Macalester College Essay

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How did you first learn about Macalester?

I received mail from Macalester and thought it was clever and interesting, so I sent a reply card to receive a packet with more information.

Macalester is a community that includes people from many different backgrounds, some who have lived around the world and others who have lived in one place their entire lives. Please write an essay about how your background, experiences, or outlook might add to the Mac community, academically and personally. (250-500 words)

I sank into my bed as tears streamed down my cheeks. Gripping *1984* tightly against me, I brooded about the problem again. When I came upon the concept of solipsism in the book, I asked my mom the meaning. Her explanation caused my world to come crashing down around my ears, with no way to refute it. "But I see the world; I see you! I know it exists. It has to."

I heard the futility of my logic, and it frustrated me beyond belief. The idea that I could be alone in the world alarmed me. Even having the conversation with another person is like a living paradox.

No one that I talked to could relieve my distress over this issue, and it consumed my thoughts until I had a realization. While this possibility could be true, there would be no way to know. Maybe if the world feels real for my entire existence, it is. Regardless of whether the universe is completely manufactured by my senses and all that exists is my mind floating in space, my experiences are real to me. Until I find out otherwise, I will proceed as if my concept of life is intact.

Such a philosophical crisis of identity and being is as consuming and pertinent for me as any other crisis. I need to understand how these ideas work and relate to my life. Deeply considering a concept, even when there’s no solution, helps me to feel engaged and connected in the world.

In my life, learning is not only central, but also fun. I enjoy arguments with my class about what a chair is, that continue after class ends, or learning about the Singularity and wanting to understand all aspects to be prepared. My mom will discuss philosophy with me late into the night, and my dad will elaborate on my queries about inflation. We get excited about the workings of the world and revel in the experience of unanswered questions. My goal is to attain that experience as much as possible, to have more revelations such as this journey into solipsism. I want to hear the perspectives of others, to learn from those who have lived around the world. I want to be around other engaged, thoughtful students and have fascinating discussions. We can all learn and wonder and wonder together.