



# Reflections

St. Joseph High School

**A m a r a n t h**

**2020**

# Amaranth 2020

## Reflections

St Joseph High School  
Trumbull, CT

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## **As the Years Go by**

Patricia Bendek '20

As the Years go by

The world shines dimmer

The earth grows colder

And the sun gleams duller.

As the Years go by

The yesterdays become tomorrows

The present becomes the future

And the future becomes the past.

As the Years go by

The beginnings become the ends

And the ends become the remnants.

But sometimes beginnings hide themselves in ends

And ends are just the beginning.



**Praying Girl**

Ava Argento '23

First Place Winner - Art

## **Icarus Falls**

Patricia Benedek '20  
First Place Winner - Literature

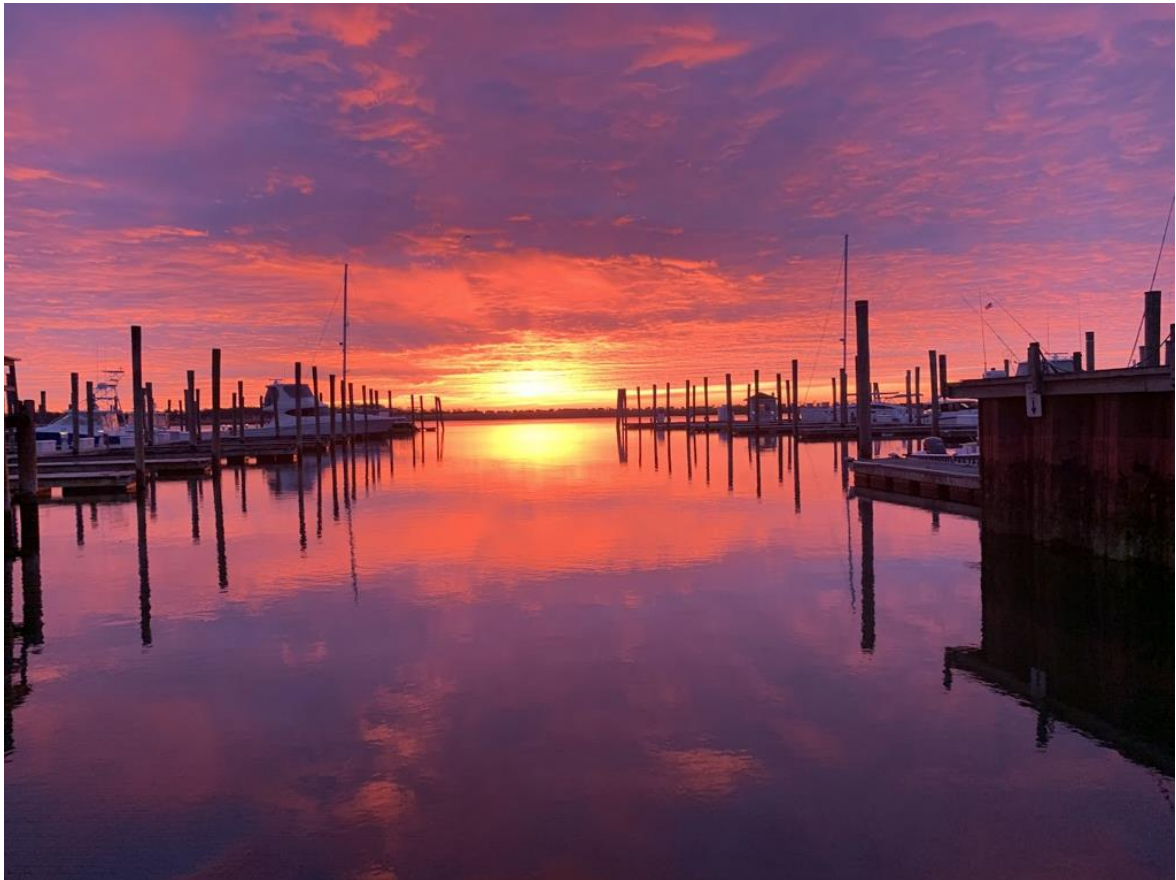
I tried to fly like Icarus  
To feel the sun, to see the sky  
I tried to care  
So I pushed and pushed, but life pushed back

I tried to be a phoenix  
To light the world just like the sun  
I tried to rise up from the ashes  
But I burned too bright, and life pushed back

I tried to fight the war inside  
To be a warrior, to win back my mind  
I tried to earn the will to move  
But I was too drained, and life pushed back

I tried to hide and stay inside  
To close Pandora's box of human pain  
I tried to find the enemy  
But the enemy was already inside, and life pushed back

I have to find my own sun one day  
and fly with my own wings,  
But until I get my fuel to burn  
I'm what you'd call burned out.



