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A Conversation with Suzanne Lamoureux Kriesant

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GLBTQ Oral History Project

(Phone Ringing)

Susanne Lamoureux-Kreisant: Hello?

Julia Palmerino: Hi Suz, it's Julia Palmerino calling!

SLK: Hi! How are you?

JP: Good, how are you?

SLK: I'm doing alright, doing alright.

JP: Great! Thank you so much for being willing to do this, and for being super patient with the technological challenges that have come along with it!

SLK: It's not a problem at all, not at all.

JP: Great! Now before we get started with some of the interview questions and some of the discussion, I just need you to verbally consent to the Deed of Gift and to the Interview Consent Form..

SLK: Yes..

JP: So could you just state for the record that you consent?

SLK: I read both of them very carefully, I consent to both, the gift of my story and my name can be used, my graduation year can be used, which is '98. Also, my voice recording, as well as the transcript, can be available to your...repository. I'm fine with it going out into the world.

JP: Great, thank you so much.

JP: Alright, so first I just kinda wanted to start with a little bit about how you decided to come to Holy Cross, and kind of what was going on when you were at Holy Cross, so can you tell me what, kind of, convinced you to come to Holy Cross in the first place? Why did you decide to attend?

SLK: Well.. I was living in Chattanooga, Tennessee. My family is from the New York City area, but right before I went to high school we moved down to Chattanooga, and my parents were very adamant about me going to school out of state. And my father picked a couple of schools for me to apply to, I picked a couple, and really what it was to please my dad. My dad said if I was smart enough and had the money I would have gone to Holy Cross. So that's what actually brought me to Holy Cross. I'm very grateful for that though because the education I got there was far better than any of the other schools that I could have picked, or that I did get accepted in to. Just the interactions with the professors. Phenomenal. The interactions just, on campus... I

was able to do things I would not have been able to elsewhere. I was able to put together a seven song EP and record it up in the studio that's above the concert hall. I was able to, I had a Zen Buddhism seminar that was just mind blowing, opened my mind, opened my heart, opened my soul to new ways of thinking. And that benefited me, when I left school I was a programmer for a while, I was in New York City, watched the towers fall, and then I became a school teacher, and it was really my HC education that got me into the NYC teaching fellows program, and then I spent about a decade serving in Title I schools. So the idea of being Christ for others was definitely engrained during my time at Holy Cross and that continued all the way through to today.

JP: (acknowledging) uh-huh. Well that's great to hear, and I am actually a music major at Holy Cross, so I am very familiar with that studio you are referring to, so that's really cool.

SLK: Is Freida Flannery still there?

JP: No, no that name doesn't sound familiar.

SLK: (exclaiming) Ahh! It's been a while, it's been awhile. But I actually spent spring break my senior year in that studio, practically the entire spring break. I was so happy I had a card to get in there. So pleased! And I actually got second place in Battle of the Bands! It was me and.. Mike Foley. There were some very good things that I experienced because of Holy Cross. Now, socially, I had some more issues with interacting with the other students. And I think part of this comes down to discovering my sexuality, and that I was bisexual. I just didn't fit in. I wasn't, we called the "BPs", the beautiful people. I wasn't wearing the J. Crew skirts and the mules, and this was the late '90s so... I didn't seem to fit in, so I went in the opposite direction, I decided to be one of the outsiders. And I, there was a small group of us that found each other. I had crazy hair, I wore vampire teeth during class, always had a jar of peanut butter with me cause that's what I would eat, in the middle of class, just take a spoon. I worked in Kimball for three years, then I ended up working in the Pub/Crossroads my senior year, so, my family didn't come with much money, and I think that was part of it too! You know, I had a really, oh man, the car that I had my senior year was a piece of garbage! Oh my gosh! I mean it was Buick blue with rust accents. Had to drive with the windows open because, you know, it would leak carbon monoxide into the cabin. So, I was definitely one of the outsiders. But that's where the GBLT support group came into play, cause that's part of where I found my community of outsiders. And as things progressed through the several years I was in that group, we were then like "Wait a second, why can't we have a social group to support that part of ourselves?" I mean, there's groups on campus for people who are very athletic, very musical, well... my expression of gender and of desire is just as worthy as these other groups. And that's when we came up with the idea of ABiGALe. It really started in that, in Chaplain's Office we had the weekly support group. That kind of grew out from there. And I remember we even... because of course, the school was not necessarily happy that we wanted to do this. Although, being Jesuit, there is a much larger.. I guess, they are more open to new ideas, which is very, very helpful, especially when we are trying to figure out who we are. And to be able to have these conversations. And remember doing a symbolic walk past the President's office, I don't even think he was there that day, but just really saying "This is who we are, this is important, and this is an aspect of ourselves that needs to be celebrated." And I am very grateful that I was part of that.

JP: Well, that's great, thank you, thank you for sharing that with me. So you kind of touched on this, but can you tell me a little bit about what your transition from high school into Holy Cross was like?

SLK: Let's see, I kind of came from two worlds. I was still kind of from Mt. Vernon, New York, which kind of borders on the Bronx, and that's where I was four years before I came to Holy Cross, and then I lived in Chattanooga, and I was very active in youth ministry down there in Chattanooga, and music ministry in my local catholic community, and, I was really into music ministry where I felt that I was being used as an instrument of God's grace. That, the group I was with down in Chattanooga, we recorded everything we did, and there were times when people would come up to us (INAUDIBLE) faces thanking us, and we listened to the tapes, and it was garbage. So it was obvious that it wasn't our voices that were doing God's work, it was god. And I was hoping that going to a Catholic college I would have that same experience and, I didn't. And that, that was challenging for me because I thought that it was going to be... because down in Chattanooga it's the middle of the bible belt, and there's not that many Catholics so I really had to know my faith because, even though I went to a Catholic high school, I was still interacting with other people in my community who had no clue, so I had to do a lot of teaching. Just like "No, we don't worship Mary." If that was a big question, a lot of time, "Why do you worship..." No, we don't. She's just the mother of Jesus, ok? We honor her but we don't worship her. And so the Catholic community down there was extremely tight knit and extremely supportive, and in some ways picked up a lot of the, I guess, the characteristics of the other flavors of Christianity down there, so it was more about engagement, it was more about connection. Back when I was in New York, you know, you couldn't really understand the priest anyways, and you kinda sat in the back, it was more cradle Catholics. In Chattanooga, if you were Catholic you probably chose to be Catholic as an adult. So there was more of that deep connection and I did a lot of youth ministry, and I had a very close knit group of friends that really, we found each other on these retreats and through music ministry. And, I was hoping to find that at Holy Cross and I didn't. There was more cradle Catholics that were just brought up with it, this is what we do, we get up, dress, go to church Sunday night, it was more like a performance than it was ministry. And that was hard for me to make that transition. And that actually got me looking into... well one of my favorite classes was anthropology of religion, where I got to explore other manifestations of connection with the divine. And that has brought me all the way through to today. I am no longer a practicing Catholic but I am a reiki healer. And, I've done a lot of teaching to other people, whether they be Pagan, Buddhist, Christian, and I've been able to help them find their truth. So that aspect of spirituality never left me, it just changed its name. So I would call myself spiritual, I don't belong to any specific religion, but I am connected to the divine. And it was wonderful. Especially, that, it was Prof, Lewis in his Zen Buddhism seminar, there was like ten of us, if that. And we really got a chance to explore other ways to connect with the divine, and that was huge for me. (INAUDIBLE) So I come to Holy Cross, what I am expecting is not what's there, and I start hanging out with well, I'd call them freaks. I call myself a freak at that time. You know, Doc Martins, dye you hair, drink every Tuesday and Thursday and on the weekends, I kinda got into that, and I ended up falling in love with one of my best friends, and this is really where I found that my attraction to people was not restricted by gender. And, she was the first person I ever came out to. She was so happy for me, she gave me a hug, and that kind of confused me, I was really happy that, you know, I got such a

