

A painting of a cemetery. A bright, vibrant green path leads from the foreground, through several dark, rectangular tombstones, towards a dense forest of tall, dark trees in the background. The path has a glowing, ethereal quality, suggesting a mirage. The sky is a pale, hazy blue. The overall style is painterly and atmospheric.

Amaranth: Mirage

St. Joseph High School 2024

Letter From Publicist and Assistant Moderator

As a senior and member of *Amaranth Club* since freshman year, I have had the honor and privilege of working with so many wonderful people , including our beloved moderator, Mrs. Conetta. As a collective staff of *Amaranth*, we aim to consistently exceed our individual expectations of the quality of our annual publication from the previous year, and we have always followed through.

Our 2024 annual literary and arts publication theme is "Mirage", the distorted notion resembling individualistic illusion, as we detail and shape our own truths based on personal interpretation. Implementing a subtle twist to this years publication, our staff elected to integrate the French language to distinguish and introduce cultural flair to each section.

As we each embark on the next chapter of our lives, I encourage you to reflect upon the hidden blessings along each of your individual journey's. Our theme, "Mirage" is a universally applicable concept which allows us to give thought on the fleeting essence of our own journeys, thus bringing our SJ cadet family closer together.

On behalf of the *Amaranth* staff, thank you to all staff, faculty, students and especially, Mrs. Conetta, for supporting and advocating for our club. We hold much gratitude for the many talented submissions and valuable feedback received; our publication could not have been possible without YOU!

-Isabella Jakab

Letter From Artistic Editor

As a senior and member of *Amaranth* for the past three years, this new edition means a lot to me. The theme mirage and questioning reality was a challenging theme, but it was incredible to see all of the talented authors, artists, and photographers tackle the theme.

Mirage is questioning what is real and how we each perceive our own realities. Some submissions questioned their feelings, while others questioned if anything around us is even real. It was fascinating to witness so many unique and different interpretations of one stagnant theme: mirage. Many students right now are questioning their own realities as well as future realities, which is why this year's theme is so special because it's so very relevant.

As a senior, my time in high school is up, meaning I'm facing more uncertainty and excitement than ever before. I'm worried about my future, questioning my future reality and what is to come.

I've learned from the talented students who submitted their beautiful, original pieces, that although the future is uncertain and undecided, that does not have to be a bad thing. It means that we should live in the present and focus on our current reality. To me, the theme mirage means not worrying about what has yet to come and can not be seen, but rather focusing on the present, and everything around us right now.

Now is not a time to be fearful, but a time to live and enjoy the moment.

Thank you to the *Amaranth* staff, everyone who submitted, and Mrs. Conetta, for making this year's edition truly special and unforgettable.

-Jill Guilfoyle

"Poems of the Dogmeat General"

Poetry Translation/Shakespearean Sonnets

By Wali Khawaja '25

"Lightning"

I saw lightning in the
thunderous sky. It is like God
wants to get clouds to lit Then
if God is not lighting up, I
cry, Why is there lightning? I
don't get it.

The Penglai Pavilion:
What a worthwhile went. It is
very nice,

Sit so on a seat, Watching by
window. Drink a drink delight,
Sing some songs to see, Play
poker playoffs.

I think I'll get drunk
Praying for Rain:
The Sky God, also named Zhang,
likes to chime. Why does he make
life difficult for me?
If it does not rain within three
days time

I will raze your temple, my
enemy,
Then I will have cannons bombard
your mom.

(This poem was written during a
famine in East China. Legend has
it that 3 days after writing
that poem, Zhang Zongchang
really did destroy the temple of
the Chinese Sky God and fired up
into the sky. 4 days later, it
is said that it was the first
time it rained in weeks...) {

Spectrum

"Untitled"

One asked me how many women
I've got I really don't know
how many either. "Dad!" a
boy cried to me among the
lot

I don't know who his mother
is, oh dear.

Visiting Mount Tai:
From afar, Mount Tai looks
blackish and sad.
Narrow on top, and wide at
the bottom.

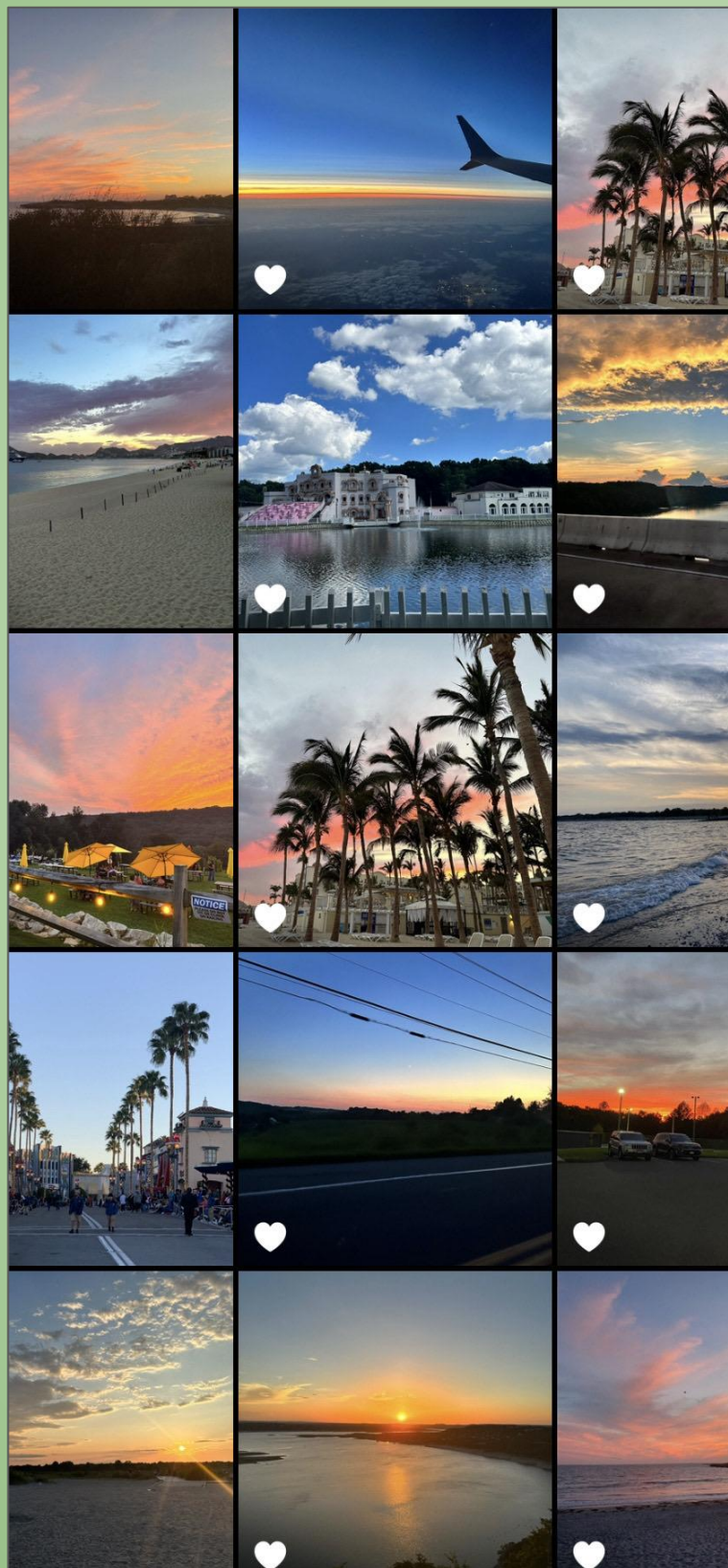
If you flipped it upside
down, and you add A balance,
Mount Tai would be, I told
them, Narrow on bottom and
wide at the top.