## **Sunset**

Peggy Marino '71

Second Place Winner - Art

## **Those Hands**

Sal Orosz '20

Second Place Winner - Literature

“Those hands,” I hear you say, “are old and worn,  
Withered wheat-head valleys and merlot mounts,  
Sometimes plateaus or flowing rose-red founts  
Their skin so harshly cracked and cruelly torn.

Indeed, indeed, those hands I do so scorn  
and they who in rebellion refrain  
from rest for that which wickedly de grain,  
of whose neglect results in hands forlorn!”

O, but in them do you not see beauty?

These hands you hate were not caused by their greed,  
Nor were they maimed to cause their owner harm.

They speak of that perennial duty,  
That is, to protect, to clothe, and to feed  
How I yearn to have hands so sweet and warm!





**Girl in Pond**

Erin Markut '23

Third Place Winner – Art

## Reflections

Andrew Donnelly '20

Third Place Winner - Literature

I ascend the stairs, each step creaking beneath my feet. There is a door at the top, the paint long since chipped away, worn down by the unrelenting sands of time. Extending a wrinkled, boney hand, I grip the frigid handle, and the door creaks open. I enter the room, and the door slams violently behind. I turn, and it is gone. The room is pitch black, save for a light with no discernible origin illuminating a full-length mirror. Unnaturally vast, I cannot make out where the room ends, or where it begins for that matter. The mirror, with its supernatural glow, beckons me. I make my way towards it, each step echoing through the abyss. The rim of the mirror is filthy, covered in dust and cobwebs that dangle to the floor. Strangely, the reflective glass of the mirror is pristinely clear, almost as if there is no glass at all. I touch the smooth surface, just to prove to myself that there is indeed something there.

I leap back in fear, falling to the floor. A cloud of dust billows around me. A young child stands where my reflection was just a moment before. I stand up, brush the dust off my clothes, and look in awe at the child. He's young, no more than ten years old. He is holding a red ball, and a wide grin is plastered on his face. The pure joy that emanates from him seems to leak through the mirror, and I cannot help but smile as well. As quickly as he had appeared, he is suddenly gone, replaced by another figure. This one is taller, with a handsome face and a head of full, shiny hair. In his hand is a single red flower. He has the same look of innocence and joy as the child. Another change, but this time the figure remains. The joy of the young boy has gone. Instead, his eyes show an immeasurable sadness, as if the innocent bliss he once lived in had been suddenly shattered. He is replaced too, this time by a slightly older gentleman,

dressed in business attire. His eyes stare blankly ahead, looking into nothing. Any semblance of the child has gone. In his hands is a suitcase, which he grips weakly. He too changes, but only in small ways. His hair goes gray and recedes, a pair of glasses rests on the bridge of his nose, and his face wrinkles and sags.

All that remains is a withered old man. He stares into my eyes, and I do the same to him. I raise a wrinkled hand, and he does the same. His eyes hold no light, no remembrance of all that came before him, nor do they have any inclination to the future. He turns and walks away. I try to tap on the glass for him to come back, but the glass has gone. I walk through the now empty frame of the mirror, calling after him. I have to tell him of everything I know, everything that I had just witnessed. He does not hear. He begins to ascend a flight of stairs that were not there before, and I follow after him. I ascend the stairs, each step creaking beneath my feet. There is a door at the top, the paint long since chipped away, worn down by the unrelenting sands of time...



## **Stairs**

Cate DeProfio '20

## **As if We Had a Choice**

Sophie Chorek '20

We were empty and dead,  
We were body and soul,  
We all kept silent  
As if we had a choice.