favorable response from her, but it confused the heck out of me. Because I said well wait a second, does she? Is she? Is this a possibility? And, there's actually some poetry that I wrote in that time that I would like to share with you, if that's ok?

JP: Yes, my professor actually shared with the whole class the one you wrote "Call Me Ryan", and we were all very moved by it, so I would definitely love to hear that. I have one more question about, kind of, coming in to Holy Cross, and then we will kind of get into that, your actual coming out story, and it's definitely so interesting that you kind of documented the experience in that way. Ok, so this ones just kind about the global climate at the time. SO, you were a student from, you said you graduated in '98, so from '94-'98. What was happening in the world at that time?

SLK: What was happening in the world? To be honest... I didn't pay attention. I wasn't watching the news, I wasn't reading newspapers. I was more focused on where I was, and just figuring out who I was. Because from 18-22 trying to say, "well who do I want to be in this world? Where is my place? What am I supposed to do?" Now, I didn't declare my major until the very beginning of my senior year. I chose psychology, without even taking a psych class at Holy Cross! There was an Intro to Psych class I took, you know, the summer between my sophomore and junior year in high school in Chattanooga. And so I believe the Gulf War was still going on, maybe just ending at that point. I didn't have any friends or family that were enlisted. So, I'm just trying to think. Smashing Pumpkins and Pearl Jam, music was more of my interaction with the world at that point. Yeah, those aren't the things I remember. But I remember the people that I met, and the conversations that I had, and the music that I played.

JP: That in and of itself is really interesting though, that music kind of, was what was defining your experience at the time, so thank you for sharing that. And then, you also kind of touched on this, and I'm just kind of curious about this also as a Holy Cross student being here now, what was the climate at Holy Cross like at the time.

SLK: Well, it was definitely you had the "BP," the Beautiful People, and then you had the rest of us. And I remember the other girls were trying so hard to fit in, you know. They would get their Holy Cross hats and then they'd wear them in the shower, and they'd put rubber bands on the brims and use sandpaper on them, and I was like "THAT'S NOT ME!" I never really wanted to fit in. I remember that there were just.... In fact I can see the tables in Kimball. There was a table that was just the Black Student Union, because there were only a handful of them. And then, you also had the Hispanic group. So you know each of them would kind of have a table, they'd kind of be close together, sometimes those groups mingled. But you know it really seemed like there was so much privilege. You got to the parking lot, and the cars that you would be seeing things that I could never even imagine. I mean, I went on a beer run for somebody once, I had turned 21 and, the deal was I got to drive their jaguar. And that was, like, that was my reward "ok ill buy you beer but I get to drive." And so, there just seemed to be there were so many students that were so, just didn't have a concept of money or of lack. There was, like, a lot of silver spoons. And, the few of us that were there on scholarships and on work study, it was definitely the Have and the Have Nots. And, I don't, I prefer to see somebody for who they are, not how much money they have in their bank account, and I think that's something else that kind of put me in the outsider category. I didn't have the money, I didn't understand what it meant, you know, to

get a car for your 16th birthday. No, that never happened. I got a car for, must have been, my godmother's husband's mother's old car and...oh man, that thing was a wreck! But it got me where I needed to go.! And at one point the brake lines went! Ahh that's right because I was living on Highland Avenue, I lived off off-campus, closer to WPI...

JP: Yeah, that's quite far away.

SLK: My senior year... Well I just kept thinking I was going to leave Holy Cross and go someplace else. Because although the education I was getting was excellent, I just felt like such an outsider, for many reasons. Some of the reason I have talked about already. So, I needed to live someplace, so a friend of mine was Air Force-ROTC, and the Air Force didn't have any group in Holy Cross at the time, they were at WPI, so that's why I ended up living over there. But at one point my car's brake lines completely had rusted out, and it was on Mt. St. James...

JP: Oh no...

SLK: And I'm pushing my foot to the floor trying to stop it, and thank god no accidents or anything, I got it fixed. But those types of things, the other students had no clue about. What does it mean to have a car that's falling apart on you because you rely on it, you gotta use it?

JP: Great, ok thank you that was really interesting. Ok, so now I want to talk a little bit about your coming out and being LGBTQ at Holy Cross. So, recognizing that coming out is certainly not a one-time event, you touched on this, but /I am wondering if you can tell me the story a little but more, when and how did you first come out?

19:49

SLK: Um well, it was my freshman year, we were in Mullydy, it was the fourth floor, and I used to go sit on the stairwell that goes up to the roof

JP: I know where that is!

SLK: It was a great place to play guitar too, cause man, great reverb. My voice sounded great in that hall! And I remember bringing my friend, who lived in the handicap room on four central. And she was, let's say, I was a freshman, she was a sophomore, and I brought her up there to tell her, and she was so happy for me, she gave me a big hug. You know, later that year, I came out to my dad, kind of almost as an accident, cause a friend of mine was very effeminate, a male, and my dad was kind of making fun of him. My dad's a whole other story, but anyway. He was making fun of him, and I was like "But he's my friend and he understands me." And my dad's asking questions, and I'm like "Well it's because I am bisexual and so is he." And the only thing dad said to me was "You better soft-sell that to your mother." So, you know, fast forward another year, I've become part of the GBLT support group, and I'm wearing a set of freedom rings, I'd just come home from... that was my sophomore year. And, mom, my mom asked me about these, the freedom rings I was wearing. And those were the ones, they were triangles of each color of the rainbow. Just on one of those ball necklaces that a friend of mine had given me. And my mom asked me about it, and I explained what the freedom rings were, that each ring

