyful nostalgia. I’m looking forward to what we’ll all create together!
I didn’t know what I was until Macalester. For years I thought I was straight because in my head I saw sexuality as three isolated points. Two years in, surrounded by Macalester’s diversity of identities, I realized I didn’t need to be easily definable to be queer. I came out, to others, and myself and I formed a beautiful family. Now, I don’t ask permission to be queer. I’m out and I’m proud. And while I’ve moved away from Mac, I carry myself with the expectation I’ll be loved regardless of what I am. And it is wonderful.

The people you’ve already found will not stop loving you. In the next few years remember that you deserve to be loved. Take the lessons you learned at Mac and build yourself new families, make your own spaces. Expect to be loved. Take the world into your queer hands, and shape it.
Dear LGBTQ+ friends

who are about to be graduates:

Thank you...

for your honesty, both to yourself and others.
for your bravery in self-discovery and reaching out to others.
for your visibility.
for supporting one another and building a community.
for being vulnerable, for that is a source of great power.
for embracing love.
for learning about the world and helping others to learn.
for your brilliance as you move forward into a new life.

You will inspire more people than you can possibly know.

Adrian Moron, 1991 [he/him/his]
i graduated last year, & by most metrics, i’m a disappointment. i didn’t get a cool job, internship, or even a grad school offer. as a working class kid from mississippi, i never did feel much sense of belonging at macalester — i was no future lawyer, anyway — but conversely as a gay/trans kid, college was supposed to be my chance to flourish.

mac did hold space for me to grow, but support was often tainted with condescension: this place is the most accepting community you’ll ever find, so make the most of it — just don’t expect the same outside the “bubble.” for people like you, it’s all downhill from here. no wonder i felt lost after graduating, like the love for my identity & community that i’d fostered for years was suddenly worthless because it wouldn’t get me a position the parent newsletter could brag about. still, i couldn’t bring myself to care about anything else.

so, last august, i said “fuck it.” i bought a one-way ticket to a city 3800 miles away, stopped checking emails, ditched my phone. i joined a real-world community of trans people where we provided everything for each other, doing really amazing work: getting people off the streets & out of isolation, protesting medical abuses & sourcing hormones for those the clinics had failed. i put my energy exclusively towards caring for others & i was cared for in return.
financially, professionally, it was a stupid decision. but it was the right decision. i was already a disappointment anyway: what is my transness, my queerness, if not disappointing others’ expectations of how i should exist in the world? by refusing to live up to respectable expectations, i’ve found friends, love, a home, community, purpose. others can judge me a disappointment for this, but never a failure.

however wonderful your time at macalester has been, know that there is so much more waiting for you beyond this place, & remember you need nobody’s approval to pursue it. just as we choose how to define ourselves as lgbtq people, we can set our own terms for success.

congratulations, & good luck!
Hi, there!

Congratulations on your graduation.

_So, hey, before you start worrying that you've "peaked":_ 

**COLLEGE WAS NOT "THE BEST YEARS OF YOUR LIFE."**

The best years of your life are ahead of you. You have new journeys to make, new people to meet, new people to be. Being at Macalester helped you build one of the best foundations you could have for these great years to come. The greatest adventures I've had since I graduated have all been traceable back to my time at Mac.

The link is never what I expected. I did an embarrassing thing to impress a young woman my senior year and found the spiritual path I've been walking for 17 years. I took a class on a whim my junior year, and it's defined the course of my life as an artist. I haven't seen my Macalester girlfriend (you know, the one I thought I'd be with forever) since I graduated, but her freshman roommate is one of my most valued writing buddies (who told me about a writing community, which led me to an event, which is where I met my wife).
**LIFE IS MORE ZIGZAG THAN STRAIGHT LINE.**

Even if you're the kind of person who has absolutely mapped out your life, you'll encounter things you **COULDN'T** have anticipated, that don't appear on any map. Those aren't calamities. They're opportunities (side quests, if you will). I invite you to enjoy them. (And if you're more like me, who's never mapped out a bit of your life, these sideways slides are surprisingly good times to give your life some direction).

**AND I HOPE YOU HAVE FUN—WHATEVER JOURNEYS YOU MAKE.**
CONGRATULATIONS

You made it! You have built and accomplished so much during your time at Macalester and for that you should be so proud. It is a triumph to have gotten this far and every future moment you pass will be another triumph, though each moment may not feel like the feat it is. I can assure you I did not feel victorious when I left my graduate program halfway through my degree, nor did I appreciate the massive existential crisis that followed or the subsequent 9 months of unemployment. However, I am still kicking (so are you) and that's what matters!

Among other forces, the Macalester LGBTQ community of students, faculty, staff, and alumni and the LGBTQ community I found afterward ensured my survival and supported me through this enormous transition. The family you've already started building for yourself as an adult will see you through your worst and celebrate you at your best. Do your best to stay connected to this family however dispersed you may become. Send them snaps of your pets, tag them in a vaguely inappropriate meme, send them a thank you email for how they've impacted your life, go out for tea, attend their theme party, attend their next big presentation, comment on their nostalgic post, take a road trip together, marry them - however you do it, DO IT. Keep in touch, and keep building your family.

