

Second Place

Lucia Jutsum

Just the light will bring me strength

My sister has ten American flags
that hang from her ceiling. An open window
makes them collectively blow in the breeze.

I lay down with my back to the floor, and
my eyes look up at the sky-full of stars.

They are unlimited in their promises,
capable of bringing beautiful light.

They make me feel so small, and yet grateful;

These are the many lights of my country.

Here are the ever-glowing beacons of
the freedom that is bestowed upon us all.

This eternal light is the ubiquitous gift
of a country that mends all broken souls.

Hopelessness comes as clouds on a stormy night;

The thick cover of darkness which is doubt.

But behind every fear shines a bright light
of a spirit unbroken by injustice.

The bold stripes of courage,

The bright stars of promise.

Even as I lay below the red, white, blue,
aware of my own inadequacies,

I can share in that strength, that courage, that love
that makes my banner wave above.