stands for a different expression of sexuality. And, my mom, who's very Catholic, and just, at that point you know.. my mom has her own issue which I'm not going to go into because that's her story, not mine, but my mother had made it very clear throughout time that a woman dating another woman, or being with another woman is wrong. And, she was like "I feel so sorry for gay people who will never know the true purpose of sex which is to have children." And it actually ended up being a big fighter between her and I, I took my car and left. First time ever getting pulled over by the cops, and it was because of a sticker, it had nothing to do with my driving. That was just, that day is definitely firmly ingrained, and, you know, I think my parents have forgotten about it, kind of tucked it away, it doesn't matter. Because, I am married to a man, I have had girlfriends throughout time, but never really brought them around my parents, never really told my parents much about them because they hadn't gotten to the point where I was moving in with them. So, I think... the Nile is not just a river in Egypt. And, that's, in some ways I understand why my parents are like that, that it is better for them to have a different view of me that has nothing to do with my sexuality. And just over time, it became more and more of a part of me that was just a part of me, and there was one point that I was dating this guy, and we kind of had an open relationship where if, I knew I didn't want to date any other guys than him, but if a girlfriend showed up in my life that, you know, I would go on hold with him and date the woman. And one of his friends came and told me how hurtful that was to him. And so, to not cause him hurt or cause him harm, I then told him "Ok, I am just with you", and I actually ended up being engaged to that guy for a couple of years, and still, you know this is at the beginning of AbiGALe too, so I was with this guy, he ended up breaking off the engagement later on, which was good, it wasn't a healthy relationship, and I had gotten diagnosed with multiple sclerosis six days before I moved to New York city, it was four days before I graduated. I was moving to NYC for this gentleman, and I was working with him for the next ten months. And, as soon as I got to NY he broke off this engagement. So that was a challenging time...

JP: I can imagine...

SLK: That was definitely... I had no clue. I had no clue where I would end up. But, because I had MS, because my energy is limited to an extent, I really had to choose where I put that energy. And that's why I became a teacher. I was tired of my precious energy making a board of directors rich. I was web application developer for the government, and when the towers fell and I was laid off the next month, I was like "Ok, I've got to figure this out." That started ten months living off of unemployment, and that's really when I first started dating women and just enjoying the differences. Because I had dated men for so long and not always the best of them, there's some assholes on that list. But its just, its just different. And there are some things that aren't exactly the same. I mean, love is love is love is love, but at the same time it is, its different, and there's actually a lot more baggage when I was dating another woman, because I didn't know the script. Ellen came out, I think during, while I was at holy Cross. You know, she was in the closet when I first got there. And... so really there wasn't any models of what female relationships could be, should be in our media, it was all hetero. And any time a gay character was around, it was very stereotypical. It was usually male, very effeminate. Like Will and Grace, I mean Friends was also really big at that time. But there really wasn't a model of what it meant to be in love with someone of the same gender in a healthy way. So my time of being unemployed, being single, and really, that was 2001, 2002, that was really a mind opening time for me, because I was able to finally be the person that I am, all of me. Including the fact that I love people, and

their gender expression is only a very tiny part of who they are, just like me! I would rather be seen as an amazing, artistic, spiritual person. And the fact that I am a woman is just a small part of many things that make me, me. And then when my husband showed up in my life, he is so extremely supportive, and absolutely accepts the fact that I love women as much as I love men, and he's been supportive of, you know, exploring that, and just being a whole person. And not just, you know, tucking away an aspect of me because the other person is not comfortable with it. No, my husband is comfortable with me, and is supportive of all of me, and I am very grateful. He just happens to be male. I mean, I... sometimes we say that he is a black lesbian in a man's body. And, it's kind of funny, but every time we have had friends who happen to be black and lesbians they are like...souls are the same as my husband. And, I've been very lucky, living in New York City let's see... that was '98 to 2007 was such a liberating time for me, because New York City, especially, I lived in the East Village, in the middle of that and, just the different types of people that you run into, it lets me see other examples of what it means to be a whole person. To now live in central Arkansas and... it's very conservative down here! And I just, I am an artist! After had to retire in 2012, I do animal portraits and I do religious art, as in like things having to do with the chakras, I also make jewelry, I do lots of things, so I kind of put the artist hat on and I'm like "Ok, I can let my freak flag fly!" Because I, artists traditionally over time don't have to fit into a mold.

JP: Right

SLK: So, I had wool dread locks all last summer, and I definitely got lots of stares and I loved it, I was like "I get to make my hair art!" So, you know it's still a process of unfolding, finding out who I am in relation to the world, what my calling is, what am I here to do, and I'm finally in a place where I have the freedom and the support I need to really be God's love present...and alive.

JP: Great, thank you. When did you kind of, first know that you were not fitting into that heterosexual mold, especially, you know, not having those role models and not having a script to follow, when did you first kind of have an indication, was it a specific experience or...

SLK: Yes, and it was early, it was very early on. Let's see, this is going to be public, so I am going to censor myself a little bit here. I was, let's say, very intimately involved with myself from a very early age. And that self love was usually motivated by images of women. And I mean, we are talking I was 6, 7, 8 years old. And it confused me so much, so much.

So, I always had that attraction women, and to be honest, I was uncomfortable as I, you know, going through puberty, I became uncomfortable and self-conscious around women in ways I wasn't around men. And even to this day, I don't really understand women that well. I may be one, but I don't... I tend to be shy, flustered... Especially if I find the woman attractive. So for me, it was very early on that I found the female form attractive, and that nurturing element, although I may not know how to interact with it, it still drew me in ways that the male form and male energy didn't.

JP: Ok, so would you say that when you came into Holy Cross, you kind of came in having terminology, the nomenclature of "I am bisexual, I kind of know that this is who I am"?

SLK: I was kind of getting there. I didn't know, it was still kind of nebulous, because you know, I wasn't allowed to think that way. You know, my mother had told me, and I remember exactly where we were when she told me that, you know, it's wrong for two women to be together. And it was just odd that my mom had told me, but that once again is her story, not mine. So I didn't understand it, it, I didn't give myself the opportunity to really think about it in that way because I was trying so hard to fit in. I had been with this boyfriend in high school that, it was an abusive relationship. So, you know trying to deal with that at the same time, it was probably about halfway through my freshman year, I had started seeing a therapist, up at uh.. what's the main campus center called?