-

Poet's Note: *The Dogmeat General, or Zhang Zongchang, was a Chinese Warlord who ruled over a bit of Eastern China during the Warlord Era of China (1916 - 1928). What separated him from other warlords at the time was his brutality, eccentricities, and shenanigans, earning him the name of the Dogmeat General. Even Time Magazine joined his shenanigans by calling him China's "basest warlord." He was also semi-literate and wrote a few poems which I've adapted into English.*

“Golden” Photo Collage

By Rania Parikh '24



Spectrum

“More of Those Days to Come”

Photograph

By Max Cartolano '25



“Untitled”

Photograph

By Sophia Manzella '25



Spectrum

"Rainbow Mirage" **Most Unique Interpretation** **of Theme Award Winner**

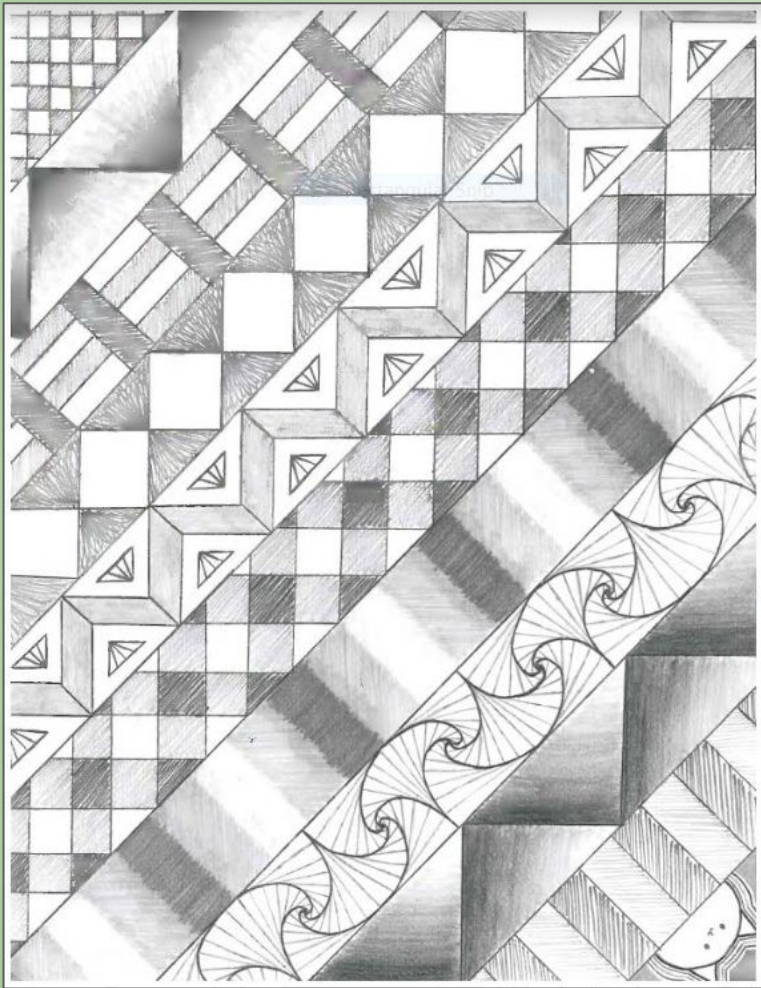
Photograph

By Adriana Jauk '27

"Shaded Illusions"

Pencil Sketch

By Miranda Martinez '27



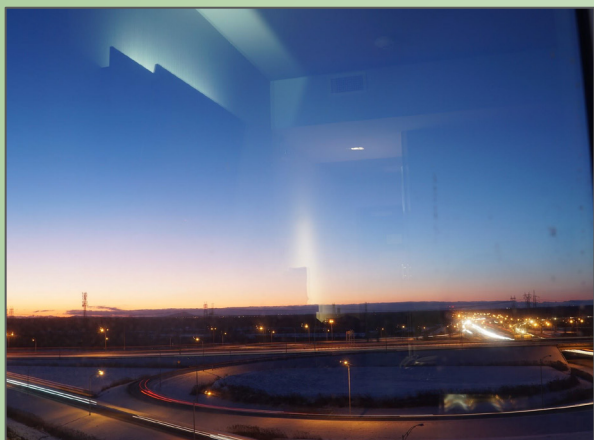
A mirage is when you see something that is not there. The rainbow that appears in my photo is not there in real life. When the camera flashes, the sun against the snow reacts and causes us to see a rainbow. I wanted to use this photo because it represents my love for animals with the leopard in the background.

Spectrum

"Life is a Highway"

Photograph

By Mateo Miranda '25



"Blur"

Photograph

By Mateo Miranda '25



"The Mirage's Lie"

Free-Verse Poem

By Kevyn Calle '27

In the desert's vast and dry expanse
Where the sun's relentless, searing
dance Paints illusions with a fiery
lance There lies a vision, a moving
trance.