Lingering between life and death,  
Traces of fear in our hearts,  
Those hearts pounding harder  
As if we had a choice.

Our fear was greater than hunger,  
Our hearts were trembling,  
But we no longer fear death  
As if we had a choice.

This was real,  
The bread, the soup  
—those were our entire life,  
As if we had a choice.





**Watercolors**

Hannah Liu '21

## As Seasons Go By

Anna Lucas '20

Season greetings  
are a feeling  
I can never quite compare.  
They go quickly,  
in a blink,  
but stay with me  
as I think.

Summer brings the smell of sea salt  
and chlorine that stings the sky.  
Buttons sticky from the heat,  
ice cream with bubblegum eyes.  
Endless days of youthful lust,  
chasing after ice cream trucks,  
Blurry films and specs askew  
Lost beneath the ocean blue.

Autumn's quiet; yet its whispers  
bubble color from within,  
Painting leaves with gentle color,  
changing millions of its kin.  
Those leaves are the playing ground  
of kids who stumble into bounds!  
Yet I couldn't quite ignore  
the smell of pumpkin spice in stores.

Winter's harsh, a rabid bite  
that seeps beneath my winter wear  
Freezing up my fingers  
with its icy stainless flair.  
We'd place spoons under our beds  
hoping that the arctic spread  
would gift us a day of rest  
sipping chocolate, free of stress.

Spring arrives with fruitful splendor  
Warmth I had since grown to miss  
Caking my hands thick with soil  
Raising flowers with a kiss.  
In my youth I'd make my pay  
selling jugs of lemonade  
in some little paper cups.  
The five cents were just enough.

Now reflecting  
and respecting  
memories of seasons by,  
I can look  
to future shores,  
hoping to find  
many more.

## **Crossfire**

Sal Orosz '20

A rifle is in my hands—wood and steel.

My goal: to find a buck to shoot and kill.

The void in me shall this one slaughter fill.

One solemn act can heal the pain I feel.

This deed only will my Father's love seal

For I can't reason how He loves me still

After the things I've done against His will.

Why does He seek me out with so much zeal?

But now a ten-point buck makes a loud noise.

I raise the weapon and rest it on bone.

I must conduct myself with grace and poise.

He is my gift to lay before the throne.

His eyes so clear, he robs me of my joys.

It is I in the sights—not him alone.



**The Horrors of War**  
Kaitlyn Szczepanski '22



## **The End of the World**

Michelle Hackenson '20

When the lights of day fade  
And then never return  
The souls that aren't lost  
Stand and watch the world burn

When the last mirrors shatter  
And the broken glass falls  
The last face will fade  
From the once happy halls

When our God's clock stops ticking  
And the gears gather rust  
Then all trees and leaves rot  
And the bone becomes dust

When the crow caws its last  
And welcomes death as his guest  
Then the raven's return  
Marks all man's final rest



## Flag

Jamie Andrade '22

## I Am from Pretty Pink Princesses

Emma Alvear '20

I am from a plethora of pink clothing,  
Dolled up with seven outfit changes per day.

I am from a simple home  
Though, it felt like a castle.

I am from a family where I am the only girl,  
Treated like a princess, even at seventeen.

I am from a nice family in a wholesome neighborhood.  
With friends just next door.

I am from the trail to the neighborhood pond,  
Its humid air and algae smell fills me with many memories  
of my friends and our outdoor adventures.

I am from baby blankets and cutesy dresses I grew up wearing,  
From my parents,  
"Campopiano" and "Alvear."

I am from casino loving Italians and panic Hispanics.  
And from baseball fanatics,  
And from exquisite cooks.

I am from Ecuadorian and Italian ancestors,  
And from empanadas and spaghetti.

I am from moments of chaos in the casino, baseball bombardment, and food indulgence  
Which define my life and the influences of my crazy family who raised me.