JP: Hogan

SLK: Yeah, so I was seeing one of the therapists there and it was really through that and, you know, healing from the sexual assault and that gave me a safe place to start to explore that. And then I started going to the GLBT support group, and it was through that time that I really started formulating that concept or that identity that I am bisexual. I am not.. I don't limit who I love by gender. I mean, there was still a lot of self-loathing going through this time as well, because I had been told my whole life that it was wrong. My mother pities them, pities people who are gay or lesbian or transgender. She feels sorry for them. And so that was kind of.. we all have tapes that run in our heads, and those tapes are formed by our upbringing and what we're supposed to and so the tapes that were running in my head was "this is wrong, this is wrong." And so it took time and it took therapy really to start realizing no this is me, and this is not right, it's not wrong, it just is. And It really took me finishing Holy Cross, getting to New York City, having my life turned upside down a couple of times during my time in New York City, to really come to a place where I was comfortable with myself, and comfortable with the fact that my attraction to people is beyond what gender they are.

JP: Great, thank you. So I know you were out to this one friend, were you out publically at Holy Cross, were you out to a lot of people? How would you describe that?

SLK: That... it happened over time. So, I was first out to my good friend. And then I started you know.. to the support group. And that continued on, and then you know I started being seen with the support group members, and some of them were very obviously out. And, I hung out in the basement of Mulledy a lot, I mean to the point where people were like "This is Suz, she lives in our hall" kind of thing. I remember sitting in one of my best friend's rooms down there, with his roommate who was ROTC, and this roommate was saying there is no such thing as bisexual, and I looked at him and I said "Yes, I am." Oh it blew his mind. He sat there asking me questions for about 15 minutes. Here I am, I do exist, I'm not a figment of anyone's imagination! Trust me, this is who I am. And actually, I dated that friend for like a week, not the ROTC guy, the other friend who has gone to Jesuit school his whole life. But I had two guys break up with me because I was bisexual. Yeah! Ok, that's fine. Even one of them had gone home and talked to his priest about it! And his priest told him to break up with me, and like ok, whatever. So, I mean, it unfolded over time. So I would probably say by my sophomore year I was out, although I didn't have a girlfriend or anything, so I wouldn't say it was obvious, obvious, but anyone who knew me knew that I was bi.

JP: Ok, and then my follow up question was, were you ever in a relationship at Holy Cross?

SLK: No, I hooked up with a couple ladies over my time there but it wasn't really a relationship. Holy Cross is not known for relationships.

JP: That's true...

SLK: And, it goes all the way back to, and that's also the reason why you find a lot of gay men, or gay young men going to Holy Cross because it is not known for people breaking off into couples. So, it's a less threatening environment. Now I hooked up with a couple of women. And there was one time a friend of mine, she was dating another girl, she actually asked this girl to the Sadie Hawkins Dance, which was just awesome. And her roommate was like, "I've never seen two girls kiss", so we kind of hooked up a little in front of her. And she was like "Wow." We're like "Ok." I had several crushes, but it was really that first friend that I came out to that I was crushing the hardest on. And I think she was teasing me at different points in time, and I was like "Ugh! What does this mean?" And then I ended up being the match-maker between her and a guy in the basement of Mullyedy, and they now have a kid and are married. And I'm like "man, I was the one that facilitated that relationship, ahh what am I doing to myself?"

JP: That sounds very much like the Holy Cross that I know.

SLK: Yeah, some things take a long time to change.

JP: Yes. So how did you, you weren't in a relationship but you were finding women to have, you know, sexual experiences with. How were you finding them, was it common knowledge that these women existed and everyone kind of knew? Was it less overt than that?

SLK: Well, they were my friends, and there was only a handful, more happened when I was unemployed, living in the East Village. And they really never went farther than kissing, but really they were my friends, people I met in the support group. And this, kind of this "there were other people on the fringes", no they were all in the support group. And it was really, it was nothing more than a very tender kiss or two, it wasn't anything really sexual, it was more just sensual and confusing. Cause, I knew the script for if I kissed a guy. I knew I either had to ignore them, or you know, avoid them like the plague if I didn't want to continue anything. But once again, I just didn't have the script. And now I realize the script really isn't that different, but it took me awhile to figure that out. That it, yes there are social differences between the way women are socialized and the way men are socialized, and the types of relationships that we form. But really, it doesn't have to be as complicated as I thought it was, back when I was in college.

JP: Great! And then can you share a quick story about what it was like to be out at Holy Cross at that time? Was it accepted, did you have any challenges with the other students?

SLK: In terms of that, I was really a weirdo. You know how the last edition of the newspaper is always satire?

JP: Yes

SLK: And they have, you know, “senior thesis’s”? They made one for me. And it was “I am Suzanne and I don’t care how crazy I appear” or something to that effect. I got more flack for just being different than I did for being bi. Although I am sure it factored into it. See, I would never do the readings, and I actually had professors, I had one of my psych professors talk to Professor Lewis in the religious department. How, I was not a normal Holy Cross student. I would have fit in better at Clark, or one of the other colleges. Cause see, I wouldn’t really do all the readings, but I would listen to the lecture, and then I would engage with the Professor. And I would get criticized for that. Because I would get into these really good discussions with the professors, sometimes a couple of the other students, but I had no problem raising my hand and talking in class. And I remember this one girl, she criticized me about it. She made fun of me for it. So, I mean, I was definitely an outsider, and by the end I was kind of claiming that outsider status. I was wearing flowy skirts, dyed my hair purple, sat in several trees, which campus facilities wasn’t happy with. I would go to the bottom part of Hogan, the tree is probably not there anymore because campus has changed so much. But, yeah I would sit in the trees and play guitar, so the other students put me in the category of outsider, and then I chose to claim it. And I’m sure being bisexual and being open about that was part of it. But, I just didn’t belong with them and that was ok. I mean, I would have loved if everybody loved me, but that’s just not realistic, that just doesn’t happen. So, I embraced the outsider status, and relished in it. And it made it feel like home, and there are a couple people that I am still very close friends with from that time. We had a good group of outsiders, good people, good people, that I need to go and see soon. But, yeah I was not disliked by other students but most of the student body didn’t understand me, they didn’t get me, and that’s ok. Too much of a closed mind, meanwhile my mind was as wide open as it could be.

JP: Great. And you’ve talked a little about this, but what kinds of activities were you involved in heavily on campus?