A shimmering oasis, a mesmerizing sight
With waters clear, reflecting light And
palm trees swaying, a pure delight A
mirage born from the desert's might.
Travelers, weary from the desert's test
See the oasis and feel blessed

A paradise in the wilderness
A refuge from the desert's harshness.
They walk towards it, their hopes high
Driven by thirst, under the blazing sky
But the oasis tricks them, a cruel lie A
mirage that mocks, as they try.

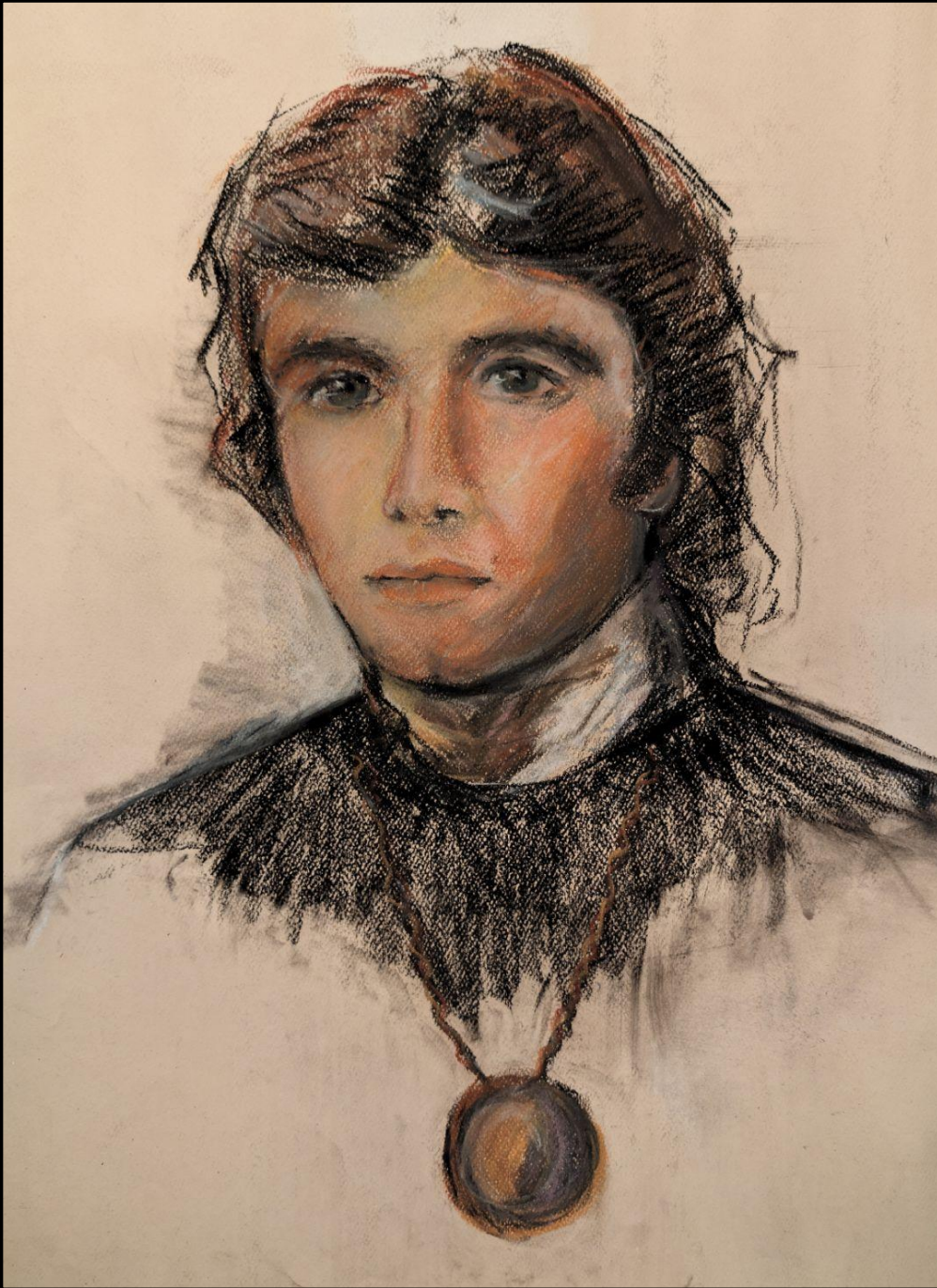
Yet in the mirage, a lesson gleams
A metaphor for life's brief dreams For
what we seek may not be as it seems
Illusions leaving, like desert streams.
The oasis fades, and the vision departs
Leaving behind disillusioned hearts But
in its wake, wisdom imparts

A truth about life's cunning arts.
So heed the mirage's elusive call, Look
beyond the illusions that enchant For in
the desert, amongst it all Lies a deeper
truth, standing tall.

In the mirage find a reflection clear Of
desires, fears, hopes sincere And though
the oasis may disappear

The journey itself holds what we hold
dear.

Freedom



“Father Faith”

A pastel portrait

By Mrs. Lori

Conetta

Freedom



“Visionary Illusions”
Best Literature Award Winner
Interactive Story & Photograph
By William Merwin '25

The fog grew greater as a lone traveler walked across the path, searching for a destination. With energy in their step, the traveler sought to make out a sight beyond the endless mist. Instead, they made out a voice... “LET YOURSELF BE GUIDED TO THE NOBEL PEN SHELL’S ETERNAL NET. COLLECT THE SPOILS ALONG THE WAY, AND THEN COMBINE THEM TOGETHER ON THE DOOR’S FRONT STEP. THE ONE IN ROBES MARKS THE CORRECT PATH...”
...DEPART TO ->

...
This is but the beginning of an interactive story!
Go to <https://www.sjcadets.org/VisionaryIllusions>, play the files in Python, and partake in the journey yourself!



Freedom

"Down the River"

Photograph

By Max Cartolano '25



"Poem"

Free-verse Poem

By Sydney Lombard '25

Winston watches the tormenting
telescreen.

Consuming contempt and deep
disgust engulf his thoughts,
as heated hatred clouds his
consciousness.

