Brothers

Even grown, they have a way of getting close
    that looks like combat, the way they used to wrestle
in the dirt or try to push each other from the bed.
    Once, my husband enlisted. And his brother—
who studied the colliding physics of the stars,
    distant explosions—refused to use his science
in the work of war. He marched to a nearby base.
    He wore a slogan and carried a sign. With brothers,
it’s a matter of fingernails in the tenderness of skin.
    It takes knowing which bones were broken years ago.
Don’t protest the soldiers, my husband said,
    but the ones who send them off to fight.
With brothers, it takes twisting an arm with both
    hands to make a burn. It’s a matter of forming a fist,
of digging knuckles against unprotected scalp.
    Now, the two are so far apart only something
droning very high could locate their coordinates.
    One would need an instrument positioned
in the desert and pointing its curved mirrors
    at the night, to find the light that they’re emitting,
each bright certainty set against the other.