

# **Nathan Rubin Poetry Portfolio**

Creative Writing: Poetry

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## Black

It landed above me,

a black bird

wings like dusk folding in on itself,

eyes quiet and watching.

Instantly,

the old stories crept in.

Black cat.

Omen.

Trouble on the wind.

The myths we indulge without question,

the shadows we flinch

from without knowing why.

But I paused.

And I wondered—

Why is black always the warning?

Why do we teach children to fear the night, but praise the cloud?

To chase the white rose, but question the dark one?

Aren't shadows what give shape to light?

Isn't the night sky where the stars come out to speak?

Black is skin kissed by sun,  
the hush of waters,  
the velvet of space.

Black is diamonds uncut,  
truth unspoken,  
beauty unsimplified.

So I looked again at that bird in the branches.

Not a warning,  
but a witness.

Not omen,  
but a mirror.

And I thought,  
maybe the fear was never in the bird.

Maybe the fear was taught.

## Up Against It

You get close...

but never break through.

Thresholds are pushed, limits are tested, but the plateau  
can never pass the tightly closed lid on the jar

Is it my fault?

Is it a result of my actions?

or does life have a line on development that one can't cross?

is it my fate?

or a mere result of my exertion?

Clouds form, drops fall,

but the rain doesn't last forever,

right?

## Uncertainty

I looked out  
and saw something shining—  
not near,  
yet not far.

It reminded me of a life  
I almost lived,  
a version of me  
that once felt certain.

And suddenly,  
the **weight** returned.  
The questions,  
the ache in the chest,  
the fear that I've taken a step

I can't undo.

What if I left too soon?  
What if I stayed too long?  
What if the road ahead  
isn't mine at all?

The light didn't answer.

It just hovered

quiet and unmoved

like a future that doesn't owe me anything.

And I sat there,

still in between.

Still unsure

if I'm walking away

or walking toward.



## Success

There are times  
when silence is heavier than sound,  
when the body forgets how to move,  
and hope is just a rumor  
whispered from a distance.

We're told  
that wealth is the answer—  
that joy lives in the decimals,  
in the chase,  
in the shine.

But one day,  
the sky stretches wide over a place  
you never dreamed you'd stand.

Laughter pours from people  
who love without reason,  
and something inside you  
softens, and relaxes

A girl dancing barefoot in the surf,

a boy in love with the moment,  
the wise at peace in their sun-warmed skin.

You remember:

happiness doesn't echo in vaults.

It grows in shared meals,

in long conversations,

in presence.

the thing we're chasing

was always just

being here.

## Masked

They see the face,  
not the map behind it—  
ask for a story  
but listen for a label.

Identity is not  
a line on a form,  
not a label,  
not a shade.

It's a mosaic—  
fractured, reassembled,  
painted in memory and sound,  
in food, in footsteps,  
in the language you speak  
when you're most alone.

Expression is survival.  
It's walking into a room  
and refusing to fold,  
even when no one speaks your dialect—

the one made of body, breath,  
heritage and hope.

You do not owe clarity.

You do not owe ease.

You owe truth—  
even if it's complicated,  
even if it doesn't fit  
into their neat little questions.

You are not meant  
to be understood by everyone.

You are meant to be expressed,

fully,

loudly,

honestly.

## Listening

Not everything speaks the first time you listen.

Some things wait...

until you've lived enough

to truly hear them.

What once felt simple

is now puzzling.

The same words, the same moments,

but now they carry weight—

not because they changed, but because you did.

You begin to notice what was always there:

the unspoken questions, the quiet courage, the soft ache beneath the surface.

Growth isn't always loud.

Sometimes it's just

seeing old things

with a new set of eyes.

And when something meets you

right where you are,

when it echoes what  
you didn't know you needed,

it stays with you.

Not as a lesson,  
but as a part of who you're becoming.

## Grounding

Everyone said:

Go chase the new.

The familiar will wait.

But no one said:

***Root yourself.***

Use the strength beneath your feet.

Let what already holds you, lift you higher than you imagined.

We are told to wander,

to leap toward the unknown

,but sometimes

the truest growth

waits where the *soil* is steady,

where foundations

run deep.

## **Phenomenon**

The trees flail in the wind  
in a pure and genuine manner  
as the storm began to die down

*However*

The storm inside me intensified  
my brain sped up  
and moved around  
with gusts of wind

The outer world and inner world can juxtapose

## Thanks

Thank you for being a quiet strength  
in the ebb and flow of life's tides.

Though our journeys have traveled different roads,  
some bonds like roots beneath the surface:  
steady, unseen, and strong.

Thank you for holding space with gentle hands,  
for nurturing light through acts both small and grand.  
For weaving circles of warmth and laughter,  
where new life grows and hope takes root.

I carry your presence like a steady ember,  
a guiding light through unknown paths.  
Grateful for connections time cannot break,  
and love that bridges any distance.

## Hungry Mind

In a world awash with static,  
thought becomes a quiet insurgency:  
a light flickering  
against the steady tide  
that dulls the senses,  
muffles the mind.

Questions turn to shadows,  
truths dissolve like mist.  
Fear takes root—  
not of night's silence,  
but of dawn's first light.

Comfort weaves a velvet shroud,  
softening edges sharp and real,  
while the voices that dare to wander,  
to probe,  
to remember  
are ghosts the silence hunts.

Goodness is no longer a clear path

it is a steady flame,  
a fragile yet fierce resistance  
to the gathering dark,  
an unyielding hold  
on empathy's thread  
when cruelty crowds the room.

Right and wrong  
ripple and bend,  
shaped by tempests  
of fear and courage,  
but they live in the restless heart,  
the mind's unyielding hunger  
to question, to transform, to become.