SLK: Well when I first got to campus, I ran track. I high-jumped. But then drinking was more important than running, so that ended pretty quickly. I played music every day with my friend Foley, and we did shows at the Sidedoor Café. We did battle of the Bands. I loved, loved anthropology, and especially anthropology of religion. So technically my major is psychology, but I, what I usually say, which is not exactly the truth, is that I had a minor in anthropology and a concentration in music. Technically I didn’t, but those are the classes that I took and enjoyed. So I did Music Theory 1 and 2 and I was writing music and playing music. I was involved with GBLT support group. So we would go to theater shows. There was a alumni that every year would send us on a trip into Boston to go see a show. Let me see, what else... I loved Theater. I took a basic acting class, I took a dance class. I wasn’t in any of the productions cause I just didn’t feel confident enough to try out for any, but I ran lights for one of the shows, I think my junior year. I spent a lot of time doing music, and spending time with Foley, he’s like my brother. It was good, so it was really the outsiders that I was with, so I was with the kids I was drinking a lot, smoking pot. We went to the Salvation Army store with a pocket of quarters to find a good table to play quarters on. Yeah, we kind of got strange looks for that one. So it was really about... I spent my time connecting with others, whether that be through music, or just

hanging out, spending time, just being. So really the things I remember most is music, I did a lot of case studies of women who used spirituality, or non-traditional spirituality, specifically Paganism, to have a safe space to talk about things society says not to. And then the second paper I did was about how these women used non-traditional spirituality to feel some sort of sense of control. They are already marginalized in society, and how do they use their concept of the divine to find a place to feel some sort of control in their lives. At one point, I was going to continue my schooling and do psychological anthropology. That really interested me. The idea of mental illness and how it is viewed in different cultures. That was fascinating me! So yeah, I'd say anthropology and music. Those were really my two things I spent the most time doing.

JP: And I do want to ask you also about ABiGaLe and kind of your role in starting that. I've been looking around and I don't think it still exists...

SLK: No, it doesn't.

JP: in its same form... Although the PRIDE group on campus is becoming, kind of, more and more known, although the Chaplain's Office still seems to be the primary resource for stuff. But I am curious about, like, what prompted you to start ABiGaLe, how did you see it as different than the support group through the Chaplain's office?

SLK: At that point, we had allies, which was the Gay/Straight Alliance. It really came from probably a group of about 12-15 of us at the Chaplain's office from the support group. The way that we saw it was different was that the support group was just that, a support group, it was anonymous to the outside world. It wasn't public. There was more than half of us in that group that were saying "Wait a second. We are proud of who we are. Why can't we have a social group to be who we are, to be in a place with no judgements that's not hidden." Cause really that's what the support was, it was hidden because there were a couple people in the support group that did not want to be outed. And that's ok, totally respect it. But we wanted to have that opportunity to have events, potentially, where we could go to dances with our gay partners. Just, as a place not just to have support but to celebrate who we were. I did not, I didn't, I was part of that group, I wouldn't say that I took a lead role, there were a couple other people that were more willing to be the public face of it. And also, during this time I started dating a guy and this was the guy that, you know, was getting his feelings hurt because I said that I kind of wanted an open relationship, that if I found a woman to date I was going to date her. That was going on in my personal life at the time, but still I knew it was important, even if I wasn't going to reap the benefits of having a social group for GBLT students, I knew that was something important, that it needed to be present, regardless of whether I was going to be benefiting from it or not. I know that ABiGaLe and Allies over time did merge into what is now PRIDE. But I remember just sitting there, I think it was either right after we had one of our support group sessions, and we just sat down. I just remember one of our male members coming up with idea of "ABiGaLe", capitalizing "A", "B" "B", for... I can't remember specifically what each letter meant, but it just made so much sense. That here, with the actual name of our group, we are going to honor what it's was about. It's not about being an ally, its about being gay. It's about being bisexual or a lesbian, or transgender. Although I don't believe we had any folks who were really transgender at that time, it was mostly gay, lesbian and bisexual. But it was, so I was one of the charter members, I was part of the executive steering committee. I am trying to remember what year it went through, it might

have been my junior or my senior year when we finally pulled it together. So I wasn't really around for... to see any events, per se, but just the beginning of it and knowing that it was important, that it was important that there be more than just this quiet support group, you know, something that actually says this is part of who we are and we are proud of it. And to have that as a possibility on a Catholic campus is huge! Although the Church's views on gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender folks have not always been positive, things are changing very slowly but what do you expect for a group that is hundreds and hundreds of years old. But the fact that we were able to come forward and say "this is important, this is something we need to have" and have that be heard. We did have to petition, we did have to collect signatures, we did have to promote it and get support behind it, but there was enough support for it to happen. We did that march past the President's Office, kind of saying "this is who we are, this is what we need."

JP: Yeah, I was going to ask was there any sort of resistance, either from the student body or from the administration in kind of having this be part of the recognized student organization landscape here at Holy Cross?

SLK: From what I remember, there was some. Cause the question was "why do you need this, you have allies?" And so we really had to say, wait a second, let's look at the distinction between these two groups. Allies is the Gay-Straight Alliance. ABiGaLe is for gay, lesbians and bisexuals. So there was some push back though, because it was exclusive. That we would be excluding students who were not of... so we kind of had to change our wording a little bit, from what I remember. Saying that it was open to students who were questioning, or who were exploring their sexuality or their sexual identity. To kind of, like, leave the door open for anyone who wants to come in, but really saying, well its different from Allies, because it is about celebrating who we are, not working for understanding. Cause that's what Allies was really about, it's about bringing people together so there was an understanding of what an ally meant, and what it meant to be gay. But ABiGaLe was more, yes it is good to have understanding, but we need to celebrate this as well, because this part of who we are, and we are part of the Holy Cross campus.

JP: And would you say your involvement in both the groups that are, kind of, explicitly about exploring, celebrating and educating about a variety of different sexual identities, in addition to your involvement in just, kind of, other extra-curriculars, how did that play a role, or shape your experience of being LGBTQ at Holy Cross?

SLK: Well, I knew I wasn't alone. And I knew that there were people who would understand. And one of my good friends was in the support group with me. She's the one who, you know, had a girlfriend that she asked to go the Sadie Hawkins with her, the same one who's roommate made us kiss. She knew the girl that I had the crush on, so to be able to have a friend who was part of the support group, who was part of the beginning of ABiGaLe, who was part of, you know, my circle of friends, it was good to know that there was somebody who understood so when the girl I had the crush on started sort of flirting with me and I'm like "What's going on?", I had someone to talk to about that, where I didn't have to explain who I was, or my sexual orientation, she knew. She had been part of the support group, she had been part of listening to me figure out who I am in respect to my gender identity, my sexual identity, it really gave me... there was a sense of disconnect between me and the rest of the Holy Cross population, you

know, referring back to some of the things we have already talked about, you know, about, not being of privilege, of being a weirdo, saying what I think and feel, and not so worried about appearances. So, I really didn't fit in with the rest of the Holy Cross population, but I did in those groups, I felt like I belonged. Even when I was dating a man, I still was bisexual. That didn't go away just because I happened to be with somebody, you know, it wasn't, I still had a place where I belonged. And although I didn't necessarily need as much support from that group during that time, I was still participating in it because I was supporting others, and that's... This is the part of my Holy Cross experience, of my social experience at Holy Cross, that I love the most and that I am most proud of. Now, I got a great education, and I had great relationships with my professors, but when it comes to the rest of the population, it is these people that I remember with the most fondness. That I remember moments of real connection, real understanding, real compassion. There were a lot of people that didn't get me or understand me. But these people that went on this journey of self-discovery with me, they helped me figure out who I am. And, in turn, I was there supporting them too, and so this is the part, that's why I wanted to be involved in this project, because it is important that this story be told, because it will help someone else. And with all of the challenges I have had in my life, if I am able to extract some wisdom from it, and then share it with someone else, it transforms from a challenge into a blessing. Because maybe someone won't feel as alone, or someone won't feel as... so that they will feel love and compassion regardless.

