“Look at that strange boy?” Everyone from the neighborhood is pointing fingers and watching the sky. “How’s he doing?” They stretch their necks and shake their heads. Ikarus Jackson, a new boy on my block is flying above the rooftops. He is swooping and diving, looping past people’s windows and over the crowd. I don’t think he’s strange.

Ikarus Jackson, the fly boy, came to my school last Thursday. His long, strong, proud wings followed wherever he went.

The whole school was staring eyes and wagging tongues. They whispered about his wings and his hair and his shoes. Like they whisper about how quiet I am.

Our teacher complained that the other ids couldn’t help but gawk and stare. He said that Ikarus’s wings blocked the blackboard and made it hard for the students to pay attention.

The teacher told Ikarus to leave class until he could figure out what to do with his wings. He left the room quietly, dragging his feathers behind him. One boy snickered.

At recess the snicker grew into a giggle and spread across the playground. Soon all the kids were laughing at Ikarus Jackson’s “useless” wings. I thought that if he flew just once everyone would stop laughing. Ikarus looked up, flapped his wings a couple of times, and then jumped into the air.
He swept through the schoolyard like a slow-motion instant replay.

But the other kids were not impressed. One girl grabbed the basketball. A boy stuffed the handball in his pocket. Somebody nagged, “Nobody likes a show-off.”

Their words sent Ikarus drifting into the sky, away from the glaring eyes and the pointing fingers. I waited for them to point back at me as I watched Ikarus float farther and farther away.

Walking home from school, I knew how he felt, how lonely he must be. Maybe I should have said something to those mean kids.

I ran through the streets with my eyes to the sky, searching the clouds for Ikarus.

He struggled to stay in the air. His wings drooped and his head hung low. He landed heavily on the edge of a building and sat with the pigeons. Pigeons don't make fun of people.

A policeman passing by blew his whistle. “You with the wings, come down from there! Stay yourself on the ground. You'll get in trouble, you'll get hurt.”

It seemed to me Ikarus was already in trouble and hurt. Could the policeman put him in jail for flying, for being too different?

When the neighborhood kids saw the policeman yelling at him, they exploded with laughter. Ikarus dropped to the ground. “Stop!” I cried. “Leave him alone.” And they did.

I called to Ikarus and he sailed closer to me. I told him what someone should have long ago: “Your flying is beautiful.”
For the first time, I saw Ikarus smile. At the moment I forgot about the kids who had laughed at him and me. I was just glad the Ikarus had found his wings again.

“Look at that amazing boy!” I called to all the people on the street as I pointed to my new friend Ikarus swirling through the sky.