

I Am Black

by Tory Blackwell

I am a father,
Brother, husband, son,
Nephew, uncle, cousin, grandson.
And I am black.

I am a friend,
I help lift boxes, babysit, and listen.
I bring gifts to parties, attend the weddings, and take all the pictures.
And I am black.

I am a teacher,
Educating students and giving them a path.
Reaching out and lifting up, providing skills that last.
And I am black.

I am a scientist,
Asking questions to help us understand our world and its connections.
Solving problems, breaking riddles, constant reflection.
And I am black.

I am a veteran,
I served and helped maintain our right,
to liberty, justice, and to protest.
And I am black.

I am a community member,
Joining committees, giving feedback, using my voice to vote.
Attending meetings, donating time and money, helping to build hope.
And I am black.

When I get pulled over or ask for help,
When I ask for respect or to respect someone else,
When I question being followed for touching something on a store shelf,
When I am not safe jogging by myself,
bird watching, wearing a hoodie,
or just in my home at rest,
When I plead to take a breath,
I am just black.