From now until the end of the school year, we will be introducing and celebrating our graduating students, looking back on the work they've done during their time here, and sharing their reflections and wisdom as they head off into the professional world. Today our series continues with graduating MFA actor AJ Friday.
What do you know now that you didn't know when you started this program?

Just remember, you literally asked for this...Life is a process. Physics drives Biology causing Chemistry which reveals more Physics. I take that idea into every character—as a given circumstance of their existence. So, there's a perfectly rational reason for why they believe they MUST do what they're written to do. In short, serve the work and understand the playwright's point of view. Science sequence complete.

What are you most looking forward to being able to do now that you won't be in class or rehearsal 12 hours/day?

I'll be looking for work for 12 hours/days, instead. Lemme tell you, these student loans...

Any plans for after graduation?

I'm getting married on July 19th, to the lovely Ms. Emily Martin <3 of Saint Paul, MN. So that's where I'm headed :) And we're gonna make beautiful mixed babies, and buy a house, and picnic on the lakes, and create intricate tunnel systems through the mountains of snow we'll get for six-out-of-twelve months ... It'll be great! God willing, we'll arrive where He needs us to be in the nick of time for His plan. MN? LA? NY? LA? God knows. I'm starting a hybrid film/theater production company too: IMRSV (pronounced "immersive"). Keep your ears open for that! So, plans for after graduation? Now the real work starts.

Do you have a favorite memory from your time here?

I think making the fundraising video, as a group, was a blast. It was funny, equitable, diverse...—you get it—process. And we made a pretty cool thing! It was fun. I was proud of us.

What piece of advice do you have for those following in your footsteps?

Take control of your learning experience. You gotta know yourself better than anyone possibly could. You gotta understand what needs improving, why it needs improving, and how YOU can best achieve it. Be honest with yourself—be gentle with yourself. That's the homework. Investigate yourself. Get good at translating external information (e.g. scripts/notes/advice/techniques) into the way YOU think. Then, be just as kind when you share your ideas. All that...and somebody really needs to do something about University parking. I gotta climb a mountain, in the rain, a mile away from my car, four times a day, six days a week—and on top of that, you kick me outta the spot that I paid a small fortune for so you can make more money off of steep football parking prices? And don't get me started on tickets/fines. Real talk.