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## Purple Citrus - Spring Writing Contest

Josey Meats

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# Purple Citrus

## *Spring Writing Contest*

*Judged by alumni Josey Meats*

### **1st place winner: “Based on a True Story”**

As a CU alumni, I have a multitude of feelings in regards to the University’s closure, things I can’t entirely comprehend. Sometimes you need a story to come along and set you straight; to read something that reads you; this is that story—however, it should be mentioned that the reason for this is not in the story, or the zeroing in on the hour, or the cross-cutting of perspectives, or illumination of the emotion of the moment. All that is fine and well, but it really comes from the sentence. A sentence is a power balance between what it says and what it does not say; knowing this balance, knowing your sentences is to get lost in a forest of symbols and dots; this writer knows the woods—knows what they say. It is because of this the reader is pulled into the story and through its pages, not in a jarring way but in a way that says: “I know you don’t know the what or the why or the how, and surely you’re wondering, but don’t worry, I know. And I’ll tell you soon enough.” There’s nothing like a crisp, clean, quality piece of prose, and this one is fresh on the menu.

### **2nd place tie: “Shortcake Dream”**

This poem reminds me of naughty Neruda. It has a glaze of nostalgia but Eros is its heart; sweet on many levels; Who can take the sunrise, sprinkle it with dew; somewhere between childhood and, dare I say, sexy. The poem paints a landscape that opens a possibility for us—the possibility of seeing ourselves outside of the fire and brimstone narrative that we are perverted, horny creatures and so on, and asks us to see our naughty sides through something sweet and natural; immersed. It is wild and untamed in its nature, spilling across the page—yet, there’s an undertone of existing in a highly manufactured, everything-so-sweet world that is quite disturbing, now that I think about it. Needless to say, it sticks with you, leaving a kind of residue. Definitely a poem to be read again and again.

## **2nd place tie: “Purple Citrus”**

I love what this poem does with my eyes. It has hidden twists and turns, both in the language and the layout. There is something greatly unstable in its undertones; it provokes a lot of questions while talking through a visceral, embodied experience; one that is seemingly quiet and controlled with little enjambment or (otherwise off-putting) experimentation in the line. I always know that a poem is working when I feel it, even if I’m not picking up everything a poet is laying down; if I feel it, I know I’ve read something.

## **3rd place: “in His image”**

“in His image” is an interesting iconoclastic artifact that is weaving many threads that have kind of lined society in a tapeworm-in-the-intestines way. However, I’m torn by it; in many ways it is bold in its form (most notably the compounding of words, always takes me back to Paul Celan, but not in an imitation-sense; these words are striking and their own); at the same time it feels reliant on a more traditional idea of a poem in its repetition and reliance on questions as a driving pulse through the piece.