Boisterous bedlam breaks out
among clustered comrades.
Glances share sad secret
sympathies.

They directly doubt their
lifelong loyalties; all
forceful feelings must be
swiftly suppressed.

"The Style of Colors"

Free-verse Poem

By Kiera Donegan '24

Styled blue styled white
Give me hickory or pine
Smell the deep rosemary leaves,
but leave the other

One to take in the aroma, and the
other drown out each others trauma
Dream a life in different shades
of blue rather than the life of
Montague

One fighting for the all the power
and glory, and the other fighting
for the destiny of their heart

Freedom

"The Eye of a Mermaid"

Free-verse Poem

By Gianni Testi '27

I once saw a reef and was in disbelief,
 I once saw a seahorse and felt some
 remorse
 Thought it was me, being a part of the
 sea
 I once saw a starfish and scrambled to
 admonish
 There I was underwater.
 A lady with fins to swim with dolphins
 I imagined a jellyfish, and realized it
 was a wish
 Until I saw a really big-looking fish
 And to its avail it was a huge whale
 I grabbed on its fin and knew we would
 win
 The sea led us to where we've always
 have been
 The beauty of the sea is something I
 can't unsee
 I'll know the life of a seal is
 protected when the dangers are revealed
 To protect those down under from the
 dangers of wonder
 The sea led us to where we've always
 have been
 Together we unite
 In unity we fight
 To maintain the wildlife
 In the ocean of life
 So come to my aid and help a mermaid
 Let's protect the ocean to keep us in
 motion

"Self-Love"

Colored Pencil Sketch

By Sophia Palacio '24



"Logan"

Bio-Poem

By Amy DeCaro '25

Obedient, Strategic, Adamant,
 Courageous
 Coworker of Francis and Admirer
 of Jessica
 Strong, Agile, Fit
 Who Loves the Power that Comes
 with his Gun, His Role as a
 Sandman, and Jessica
 Who fears Lastday, Death, and
 Carousel
 Who covets the Chase, Freedom,
 Sanctuary
 Who Destroys Runners, Alters his
 Appearance, and Dreams to Escape
 Resident of a Cruel, Dystopian
 Society

"Faculty Submission #1"

Painting

By Signora Bridget
Carroll-Lewis
World Language Faculty

"True Freedom"

Free-verse Poem

By Sebastian Martinez '25

I awoke quite some time ago in a
world with no boundaries or
distractions
For the first time, I am not
disturbed at all, as I walk along
the single path in front of me I
look up at the sky, it is raining,
pouring, soaking my own mind
Melting away my miseries now and the
disappointments to come
The landscape is dull, but I feel
vibrant colors surround me The reds,
greens, blues, the colors that I
stare at day after day I reach in my
pocket for my phone and find that
it's not there
I don't need it there, I smile at
this fact
A world without the pleasantries
that have disgusted me for so long
I know it's not real, but I long to
be here anyway
I long to stay with my eyelids
closed, with the constant wind, with
the heavy rain The comforting
silence, the holy silence
Where the path leads I do not know,
and I do not care I can only imagine
walking here for the rest of time
No goals, no worries, no heartbreak



The paradise we want, well, the
paradise I want
A world without love, how bad would
that be? I am alone, as I have grown
used to
In this world, solitude doesn't hurt
at all There is only myself and the
endless storm
I am content here, alone, but
without pain, without boredom
Freedom from the human emotions I've
learned to hate
A mirage, yet just a glimpse of what
it could be
Here I wish I could never wake up

Nostalgia

"A Painted Picture"

Free-verse Poem

By Kiera Donegan '24

The next day's morning
frost, bit through her
heart

The air has become cold and
bitter, summer days are
long and over

Morning sunrises light up
the warm colored leaves,
appearing like

Michelangelo's pallet Paint
the heart red, let it bleed
with love

There's no reason conceal
one's true colors, until it
is painted black, ridding
it of beauty Among all the
others, her days appear
repeated with no change
While his days were set a
blazing,

His hand crowded her touch,
pressing onto the emptiness
that the woman possesses

Their souls murmured
quietly in the raging crowd
Love leant against their
wounds, leaving them
rejuvenated and in bliss

"A Haunted Heart"

Free-verse Poem

By Kiera Donegan '24
Sitting at the piano bench,
by fireside
Playing along the keys,
Her voice echoes through
the depths my heart
Right through the chest
cavity, to linger and grow
violets no longer blooming,
roses now wilted
The talk amongst the crowd,
sounded like birds singing
in the springtime
A haunting jazz melody went
through the ballroom,
Her collection of pearls
scatter on the wood floor,
lost into the darkness like
the feelings falling from
her black heart

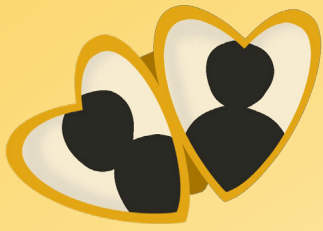
"Dystopia"

Group Poem

By Amy DeCaro, Maddy
DeRosa, Monica Tokar '25

Suppression seeks where weak
minds weep, Winston's world
bleak with nebulous newspeak
Deny dreams - lies live
extreme

Quickly, quiet outside
twisted thought Dark
despair, freedom fought And
vivid vaporization
Fearing for destined
damnation



Nostalgia

“Not Just Jewelry”

Narrative Essay

By Adrienne LaRiviere '25



Worn against my skin, the gold heart-shaped necklace clasped securely around my neck carries more than its delicate weight. Although smooth and polished on the surface, it glimmers with the affectionate memories etched into its metallic core. Each link in the chain weaves a tale of connection, an example of the strength of love. In moments of discomfort, and in need of familiarity, my fingers instinctively find refuge in the dance of fidgeting with the delicate gold heart around my neck.

The smooth surface, once a source of comfort, becomes a necessity, grounding me in the tangible reality of its presence. I trace the heart without thinking, feeling the cool metal face the warmth of my touch and am reminded of this symbol of my affection. As conversations turn awkward or surroundings become unfamiliar, the golden heart becomes a silent companion, a small yet significant object. Its presence offers a momentary escape into the familiar embrace of my cherished pendant. Even when I only briefly remove the necklace, an immediate awareness of its absence washes over me.