JP: Well thank you again for being willing to participate in this. We had a great response, so I think it is going to be nice kind of add to this project that's really been ongoing for several years here. So, if you could do your Holy Cross experience over, is there anything you would do different.

SLK: Oh good question! Would I do anything differently? Hindsight is always 20/20... I probably would, that guy that I dated and almost got married to, I probably would have ended that relationship much sooner. And if I had done that, there would have been more opportunities to explore that side of myself. Now, I did get that opportunity after 9/11 living in New York City, but you know, I always wished there was more I could have done, more I could have experienced, because it was a safe place for a lot of things. And, you know, if I wasn't dating a guy towards the end there, I would have been more active in ABiGaLe and more active in the support group. I was still part of it, still a supporter of all of it, but... and I really wish that I had pursued that relationship with the friend I had a crush on.

JP: Great, ok. So actually that's the next thing I want to talk about. That's kind of like, its going off of my script because it is not necessarily something everyone would have experienced, but I do want to talk about that. So can you tell me a little about when you first became friends, when you first knew you had non-platonic feelings for her? Those kinds of things...

SLK: She was in my hall in Mulledy, she was a year ahead of me. Her and her roommate, who was a year ahead of her, had the handicap back room on the fourth floor. I had a pair of bear foot slippers, they had bear claws on them, fuzzy things. And so, I'm always about comfort, and so I... my roommate was from Worcester. And the first week she had all her Worcester friends in our room hanging out, so I started making connections with them, which was kind of ridiculous because they disappeared, so it was kind of hard because there was this opportunity to interact

with people in my hall and get to become friends with them... Well that kind of got messed up because I was trying to become friends with people who didn't get to the school. Then came all the Beautiful People. And, I just, I didn't fit in because I wasn't going to fit into their concept of what normal was. And, so one of my favorite movies is the Never Ending Story. And so, these two girls down the hall, one that... I'm going to call C and M, C was the one I had the crush on, they had a movie going on and they happened to have Never Ending Story playing, and I said "Oh my God" and I grabbed my hot chocolate, my bear foot slippers and I go into their room and watch the Never Ending Story. And, these two girls, they were very, I mean, doc martins, dark hair, weird colored hair, very open and just weird, just odd. They had fish tank, they didn't have any desks, they put the desks down in storage, they had a couch, a table to play quarters on. And so I just started spending all my time there because I didn't fit in with my roommate, I didn't fit in with the other girls on my hall. The girls on my hall were scared of C and M, they thought they were Wiccans. They had lived on Mulledy the year prior, in one of the regular rooms, and you know the first week, they walked past that room and said "Oh they got the ghost blood off the wall"! They were just completely being weirdos. And so everybody on the hall, all the naïve freshman were like "Oh my god! They are witches!" No, there was nothing to do with ghost blood, they were just being odd. But that works for me, for me that was "Oh, ok this is cool, I'm down with this"! So, I started hanging out there, all the time, all the time. Our thing was drinking on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Tuesdays because it was just Tuesday and you needed a drink on Tuesdays. I was called Buzz during this time. Another girl on my hall gave me that nickname because I had no tolerance when it came to alcohol. Give me a beer and I'm buzzed kind of thing. So I just started spending all of my time there. We would watch movies, we would hang out, you know after classes, in between classes, I really spent my time in that room or in the basement of Mulledy. And C and M were also friends with the guys down there, so it was just, our social circles started becoming one. And, it was just something over time that she was just... she loved me as a friend, and I loved her as a friend, but then I started figuring out that that attraction was more than just friends, that I had this desire to kiss her. And then I was like "Oh wait a second"... And I would be talking about this in the support group and another friend in the same social circle was also in the support group. So to have like an insider who both got to see my struggle of trying to figure this out, as well as seeing the social structure she was present, so having that friend who was in both worlds, it really encouraged that crush on C. And then it got to the point where I was like ok, I need to tell her, I need to tell her that I like women. And, you know, I took her, it was, I think I had had a beer or two at the point, you know a little liquid courage, and I took her up into that stairwell, and I was like, I've got to tell you something. And, I told her that I was bisexual, and she was like, I am so happy for you, and gave me a hug. And I was like "please don't tell anyone" and she was like "No problem, I won't say a word." I couldn't have asked for a better person to come out to. Just the fact that she was so accepting because she had other friends that were gay. She was accepting and so cool about it that it was like "Ok, what does this mean?" I knew she loved me, but did she love me like that? I don't know. And it was really through that next sixth months to a year that these questions just kept coming up and coming up. Like, I asked her to come up to my room sophomore year and hang out, and she did, and it almost felt like... we were watching a show or something on TV, and it kind of felt like she was looking for me to do something, and at this point she wasn't dating anybody. I wrote a poem about that specifically, did you guys hear the one called "Kiss"?

JP: I don't think we did, no. I don't remember that one.

SLK: Then my 21st birthday comes around, and she puts a box of wine in her backpack... That's what I drank at the time was boxes of wine! So she took care of me through that night, I slept on her couch cause she lived off campus at that point. She actually flashed me! She changed her shirt right in front of me, and that point she had to have known that I liked her and so I was like "What does this mean? Ahh why are you doing this to me this is not fair!" Yeah, no, it's just one of those things.

JP: So what prompted you to start writing poetry about these feelings?

SLK: Well for me it really was... I had to get it out somehow, I had to share it with the world in some way, shape or form. And I had been writing poetry for a very long time at that point, and it just seemed to make sense, just to find a way to get these thoughts out of my head, to put them down on paper, because it was just overwhelming. Ahh, here we go. This one is called "Kiss."

Why must dreams be only partially realized?

Why should I be content with only

Halfway?

"some is better than none"

Some say.

Others say

"all or nothing"

where do I stand?

I have her friendship but

I think I want more.

If I speak to her words of love

I Risk.

"Risk what?"

they ask.

fear

rejection

Hatred

worst of all

Loneliness...

but I could

gain

Love.

Wait...

In a way

I already have that

but I'm curious.

"curious?"

they ask

Curious if she is

able or

willing

to be uncomfortable
to take a chance
to Risk.
"risk what?"
they ask.
Being "intimate" with me
being scorned because of me
falling in love with me.
Should I be content
With what I have
or Risk?
Risk all that I've
built over the past year
with one simple
Kiss.

