The Pen is Mightier than the Sword

I have a dream . . .
Martin Luther King, Jr.

I think, at first, of King . . .
I see him on the monument,
up there, gathering in the words
with slow, powerful cadences,
people nodding, “uh unh”

and I think of the pen in his hand
as he must have jotted those words
nights before.

and I think of the short, squat implement in his hand
and wonder about its standing up
to the semi-automatic, or to the
submarine missile gliding silently in subarctic
waters.

And yet it isn’t King,
nor even the small, still voice he
listened to . . .
it is the writing, the jotting of a
phrase: “beloved community,” “a force field
more powerful than war,”

and the way each phrase enters
the brain, the bloodstream,
the very expanding and contracting
of the lungs . . .

Until it is filtered, distilled,
into the myriad choices that
make our days, our weeks,
our millennia.

--Andrew Moss, 2010