It's as if a part of me is momentarily misplaced, leaving an emptiness that is hard to ignore. Without realizing it, my hand instinctively reaches for the void, and the realization dawns upon me in a split second. The act of taking it off, even for the briefest of moments, unveils the significance it holds in my daily existence. The absence is a stark reminder of the void left when love is momentarily set aside.

At that moment, the act of putting it back on becomes a deliberate commitment to carry the essence of love, both in its presence and its brief absence. In the dance of discomfort and the acknowledgment of absence, the gold heart necklace proves a metaphor for the fluidity of love in my life, a tangible thing in place of the intangible thread of love I seek in all things all around me.



Nostalgia



"The Thing I Carry"

**Personal Anecdote inspired by Tim O'Brien's
*The Things They Carry***

By Monica Tokar '25

The funny thing about the things we carry is that sometimes they were not ours to begin with. The hair tie I wear upon my wrist is likely not one I bought. In fact, it was probably passed from person to person before it got back to me and I don't even know whose it was to begin with. Someone may have handed me one out of necessity or because at that moment it seemed like the only thing I needed was to pull my copper hair out of my face and watch the world become a little clearer. Just like that, a form of unspoken unity between two girls passed through the air.

There is a girl I met one summer on a weekend trip to Ohio. On the bus ride home, we spoke for nine hours of the bitter and sweet mysteries life has to offer. When I grew melancholic she asked to braid my hair, leaving me with the hair tie I wore on my wrist every day until it finally snapped. There is no use for a broken hair tie. Yet as worn out as it was, it served its use and nothing is permanent, not even an elastic band.

As I reached for a new hair tie and stretched it out, I recognized it too needs to be broken in to accommodate its best function. By continual use, it becomes optimum for sharing with other girls and beginning the chain of unspoken alliance like those that came before me. In a never ending loop, I give and receive hair ties every day in a mutual ambition that every girl can braid their hair and watch how pulling their hair back makes them focus on the world a little better. The funny thing about the thing I carry is that sometimes I bring a piece of everyone I know with me wherever I go.



**“Celestial Glow and
Midnight Mystery”**

Colored Pencil Sketch

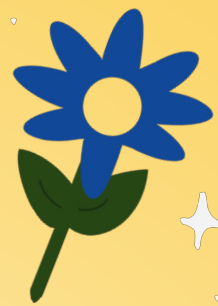
By Fayrose Hussain

'24





Nostalgia



"Keys and Responsibilities"

Personal Anecdote

By Sara Parker '25

As young children grow up and experience their tween and early teenage years, many look forward to the huge milestone that is their 16th birthday. They know what lies ahead and impatiently wait for that day. For me, everything changed on my 16th birthday. I gained possession of a single black and silver key. A key that would not just unlock four shiny, silver doors and start a roaring engine but one that would open a new realm of possibilities.

On a Thursday morning, I woke up just as the sun was beginning to rise. There was no possible way for me to sit still as the adrenaline coursed through my veins. I left my house promptly at 7 am as my driver's test was at 8:30. As I walked outside, the birds were singing, and the sun was shining vibrantly. There was a cool breeze, and I knew it would be a life-changing day. I passed my test comfortably as the car moved steadily down the streets, and every turn was smooth. Upon the test's completion, the generous agent handed me a small slip of pink paper.

From that moment on, the roads were at my disposal, and endless opportunities lay ahead of me. The key I received only four months before was no longer solely kept in a kitchen drawer. That key would now come along with me to explore new adventures. Every day, that key jingles in my hand with the promise of independence and responsibility.

Nostalgia

From the first time I turned that key in the ignition, a new chapter in my life started. I thought of all the previous keys I had held on to. I thought of the colorful, plastic keys I had as a baby. I thought of the mini metal key that would unlock the blue flower journal I had written in as a middle schooler. I thought of the house key now attached to the key sitting in the ignition. Each key marked a significant chapter in my life, but none held as much significance and responsibility as that singular black and silver key.

That key could control a weapon. There are rules on the road that drivers need to follow and severe consequences for ignorant actions. Despite these new foreign concerns, there was a feeling of freedom. Driving down the black pavement with the windows down, music blasting, and wind blowing was like nothing I had ever experienced. It was an opportunity to explore the world beyond the same streets I had become so accustomed to. It was an opportunity to create adventures in my own unique ways. This seemingly small key opened not only simple car doors but countless doors that can help shape my future. It opened doors to new jobs, financial awareness, and enjoyment. Whether it was just a short drive around the block or a long drive several cities over, there were new opportunities to explore.

Every day, I grab that key off of the kitchen table. While I may forget my water bottle or chapstick, that key travels everywhere I go. Whenever I look at that key, I see how much my life has changed in just a few short months. When my mom calls, "Drive safe!" down the stairs, I remember the accountability, independence, and responsibility I must carry and uphold every single day. That key represents the future. As I learn, grow, and mature, new keys will find a place on my keychain. There may someday be a new house key, a key to an office, or even a key to a new car. There are endless possibilities for the future, and that single black and silver key symbolizes the ride I am just beginning.



Nostalgia



"Aquaphor"

Personal Anecdote

By MiKayla Gallias '25

For years, I have been inseparable from my miniature Aquaphor, which is attached to a delicate pearl keychain. Despite going through different tubes over time, my addiction to this product persists, becoming an integral part of my daily life. However, it is more than just a healing ointment. It takes on a different significance, one that intertwines with the complexities of conforming to societal beauty standards. As I meticulously apply the ointment, I'm aware of the conscious effort I put into maintaining my appearance. The reflective moments when I reach for the tube become a canvas for the insecurities and expectations ingrained by societal norms.

In the seventh grade, I began to carry Aquaphor with me, inspired by my Grandpa's application of it on his weathered hands. He confided in me his feelings of shame and regret for the actions that had caused his hands to look the way they did. From then on Aquaphor became a sanctuary where the apprehensions about growing older could momentarily dissipate.

As a teenager it feels as if the world is actively measuring worth based on appearance, my use of Aquaphor becomes a tangible representation of actively engaging with beauty standards. It's not merely about skin hydration; it's a deliberate act of self-presentation, an acknowledgment of the societal gaze that constantly scrutinizes appearances.





