

Thank You for Your Service

Who could know that after Pearl Harbor
my Ohio farm-raised uncles would enlist,

proud to be Army and Navy bound,
to defend their country, and who could know

they'd march into World War II,
relegated to segregated units,

except, on European soil they'd
stand taller, tread lighter

not shunned or shamed
not damned or diminished,

but respected as Americans
accepted as men, bronze skin and all,

would shelter and fight in foxholes
with white soldiers, break bread --

and they'd return home heroes, hoisted
high on their countrymen's shoulders

as if the U.S. had changed
as if the home-front war was done raging,

except after the homecoming parade,
after the champagne and speeches,

it was business as usual.