## Gymnasts

Lindsay Capobianco '22

## September Nights

Alyssa Meyers '20

cool autumn air.  
warm water up to my ribcage.  
chills moving down my spine.  
hair sticking to my neck.  
hands brushing underwater.  
blue light illuminating our faces from below.  
water splashing softly around us.  
feeling the sting of carbonation as I suck down soda.  
a soft current on the small of my back.  
fingers looking more like prunes than phalanges.  
the familiar smell of chlorine as I bow my head laughing.  
lingering tastes of soda cut with the taste of chlorine as I open my mouth.  
snapping my head back to look at rustling leaves above.  
moving my focus to the clouds traveling the dark sky.  
being pulled back to reality with a cat rubbing against me.  
its orange fur clinging to my shoulders.  
it struts around the hot tub before scampering away.  
i rest my head on the edge of the tub and smell the sweet soil with every  
inhalation.  
someone taps my shoulder gently as I sit up straight.  
water drops weighing down my eyelids makes this feel like a dream.  
somebody leans in to tell me a secret.  
i smell peppermint on their breath.  
as they whisper, the wind burns the tip of my nose and the tops of my cheeks.  
over in the corner of the yard,  
somebody has started a fire in the fireplace to warm themselves up.  
the orange glow the fire possesses is a stark contrast to the blue of the water.  
a gentle breeze carries the smoky aroma over to us.  
the scene fades into black with the buzz of chatter.  
i close my eyes, savoring every detail of this moment.





**Girl with Sunflowers**

Julie Ouyang '21

## Wings

Amy Ogle '22

I do not need wings to fly.

For if I needed wings,

Then I should not be able

to find happiness.

If I needed wings

like a grand eagle

to feel free,

then I am no better

than a caged canary.

Freedom,

the definition

as fickle as it is,

is everything

and nothing.

Is one truly free

if he is chained

by his wings?

Is one truly caged

if his wings

drag on the ground?

The others' wings

are pristine and pure.

My wings,

ruined and charred,

are bloody and bruised.

Yet, I am able

to soar above them

with my feet

planted firmly on the earth.

I do not need wings to fly.

For if I needed wings,

then I would not be able

to write about my own.



**Eagle**

Ava Argento '23



## **Metamorphosis**

Emily McGovern '20

Encased in the darkness, the unknown instinct takes over.

My sense of self evolves as the metamorphosis begins.

My wings start to grow, a sign of what is to come.

In a colorful explosion, I emerge from my cocoon.

The start of new beginnings, an exciting new adventure.

I have found my truest self, reborn into a creature with new opportunities.

Eagerly I unfurl my wings and embark on my new journey.



## **Berries**

Bob Marino

## The Pursuit of the Yellow Swing

Deanna Maltese '20

Sometimes the world gets too loud  
And I feel trapped inside four walls of negativity  
Isn't the world beautiful?  
Aren't there good things to be found?  
But instead we drown in overwhelming pain

I have this desire to escape  
The world is so much bigger than we see  
All you have to do is stand outside  
So that's what I do

Step by step the soft ground passes underneath my feet  
Reaching my yellow swing  
And as I sit, I look up at the sky  
Look at the blue, and the way the clouds float by  
Never stopping, always going

It's not plagued by the walls we build in our mind  
Of all the worries, stress and overwhelming fears  
I close my eyes and breathe  
Breathe in the air that renews my lungs

The sun breaks through the cracks in the trees  
Trees bare, missing the rustle of leaves  
Winter not quite gone, but still known  
Spring light, mixed with cool air  
And the slight breeze that chills you to perfection

No phone to be found  
I sway back and forth, my hair falling into my face

A silence that allows you to hear the thoughts in your head  
A peace that comes from knowing the world is bigger than your worries

The creaking of the old swing set makes you wonder  
How much longer until it's seen its last day  
How much longer until this thing you've known for 12 years is gone  
But with every sound you smile  
Because you've always known why it was there

It was there in the early years for laughter  
For the climbing practice, and raw hands from hanging upside down

For the races down the long yellow slide, and getting dizzy in the tire swing  
For the way we imagined and dreamed

And after many years of being forgotten, I find myself walking towards that swing,  
my swing  
My yellow swing, that sits in the middle between one that's red and one that's  
blue  
And it shows me a world I've forgotten  
One of nature, one of God, and one of innocence  
Because in the end we all need that yellow swing



**McKenna Hedman '20**  
"Boardwalk"

## In Sync

Jackie Lenard '21

The roads I drive on are never really the same.  
Some take are smooth and new, others show their wear,  
Some are rough and wild, others smooth and tame.  
All roads go somewhere.