Nostalgia

Eventually, Aquaphor increased to the use of mascara, blush, and eventually a full face of drug store makeup that I would apply without my mother knowing. Before I knew it the rituals of skincare morphed into a conscious effort to adhere to certain beauty ideals, influencing my choices and actions throughout the day.

In the spring of 2020, while confined to my home due to the lockdown, I had the opportunity to remove my makeup and escape the harsh judgment of preteens. Despite the unprecedented circumstances, this period allowed me to engage in self-reflection, particularly regarding my appearance. As I spent countless hours in bed, mindlessly scrolling through TikTok, I was bombarded with countless videos promoting "at home ab exercises" and "DIY clear skin recipes." Although these enticing messages tempted me, I made the conscious decision to remain true to myself. Over time, my confidence grew and my collection of various beauty products dwindled down to just Aquaphor. It dawned on me that the opinions of others held little significance; what truly mattered was my own perception of myself. It is the essence of my being, my soul, that radiates and captivates others.

Now the tube of Aquaphor, nestled in the depths of my bag, becomes a silent confidant in my ongoing battle against the fear of aging. As I glide it across my skin, I find solace in the simple ritual, a moment of self-care that transcends the superficial expectations imposed upon me. I realize the lines and scars on my hands mark his journey through life and Aquaphor is a reminder that beauty is subjective, that the lines on my face tell a story of experiences, laughter, and growth.

Nostalgia

“Dectina Refrain: Editing History”

Dectina Refrain Poem

By Amy DeCaro '25

We
Must change
History
To control now
People need us now
Past controls the future
The Present controls the
past
So, we must change the wrong
past
Taking over Oceania
One paper at a time, every
day
"We must change history to
control now"



“Split Reality”

Best Art Award Winner

Watercolor Painting

By Niki Tsilfides '24

“Ode (to Big Brother)”

Modern Ode Poem

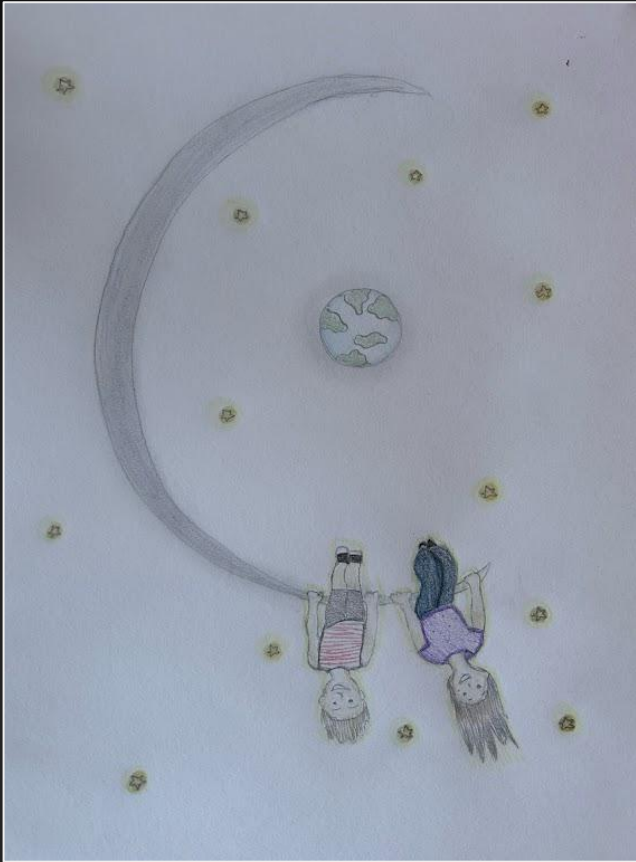
Amy DeCaro '25

I will forever praise you Big Brother
For you are always right
How can I refute such a wise man?
Although I cannot see you, I still know you
Thank you for your control of society
Without you, life would fall apart
Your way is always perfect
For I am nothing without you
But those who disagree shall be vaporized
For you, Big Brother, are necessary

"Whimsey"

Colored Pencil Sketch

By Anna Campolettano '26



"The Day After"

Free-verse Poem

By Emma Fernandes '26

Waking up with a start,
feeling heavy in the heart,
Wishing it was just a dream,
a twisted plot, or a scheme.
Why'd you have to go and
leave a hole,
Now I'm wandering, playing a
lonesome role.
Wondering, Pondering what to
do without you
Every dawn when you'rE gone,
my thoughts of you carry on
My vision gets hazy, MY eyes
playing tricks on me,
Reality's a puzzle, as
tricky as can be.

Answer

"Here I Have Waited"

Free-verse Poem

By William Merwin '25

Here I have been cast
Left to be biding my time
With no one but myself to remain
That I have been biding for my
prime

A suspension of which,
Eternity feels truly compared
Others have said my wait is
damned
But our love is truth, not dared

I still remember the day
Our eyes met on that bridge
A passage of love, our paths
collide
From the peninsula, our destiny
sciage

Even last I saw your
beauty-filled face
From beyond the shores of worlds
I felt deep down, we would
reconvene
And here, for so long, I will
wait...

Wait! I can feel him
approaching!
I knew our eternal bond was
secundum esse!
All this time I have waited
alone, just for our love
9So why have you arrived with
someone else...?

"We Never Even Dated"

Free-verse Poem

By Anonymous '26

We never even dated
Though it feels as if we did
Locked away like R and J
We lied just to stay hid
You said that I was perfect
And that I deserved the same
But when I think of perfect
I think of your perfect name

I wanna tell you that I miss you
I want you to know how much I cry
But if you said you did the same,
I'd know it's all a lie
You said it was real
I started to think it was love
So tell me, what is real to you?
And what does that lie consist
of?
If I had known last time I saw
you
It would be the last forever
I would have hugged you a little
tighter
As now "next time" has turned to
"never"

I wish I could go back in time
And be with you once again
But this is all a secret
So I'll just ask you how you've
been
You said these words to me that
night
"I believe it was right place
wrong time"
But then again, we never even
dated
Yet I'd give the world to call
you mine {



