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Volume 28
Issue 1 *The Last Torch (2019-2020)*

Article 35

4-1-2020

Purple Citrus

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Available at: <https://commons.cu-portland.edu/promethean/vol28/iss1/35>

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Purple Citrus

Micah Beukelman

2nd Place Tie Short Story Winner

Purple citrus is as wrong as I am.
Backwards eyes and flipped tongue, eyelashless and unblinking.
I walk with sideways steps and gigglebreaths.
I have been this way as long as I have been this way.
Sinewy fingers and orange fingernails,
I reach
 and reach
 and stretch—
But this creature that I am never pauses.

I lick my eyes and things flash by with indigoscreams.
Heads turn when I approach, lips draw back in horror and
revulsion.
Their faces darken and mine turns eggshell in the wake of my
identity.
Monstrous—
 I am
 monstrous.

I fall,
 a crumbling ledge giving way to a space below
 I plummet
 crash
 explode
 and
 poof.

I am gone and yet—
I am awake.
In bed.

Merlot sheets and memory pillows.
Six blankets and purring furlump.
My lover asleep beside me.
Eyelashes and lids with forward facing eyes.

What have I become?