JP: Wow, that's really powerful

SLK: And, so she obviously, nothing between her and I happened, and then she starts dating this guy in the basement. You know, they have a drunken hook up and you know, she's starting to go "Oh my god, I think I really like him" and he's starting to go "Oh my God, I think I really like her" so I'm playing the go between which I am really not happy about doing because, you know I like her. But, you know, she was so upset about this hook up, and wanted it to be something more, and I loved her. So, of course I'm going to help her do that. So then I wrote Ryan as I was sitting in the basement in somebody's room in Mulledy, we were watching a movie:

I sit here, curled up in Ryan's seat, in
Ryan's room, using Ryan's ashtray.
There she sits.
On the floor next to him-
by her man.
Watching a movie.
I'm watching her-
as she snuggles into
what isn't
me.
The movie speaks of music
and sex and drugs.
All these things mean nothing to me
unless she is there.
She is my music
my sex
my drug.
What am I to her?
Just Buzz?
or am I Suzanne?

a possibility
a fear
more than a friend?
She knows something
is wrong but she
will not ask.
We sat before-
side by side watching
pointless TV shows waiting
for one of us to speak-
or was she just watching-
not waiting.
I sit there curled up in Ryan's seat,
in Ryan's room,
If I was called Ryan-
would I then stand a chance?
soon - I must know for sure
So I can find a replacement.
Please
Call me Ryan.

JP: It is really interesting for me to be listening to these, because you can just kind of hear the dialogue you had going on in your head playing out in these poems. So I am kind of trying to piece together, did you, so you never outwardly told her that you had any feelings for her, do you think that she knew at all?

SLK: I think she did, I think she did. I think our mutual friend who was also in the support group eventually told her, although it was really obvious, looking back, in the way that I looked at her, and in the way that I spent... I wanted to spend all my time with her, and I did spend all my time with her. You know, come home from class and I would go into her room. That's where I spent my time. You know, I drank too much, I'd sleep on the couch. They had a bathroom in the same room, which is why they got that room actually so that they would have the bathroom so they could get drunk. You know, we would steal one of the water bubbler, water bottle... I didn't do this, they did. They stole one of the full ones from the hallway and they would just keep that in their room so we would always have water. I think she knew. I mean, I think she had to be really... she was smart. She was smart, she was beautiful, she was funny, she was just, she was amazing, and you'd have to be completely blind, deaf and dumb not to know that I had feelings for her.

JP: Oh, go ahead sorry.

SLK: And, that poem says, we were sitting watching pointless TV shows, I knew she was waiting for me to say something. She was single at the time, she already had friends that were gay or bisexual. She understood, she knew that I was. I'm sure somebody told her I had a crush on her cause lots of people knew, but it was almost like she was waiting for me to have the courage to take that first step. But, I didn't.

JP: Ok, so my next question is going to be do you regret not doing that?

SLK: Yeah, I do, because, there was so much potential there, and... for both of us to be happy. We were already very close friends, and just to take it that extra step closer, there would have been more comfort for both of us. And, you know, my life would have turned out differently, because, you know it just would have, so would hers. I mean, she's with the guy, she's currently with the guy, has a kid with the guy that I set her up with, or that I played matchmaker for. And, the guy I was initially engaged to was somebody I met in the same circle. Somebody who this C dated before kind of thing. And, it was just, things would have been different. So, do I regret it, regret it... Yeah... I am happy where I am now, and I wouldn't have gotten to where I am if things turned out any differently than they did. But wish I had had the courage to at least try, you know, to at least you know, take it that next step and ask her if I could kiss her. You know, but I didn't. And that's ok! I'm happy with where I am, the person I am today. And I wouldn't be me unless everything happened exactly like it did.

JP: Well thank you for sharing that story with me. I.. After hearing the poems in class, especially the Call Me Ryan, because that is just so, you know, I feel like that is something that so many people that identify as LGBTQ think, like if this one aspect of my personality or of my person was different, would things be different? And I think to see that in this online archive, that is going to be really impactful for a lot of people.

SLK: And I will send you the text of both of those, so that you have the correct line breaks.

JP: That would be great! Thank you so much. Ok, and so then, this is kind of just a question about Holy Cross again, in general. DO you think that the Jesuit identity and the environment of Holy Cross affected your view of your sexuality, how you were acting on that sexuality when you were here. And, have you... I am kind of getting the impression that you've actually kind of viewed Catholicism and Catholic doctrine and religious and spiritual doctrine as sort of a liberating thing in a lot of ways, so how has that impacted you in your life in general?

SLK: Well, I like the fact that the Jesuits allow questioning, That they embrace questioning. That they embrace study of other faiths. For me, being a woman in the Catholic church was something I had issues with. Because, even as a little kid I felt I was being called to be a priest. But that option is closed in Catholicism. And, I did end up leaving the Church, I would probably say halfway through my Holy Cross time there. Because, it was ... the spirituality that I knew at those church camps that I went to in high school, and that's what I was looking for, and I didn't find that at Holy Cross. In terms of the Jesuit identity and my sexual identity, at least there was the opportunity to ask the questions, that the questions themselves were embraced. And the fact that, you know, it was the Chaplain's Office that had this GBLT support group, that helped. And there was actually retreat that I went to, I think it was through Boston University, which was a retreat to explore being Christian or being Catholic, and being GBLT. And I still have all the papers that we got from that, you know talking about the Bible, and the translations, that are incorrect that actually what it is saying is about pedophilia, it's not talking about you know going against, gays lesbians or bisexuals. So you know, there was some conflict for me between the two, because my mother was always saying "It's wrongs, its wrong, it's wrong, doesn't matter

it's wrong." Because the Church says it's wrong. So of course I had that voice in my head, but at least I got to question it in the Jesuit landscape, if you will. And the fact that we were allowed to create ABiGaLe is a testament to, just, the ability to question, to change, cause there's a lot of religion, specifically Christianity that is very resistant to change, to growth, but the Jesuits are kind of in their own little category there where they embrace change, they embrace growth. And to have that kind of as a thread that went through my Holy Cross experience, it was a very positive thing.

JP: OK great. And we talk a lot as Holy Cross students now, and I think in some of the oral histories I've read of other LGBTQ alums, there's this sense of Holy Cross exceptionalism, like Holy Cross is different and unique from even other Jesuit institutions in kind of the way that they approach incorporating LGBTQ people into kind of our community. Did you feel like that? Do you really think it is tied up with the Jesuit thing and Holy Cross by being Jesuit had a different sense of acceptance or do you kind of buy into the Holy Cross exceptionalism?

