

# 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.