

The Letter

I registered for the draft
before I left for college
in 1960.

A mechanical act,
with no thought given to the blood
hidden under my signature.

College deferred me,
although at times I heard distant thunder
of an advisor getting killed or a domino not falling
in a country not known to me.

The letter felt heavy,
didn't want to open.
I held it, for a while.

My friend burned his card –
the smoke carried him
to Stillwater Prison.
I enlisted in the Navy.

Later, I paid the price. Later,
I heard the silence
in the roar of a jet engine.