

INK & ECHO
Poetry & Spoken Word

YOU

Nicholas J. Pirro

You.

You the reason I breathe,
the reason I'd bleed,
and the reason I need
to be a better man,
and be settled and comfortable
when the chaos swirls-
from the wind
to the world.

You.

The quiet in a life
that learned to speak in storms.
The hand I reach for
when everything I've carried
becomes too heavy
to pretend it weighs nothing.

You don't stop the rain.

You make me forget
that I'm wet.

You don't silence the thunder.

You remind me
that noise isn't always something
I have to fight.

Because I've fought.

God, I've fought.

I've fought battles
that weren't mine,
wars that had no winners,
and people I loved
as though loving them meant
I had to survive them.

I've mistaken scars
for medals,
exhaustion for strength,
and standing alone
for standing tall.

Then-

You.

You walked into the wreckage
without asking me
who started the fire.

You didn't demand
that I rebuild myself
before I deserved your warmth.

You simply stayed.

And somewhere between
your laughter
and the way you say my name,

I started wondering
whether a man can spend
so much of his life surviving
that he forgets
he was supposed to live.

So I want to live.

Not forever.

Just long enough.

Long enough to grow old
beside you.

Long enough for these hands,
so accustomed to fists,
to forget what they were
ever fighting for.

Long enough to learn
that peace isn't surrender.

That softness isn't weakness.

That a man can lay down his sword
without losing his name.

And if tomorrow comes angry,
let it.

If the wind tears through our world,
let it howl.

If everything I've built
comes crashing to the ground,
I'll build again.

But this time-
not an empire.

Not a fortress.

Not walls tall enough
to keep the whole world out.

I'll build a home.

And I'll leave the door unlocked
because you'll be there.

You.

The reason I breathe.

The reason I'd bleed.

But more importantly-
the reason I'm finally learning
that maybe
I don't have to.

About the Poet

Nicholas J. Pirro is a writer, researcher, and publisher whose work explores the intersections of human experience, leadership, resilience, and change. Founder of Pyrrhic Press and Ink & Echo, his creative writing turns toward love, loss, memory, family, and the complicated experiences that shape a life. His poetry favors emotional honesty over convention, finding meaning in the things we carry, the people we love, and the words that remain after a moment has passed.

Published September 21, 2026

Ink & Echo · Pyrrhic Press

pyrrhicpress.org

© 2026 Nicholas J. Pirro

Published by Ink & Echo, a literary collection from Pyrrhic Press.