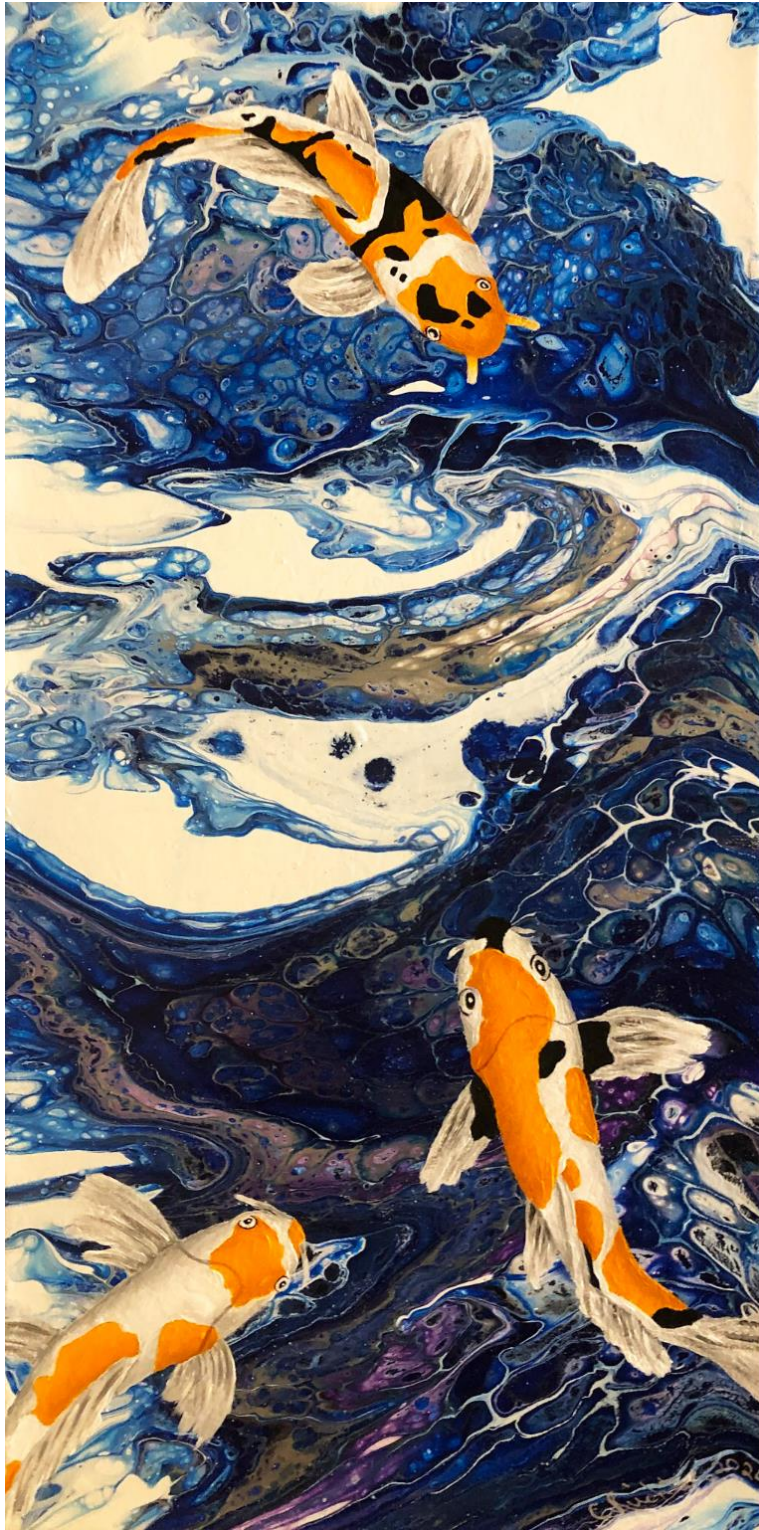
The trees I see are not exactly alike.  
Each were intricately designed,  
And each beautiful on a hike.  
Each one unique, even when combined.

