

2nd Place: Mackenzie Kean
Freehold Township High School (Freehold, NJ)

Michelsohn Letter

Dear Eliahu,

Were they like wings?

The words
they tattooed on paper
and pinned to your back?

I think they were just like wings
but
without the feathers
without the fluff and the fuss

which only leaves faith.

And Eliahu, that's all you need
to remember that

they wrote them just for you.
They built them just for you –
out of three simple things:

Paper.
Ink.
Hope.

And even though paper is thin and
ink will bleed
Hope
is like a heart –
pumping and pulsing and
pushing you into the air.

But, your wings
weren't built to just keep you off the
ground.

they were built to bring you home

and

wrap around you
like a warm embrace of
Somedays and Somehows

because they promised that
Someday
you would
Somehow
find them

with wings like yours
with hearts that had been
hurting harder.

But, Eliahu,
until you are
home
until you are
heart against heart
once again,

read their words
and
wear your wings

because you were
born to live
born to breathe
born to fly.