Again, congratulations, and may your next adventure be triumphant and full of family.
Q: How do you define thriving?

Thriving means that things are going well in my daily life; that stress is at its minimum. It means I have plenty of energy to make my dreams happen. It took some time, but I can say I am **THRIVING**.

Q: How do you define hope?

Hope means to keep moving forward even when surrounded by fear and doubt. We’ve been taught to doubt ourselves for so long, so push through even when it’s there. Take a risk on yourself.

J., 2014 [SHE/HER/HERS]
Not a single one of them is queer. Fifty professors in my grad school program and not a single one of them is queer. A professor will talk about her husband or his wife and I will be amazed at just how much straightness permeates my new life. I step into a professor’s office and the conventionality is palpable. Nothing radical about the way they dress, speak, or move. Nothing radical on their door or desk and no rainbows. Just a wedding photo.

I tried to care about my queerness during my first semester of college. I went to Lavender Reception and I went to QU a couple times. I never left feeling any drive to dig into my queer identity or actively seek queer friends, so for four years I did neither. With lesbian moms and five queer older siblings, I did not feel that college needed to be my refuge from a harsh straight world.

I shed no tears at Lavender Graduation. It was a very nice ceremony, which I appreciated very much, but I did not feel moved. My queerness just meant so little to me because I lived without the magnitude of wounds many other queer people carry.
I took for granted the plurality of queer people at Macalester, including my closest mentor, my academic advisor, several other professors, the Dean of Students, seemingly a third of the student affairs staff, and the Provost. I did not know how much this representation helped me feel at ease with my queerness until I went to grad school and became surrounded by straight people. Since leaving Macalester, I’m not sure I have met a single gay man with a PhD. I now monitor my mannerisms and vocal production to an extent I never reached at Macalester. I’m self-conscious about being a gay man.

Wherever you’ll be after Mac, I hope there are queer people. If there are not, or if you feel compelled for any other reason, please feel welcome to contact me.

I want to express that it’s really okay if your queer identity was not particularly salient for you in college. It’s okay if you never went to QU. It’s okay if most of your friends weren’t queer. It’s okay if you don’t even know where the GSRC is. It’s okay if you’ve never gone to Pride. You’re still queer.
to thrive:

to evolve from being to becoming

SEEN and AFFIRMED
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO NOW IS BE YOURSELF.
I logged into Facebook on the F train and I saw a friend, who I had been meaning to have drinks with since moving to New York three years ago, was moving to Seattle. Like me, she is a queer educator. And it made so much sense that we would connect. But schedules are always filled. Whether it’s grad school, grading, or those pesky parent teacher conferences.

There I sat on an emptier than usual F train into Manhattan, two weeks before my 26 birthday, thinking what else have I missed? Besides regular check-ups that my parents soon-to-end health insurance would’ve covered and drinks with strong acquaintances waiting to become friends, what else have I not taken the time to attend to?

Every year out of Macalester, your world is going to change. There will be new perspectives you gain from life experiences. If you would’ve asked me last year, “what’s something you wish someone told you before graduating” it would’ve been something different and next year it will also change, but this year, I wish someone would have told me is “take your time.”
I don’t mean slow down. I mean take your time, time that you carve out for you. It’s your time, not your bosses or your professors. It is yours. Not to be all political, but capitalism ain’t set-up for us to enjoy life. There is always a reminder to be productive, earn money, build your career. But resist that. Take your time. Use it for drinks with old college acquaintances. Use it to go rock climbing. Or to learn the piano. Take your time for you. Don’t treat life like a footrace.

The next day, after my F train realization and during my Sweatcoin inspired walk from Flatbush to Crown Heights, I saw a person who looked like a student in my fourth period being chased by four police officers, three with guns drawn. A police officer running by me reminded me how fleeting our lives are. In the next few years, don’t be a passerby in your own life, don’t watch it whisk away. TAKE YOUR TIME, for you, for your dreams.
In 2017, Ariel Estrella ’15 started Facing Forward an alumni zine for students of color and Merita Bushi ’14 started Honoring the Journey Ahead an alumni zine for first generation college students. After students received the first issues of these zines, there was a conversation with the staff organizer of the zines, Associate Director of Alumni Engagement Neely Heubach about the need to uplift the voices of LGBTQ alumni. And so there in May of 2017 the idea of Inscription was born.

When Neely asked me to put together the zine, I was thrilled. This zine is a labor of love from alumni. This is us remembering the specialness of Macalester. Volume I will be presented at Lavender Graduation on May 9th 2018. This event is an annual graduation for the LGBTQ students at Macalester.

As a note “LGBTQ” is used as a way to provide solidarity for the different identities. It is understood that the term itself is not a preferred means of definition for everyone. A submission to Inscription does not imply that the author identifies as or with the term LGBTQ.

Thank you to all the alumni who shared their stories, wisdom, and voices for the first Inscription. Congratulations to the Lavender graduates and all who are celebrating you during this heartfelt ceremony. I am honored to have been giving the opportunity to provide this small gift of love to you.

RAY(NISE) CANE, 2014 [THEY/THEM/THEIRS]