No bird sings the same song,  
Different kinds have a different tune.  
Some voices are quiet, others are strong.  
Each bird has a different croon.

The roads we take, the trees we see, the birds we hear,  
Each one is a little more different then we think,  
Each one made to work like a gear.  
All made to work in sync.

Just like the roads, the trees, and the birds,  
Every person was made a little different and by someone greater.  
Brought to life through His thoughts and words.  
Everything was made by the same creator.





**Koi Pond**  
Cynthia Richter

## Family Recipes

Eileen Rafferty Broderick '79

First thing this morning I ask Shannon if she would like clam chowder for dinner tonight. I get an enthusiastic response, just as I suspected. Manhattan Clam Chowder is her favorite. The recipe was handed down to me from my Grandmother Licsak. As I reach into the cabinet to pull out my recipe notebook and find the card, I find memories of my grandmother.

Before I start the soup, I pull out an apron. It's only 6:00 in the morning and I'm wearing my workout clothes since I'll take my morning walk once Shannon leaves for school, but there is something about Nana's recipe that calls for an apron. Most of my memories of Nana are of her in her kitchen. The kitchen was small, but it was the center of her house. When we went to visit each Sunday, the family would gather around the kitchen table. Grampa Licsak always sat at the head of the table, a cup of coffee at his elbow. My dad would sit next to him to argue politics. The family joke was that Grampa was a socialist. I think he just loved to argue, so whichever position my father took, Grampa took the opposite view. He was a first-generation American born to immigrant parents from Slovakia. Even though he spoke his parent's language he refused to teach his children, "You're Americans, you speak English," he declared. But he often used Slavish words to refer to us children. We chose to think they were terms of endearment.

My mom would sit opposite her father and chat with Nana about us kids and other family members. What the news was from California where my uncle had moved his family, much to Nana's dismay, and what each cousin was up to, good or bad. Nana would busy herself at the stove or the sink, pouring coffee, checking on her Sunday dinner preparations, and whispering to my brothers and sister and me where we could find the cookies in the pantry. And always, no matter the occasion, she wore an apron—usually a floral flouncy apron, sometimes with her own embroidery, over a housedress. At the holidays, when she wore pretty dresses and heels, and some of her outrageously bold costume jewelry, she'd wear a white lace hostess apron.

With my Winnie the Pooh apron tied on, I heat the oil in the pan and start chopping vegetables. I can hear Shannon moving around upstairs, but as I peel and slice, and rinse, I think of Nana. Thirty-four years after her death, and her face is still as clear to me as it was as a child, possibly because my mother and older sister look just like her. I ended up on the Irish end of

the family gene pool, but the other two favor her with dark brunette hair, chocolate brown eyes, and olive skin. There is some debate as to Nana's heritage, which was supposedly English and French, but Nana always believed she was adopted. Years after her death my aunt attempted to trace her mother's family roots. The search ended abruptly in upstate New York, but there was talk that there might be some truth to Nana's belief that she had been descended from the Oneonta tribe of American Indians. True or not, it lent an air of mystery to our family history.

I picture Nana moving about her kitchen as I work in mine. My grandfather was a butcher, so Nana often cooked some odd types of meals. We kids used to dare one another to raise the lid on her cooking pots to see what was bubbling inside. If you were lucky, it was a pot roast, but if you weren't you might find pig's feet boiling away. While Nan cooked, her black miniature poodle, Flirt, would dance around her feet. The only person Flirt ever flirted with was Nana. The rest of us she nipped and bit. I still can't stand poodles, but my black lab Hannah, is underfoot as I move between the stove and the sink. She only dances around my feet if she thinks there is food to be had.

Over Nana's kitchen sink hung a black and white china cockatoo she christened Pedro. I used to think if I just listened carefully enough, he'd actually talk to me. After Grampa died in 1986, Mom took Pedro and brought him to our home in Cape Cod. For years he sat on a shelf in the laundry room gathering dust. Three years ago, when we were cleaning out the house in preparation to sell it, I asked if I could have Pedro. He now hangs over my kitchen sink, a whimsical reminder of my childhood.