SLK: I don't have that much experience with other Catholic universities or Jesuit universities, so I can only speak to what I know. And, I mean, Holy Cross is definitely a unique place. I applied to 10 schools, got accepted to 7 of them, I mean Notre Dame was one of them, Duke. Then I did like University of Dayton in Ohio. And Holy Cross was, even from just looking at the perspective, and this was actually, I think this was... my year was...my freshman year was the first year of the first year program. Now I didn't participate in the first year program, but it just... the way Holy Cross approaches curriculum is, I would say that is unique. That, the freshman seminars. The one I was in was "Love, Friendship and Other Affection." It was a philosophy class. And that was really good for me to have my freshman year because there's... Holy Cross provides, at least the classes at Holy Cross provide the lens through which we can look at our experiences. And, the fact that the Professors are so involved, approachable, class sizes are so incredibly small that you really do get a chance to explore in depth these ideas. Professor Rogers in the anthropology department, same kind of thing. I was really able to understand in depth, you know, the role of religion in terms of society, and to take a look at anthropology and how can we view ourselves, how can we view others through a different lens. And I would say Holy Cross is unique in that respect, based on, you know, people that I have met in the world since I graduated. I really did get an excellent foundation on which, for me to grow, both spiritually, intellectually and in terms of my career. I don't think I would have been as good a teacher, and I taught in Title I public schools the "failing schools", poorest of the poor. And there was a lot of questions about religion that came up, and because I took all those anthropology classes, I was able to, in a very succinct, compassionate way, say "Well this is what this group of people believe, this is what this people, this group of people believe, and your parents sent you to public school and that means they get to decide how you talk to God. Ask them your questions!" But, I wouldn't have been able to do that without the opportunity for dialogue with the professors. More so than dialogue with the students. So Holy Cross is very unique in that way. I don't know if it is because it is Jesuit, although I know that Jesuit identity plays a big role in how they choose professors. And, without exception, all the professors that I came across in my four years, I felt I learned something from. And that, that is huge.

JP: Yes, it really is. It's interesting you mention Prof. Rogers, she is still here and my friend is an anthro major and she is her advisor. So I have heard great things!

SLK: I love her! I still have those papers that I wrote. She was so happy that I did these, because I did interviews with three women that identified as pagan. Just... oh they are good papers! I mean, I am so proud of them! And the interviews that I did, and the notes that I took. She was just really moved by the work that I did and it was just... some of my favorite classes. She is amazing!

JP: Yeah, I've heard great things! Ok, so then these questions, these last questions that I have are just kind of about looking back at your experience at Holy Cross. So based on your experience both at Holy Cross and in your life since then, what advice would you offer to LGBTQ students who are struggling to come out at Holy Cross?

SLK: Find your tribe. Find the people that... when you meet someone and your heart leaps, as in "Oh I know this person" or it feels familiar. Don't give up, you will find your tribe. And it's that tribe that you will find the safety to come out. And I would recommend anyone who is struggling to find their identity to write, to journal for themselves. For me it came out as poetry, it could come out as prose, it could come out as drawings. But to find a way to kind of get those thoughts out of your head. Even if the thoughts are being mean to yourself, write them down, put them out where you can see them. And you will find the right people to share pieces of them with. But to not... You will find the one, and if you don't find them today, you might find them tomorrow. But don't give up because you will find the people that understand.

JP: Great, and based on your experience, what advice would you offer to LGBTQ seniors who are about to make their transition from college life to professional life?

SLK: Once again, you're going to find your tribe wherever you are. And when it comes to being a professional person, focus on being professional. And know that your social life will grow. You will find the right people over time. But, in terms of going into the work world, your sexuality, your sexual identity is part of who you are. And then, no question an important part of who you are. But your employers have hired you because they see greatness in you in other ways. So let that greatness grow and develop, and know that you will find your tribe. And it is not always the people at work that are going to be the support system that you need. But keep sending out feelers, you will find the support system that you need. And you know what, therapy is never a bad idea. Because that is a safe place. And insurance will cover part of it. And there are other therapists that will work on a sliding scale. Because for me, therapy was the first place for me to find that strength. So that I could do what I needed to do in my career. So that I had that support, that one person that was always going to be by my side, and that was my shrink. So if you are struggling, get help. There is no shame in it whatsoever. And the therapist is there to support you as you move forward and grow. Because this is a process. We are not finished products the day we graduate. We are never, until the last breath that we take, we're not done. So, finding the support you need is there. And even outside of school there are GBLT groups. Look for them. You can find them, there are even groups on Facebook that are not restricted by geography. Keep your eyes open you will find your group, but if in the meantime you need support, there are places to get it.

JP: Alright well, thank you so much. That's all the specific questions I have for you. I did want to ask if there is anything we didn't talk about that you wanted to make sure was included as a part of the story?

SLK: I don't think so, I think we've done it all. I think... Everything that I can think of... You know, you've done a really nice job leading me through these questions and just listening to the narrative, and I appreciate the opportunity.

JP: Well thank you so much, it was so great to talk to you and its just its really... A lot of what you are saying about Holy Cross really resonates with me, I'm not necessarily in the same sense of struggling to find my own sexual identity but in terms of, not, you know, in terms of the privilege at Holy Cross, not necessarily feeling like you fit in with that group. I think that, you know, even that part of the story resonates... I think there's a lot of people at holy Cross that feel the need to conform but don't necessarily want to, and so I think that it is going to be really interesting for anyone that has, you know, that has experienced Holy Cross to kind of get to read this. And I think, I personally can identify with parts of your story, and it is really great that you were willing to share it with us!

SLK: Well...it is my honor, it is my honor. And I am very grateful that I can take some of the struggles that I have had, and turn them into a narrative that supports someone else's growth, then it sends a blessing to me and to the other person. So that's why I have done this project. It doesn't matter, I mean, my sexuality, my sexual identity is a part of me, yes. It is my whole story, though that can support others, regardless if they are struggling with sense of privilege, or struggling with feeling different, however that difference manifests. You know, the things that I have figured out along the way can help somebody else, and that's why I have done this.

JP: Well thank you so much.. I will let you know, my next step is to transcribe this whole interview and do some reflecting on it. I'm hoping that my little recording apparatus that I have got set up here worked, and then I will turn that in and we will get it on the online database, and I will let you know when that happens so you can take a look at it and take a look at some of the others. There a lot of interesting narratives from different people at different times, and it has been really interesting to kind of dive into this project. So I hope you will get to do that as well!

SLK: Well, you let me know. As I said, I will send you the text of those two poems so that you will have the correct line breaks.

JP: Yes alright well thank you so much again for talking to me, and I hope to be in contact soon!

SLK: Oh it's been a pleasure, thank you so much. You have a good day, a good week and we'll talk soon!

JP: Yes! Thank you so much, bye-bye.

SLK: Yes, bye-bye.