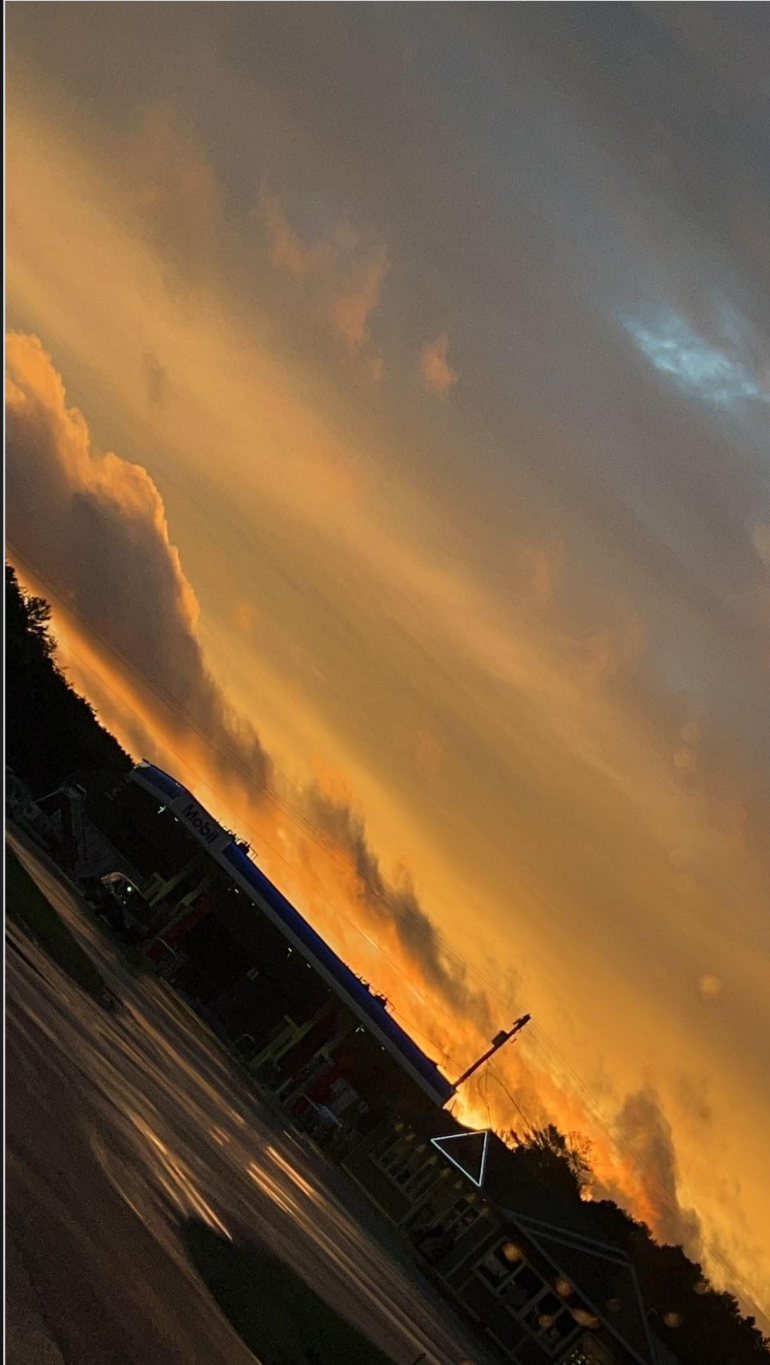
"Silhouette"

Free-verse Poem

By Gabby Perez '25

I recall you telling me you're not like
other guys.
But as I watch you leave to the crowd.
The crowd of guys that have forsaken me
just like you did.
I stand in a crowd of memories that feel
too similar.
A painful recollection of the premonition
of abandonment.
As I drown in this crowd of pain.
I am reminded of the cessation of us.
The place that you stood beside me,
Is reinstated with nothing but a
silhouette of who you used to be.
Of what **we** used to be.
As I watch you wander to the crowd.
I ponder on what I could've done to make
you stay a little longer.
But no matter how much pain you've caused
me.
I wish for your silhouette to be a
lifelike figure of you.
So then I can experience the feeling of
love and safety.
Security.
Happiness.
Euphoria.
One. Last. Time.
I yearn for the silhouette to be you
again.
Letting you go has been a strenuous
process.
But I **must**.
I don't need you, I need **me**.
No matter how much I long for your
presence.
And the way your fingertips traced my
scars.
8 I must let you **go**.

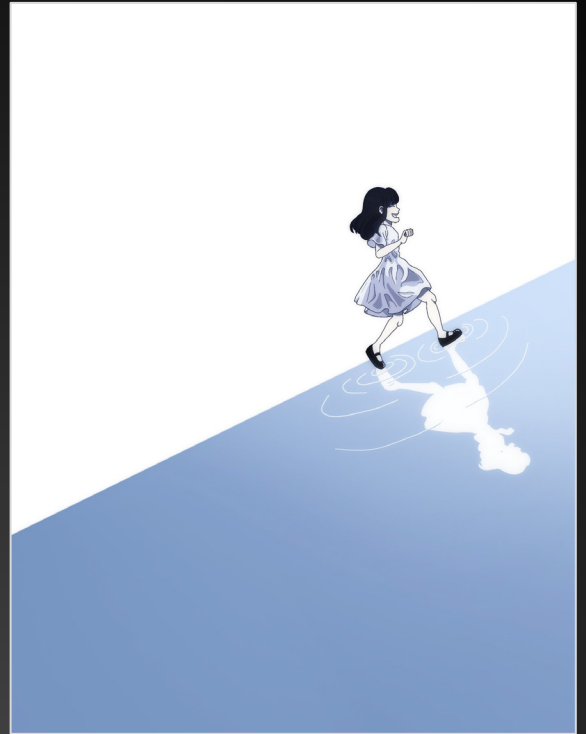
✧ Mortality ✧



“Finding Peace at the End”

Photograph

By Sophia Evers '26



“The Spirit of Zelda”

Digital Art

By Danielle Erive '24



“The End”

Photograph

By Max Cartolano '25

✧ Mortality ✧

"FLEETING"