The vegetables sizzle when I drop them into the pan, one of my grandmother's that I rescued from the donation pile when we cleaned out her house. I lower the heat, stir them, and then run to the pantry downstairs to find the cans of clams and bottle of clam juice. When I return, Shannon is stirring the vegetables for me. She smiles at me and says, "I love Nana's clam chowder." Then she looks me over and says, as only a teenage girl can, "Nice apron, Mom."

As I boil water to pour over the vegetables and drain the clams, I think about the things that connect us. How my daughter, who never had the privilege of meeting her great-Nana, loves her soup recipe. How she sees me wearing an apron, because when I make Nana's soup, I



wear an apron. And how I cook in a kitchen watched over by her great-grandmother's china cockatoo. It's funny how even the simplest of things can bind us across the years.



## **Vermont**

Betsy Sorrentino '76

## **I am From the Moments**

Emily McGovern '20

I am from painting under tables  
And mixing cement in the trunk of a car.  
I am from homemade birdhouses  
And elaborate sand castles decorated with seashells.  
I am from logic puzzles and fuzzy socks,  
From dog cuddles and smudged glasses.  
I am from Parcheesi tournaments and game nights,  
From frozen marshmallows and waffle ice cream sandwiches.  
I am from grass stains, cracked chins,  
And face-planting in the snow.  
I am from butterfly kisses, hand-knitted scarves,  
And photos glued in scrapbooks.  
I am from the dirt beneath my nails  
And homegrown juicy tomatoes eaten with salt.  
I am from rain-soaked tents and mud-caked boots,  
From sleeping under the stars.  
I am from vinegar-dyed hands,  
Painstakingly making designs on hard-boiled eggs.  
I am from designing place cards on holidays  
And smeared names on birthday cakes.  
I am from Saturday morning soccer games  
And orange wedge smiles.  
I am from digging for clams  
And long-winded rambles.  
I am from the moments,  
The memories that withstand time.  
Both the good and bad,  
The ones that have shaped me into who I am.

## **A Letter from the Editor:**

The word “Amaranth” comes from a Greek legend about a fictional and immortal flower. This holds true to our magazine which brings together all forms of creative expression and preserves them within its pages. Earlier in the year, when our editorial staff decided on a theme, we felt that “Reflections” embodied the message that the magazine carries. We wanted to put a twist on the stereotypical theme of “2020 Vision” and turn it into a topic that could inspire contributors.

Without the hard work and dedication of the Amaranth staff and the individuals who submitted work, this magazine would not be able to showcase the talents of the St. Joseph High School Community. A special thank you must be given to Mrs. Broderick; whose contributions and time made this book possible. Despite the complications of having to work on Amaranth remotely due to COVID-19, the senior staff came together in a collaborative manner to ensure that the book would still be published. This is a difficult time for everyone and we wanted to make sure that the creative submissions of our contributors could still be highlighted. Our staff felt that this time, more than ever, is when literature and art are needed. The writings and illustrations submitted are a tribute to those who produced them. They are reflections of the past and hopes for the future.

Finally, this is the last year of High School for our senior staff members and I know that we have all taken the past few weeks to reflect on how much St. Joes has meant to us. We all came together to produce this book as tribute to both the contributors and to our love of the creative arts at St. Joes.

Emily McGovern '20

## ***Amaranth 2020 — Reflections***

**Editor-in-Chief:** Emily McGovern '20

**Assistant Co-Editor:** Patricia Benedek '20

**Assistant Co-Editor:** Michelle Hackenson '20

**Art Co-Editor:** Lindsay Giovannone '20

**Art Co-Editor:** Jenny Lee '20

**Assistant Art Editor:** Sophie Chorek '20

**Editorial & Art Staff:** Victoria Alves, Annika DelRosario, Julia DiCesare, Andrew Donnelly, Megan Frattaroli, Anna Lucas, Helen Mahoney, Maeve Malone, Hannah Mussatto, Amy Ogle, Lauren Pleszko, Carson Rodriguez, Katherine Spangenberg, Kaitlyn Szczepanski, Kimberly Wu

**Moderator:** Eileen Rafferty Broderick '79

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