Free-verse Poem

By Dr. Dan Lambert

Sometimes when I walk past a mirror
Nothing is there looking back at me. No reflection. No image. No me.
I used to spend a lot of time in front of mirrors
Checking my hair, my skin, my teeth.
That person is gone, vanished in the vapor of time.
I would look into the mirror and see flaws, blemishes, doubts
That I knew everyone else was staring at
And repulsed by. Gross.
The pessimistic and self-critical reflection of youth
whispering to me About my failures and shortcomings and
The many ways I didn't measure up.
As days passed into weeks
And weeks into months
And months into years
And years into decades,
That loud, obnoxious, persistent, omnipresent
reflection faded. Replaced
By Experience
By Knowledge
By Wisdom.
I now realize that the reflection I saw as a youth was
Fleeting.
Now those same mirrors highlight
Battle scars of a life well lived,



"The End"

Best Art Award Winner

Acrylic Painting

By Jillian Guilfoyle '24

And the insight that the mirrors
from back in the day Lied.
The pain of those years was very
real and deeply felt
Even as I knew deep down that
the blemishes and flaws and
shortcomings Were manufactured
by the impossible standards of a
sick culture
Built on impossible expectations
of fake perfection.
"This too shall pass," is the
truest Truth my self-doubt
needed to learn. The image in
the mirror is
Fleeting.

Letter From Moderator-in-Chief

This year's edition of *Amaranth* invites its readers to explore the theme, "Mirage." Student writers and artists explore the intricate lines that amalgamate fact, fantasy, and faith. The word mirage derives in part from Old French. The literal meaning discerns how refracted light causes optical illusions; whereas, the poetic interpretation entices one to question what is real or imaginary...

The substantive submissions inspired our student staff to curate this exceptional work by dividing the content into distinct sections also inspired by French words: Morality(Moralité), Love(Amour), Nostalgia(Nostalgie), Freedom(Liberté),and Spectrum(Spectre).

During the 2023-24 school year, the St. Joseph High School *Amaranth* staff expanded our club to invite student artists, writers, and crafters to our Creative Collective events after school to revitalize this year's nuanced theme. This platform welcomed students and faculty to brainstorm ideas, innovate, and inspire. The camaraderie fostered a relaxed environment culminating in student works: poems, journals, crafts, or sketches. Ultimately, all found unity in creating something avant-garde.

The *Amaranth* staff furthered its mission: Open the hearts and minds of the reader by infusing the design and selections with tangible care. This edition stands out as traditionally Gothic in its philosophical roots; yet, the works express these tenets in diaphanous forms.

Amaranth would not exist without the contributions from our SJ community. I would like to thank the *Amaranth* student editors & leaders + our staff, administration, faculty, staff, and family who support our Cadets' creativity.

Lori Conetta, MAEd./CI
Amaranth Moderator-in-Chief
Student Academic Center Director & Personalized Learning Specialist
English Faculty
Drama Club Assistant Director & Producer

"Pistil de Fleur" -an oil painting on wood

By Lori Conetta



Letter From Literary Editor ✨

It is with great pleasure to present this years newest amaranth edition, *Mirage*. Though I have only been apart of this club since the end of my junior year, I could not be more proud of the editions published. Seeing other students submit their creative and artistic works has brought complete and utter joy. There have been themes of love, longing, freedom, nostalgia, and many more that carry the most personal message. The theme of *Mirage* has allowed people's minds to go beyond their capabilities and curate a masterpiece of literature or art. This year's edition is even more special, as we tie in a cultural flare with the origins of how mirage came to be.

As high school comes to a close, the adventure of college begins. There will be moments of excitement, joy, but also fear and discouragement. Like a mirage, there will be times that one will need to find my own take on reality and decipher life's challenges. It is only up to you to internet and make your future.

I would like to thank Mrs. Conetta for her continued support and guidance not only on poetry, but with life's crazy challenges. Thank you the additional *Amaranth* editors for their hard work and dedication on creating a truly inspiring magazine. In addition, thank you to the people that submitted their work, if it weren't for you all we would not have made this a reality.

Lastly, i would like to thank the community Saint Joe community for creating a kind, loving family. This school has created many lasting memories and bonds that creates a great bond to hopefully, last a lifetime.

-Kiera Donegan



Acknowledgements and Thank You's

Literary Editors: Kiera Donegan '24
& William Merwin '25

Artistic Editor: Jillian Guilfoyle '24

Layout & Artistic Support Staff: Fayrose Hussain '24

Publicist & Moderator's Assistant: Isabella Jakab '24

Creative Collective:

Leyla Basnueve '24, Allen Ramirez '24, Keira Sliva
'26, Sofia Couture '24, Sara Barrett '24,
Sebastian Martinez '25, Danielle Erive '24,
Danah Chamberlain '27, Amal Mamun '27, Walliulah
Khawaja '25, Emilia Wakulczyk '25, Adriana Juak
'27, Sophia Evers '26, Natalie Newmark '26, Lorelei
Buonicore '26,
Keira Sliva '26



"Amis Fantaisistes"
-an oil painting on wood
By Lori Conetta
Moderator-in-Chief

Acknowledgements and Thank You's

Acknowledgements:

The St. Joseph High School's **Amaranth** staff would like to acknowledge the previous staffs who inspired our vision and gumption to be the best versions of ourselves.

The staff would also like to thank Mrs. Martinez for her expertise and connections that make this magazine pop.

Ms. Pellegrini, thank you for gifting your artistic talent to our community and co-hosting the Creative Collective Events.

Mrs. Cardillo, Mrs. Conetta, Dr. Lambert, Ms. Kraszewska, Mrs. Broderick, Mr. Forde, Ms. Fox, Mrs. Gentry, Ms. Lowell, Ms. Loehfelm, and Mrs. Sorrentino: Thank you for igniting the literary gifts of your students.

Thank you to our administrators for their continual support in producing and financing this publication.

Lastly, thank you to Mrs. Conetta for her love and dedication to **Amaranth**. Our magazine would not be possible without the creative knowledge, vision, and patience of our beloved Moderator-in-Chief.

A collage of five torn, overlapping pieces of paper, each showing a portion of a painting. The painting depicts a woman with long brown hair, wearing a pink shirt, and holding a yellow book. The background of the painting includes a wooden floor, a green wall, and a small framed picture. The text "Amaranth: Mirage" is overlaid in a stylized, pink and white font.

St. Joseph High School 2024