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## Strange Fruit

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Strange Fruit (*for Michael Brown*)  
by Donel Arrington

“Hands up, hands up up don’t shoot!”  
still the same damn strange fruit,  
blood on the leaves and blood on the root  
now it grows from the street  
instead of the trees,  
tear gas, sound cannons,  
militarized police,

how many children gotta die  
before we heal this divide?

societies irrational fear of black men—  
putting too many black kids in early coffins

hiding behind badges, and  
stand your ground,  
crying self defense  
as the lights go out  
on the wrong side  
of the line between right

and now

and it’s a shout out but not  
just about Michael Brown  
it’s a road that every black person  
in America’s been down.

like when I was driving in my car,  
heard the siren sound  
pull over to the side and the  
officer comes out,  
“put your hands on the wheel  
where I can see them NOW!”  
unclipping the holster hand  
gun on his belt,  
all just for driving in the left lane—  
no ticket, no bullets, no harm  
no foul.

or the time I was walking  
to work, getting stopped just for  
being out at 6AM  
70 yards away from my house,

“don’t move, let me see some ID!  
we’ve been having a lot of robberies you see  
and you kind of look suspect to me.”

or the fear of our parents  
every time we leave the house.

see I was taught how to  
act around police  
since I was 11 years’ old  
taught that I’d be shot  
if I broke the mold—

but even with our hands up,  
sometimes they still shoot  
black bodies dropping  
the same old strange fruit  
blood on the leaves  
and blood on the root,

and I think that it’s time  
we confronted the truth,  
it’s 2016  
and we as a people  
still caught in the noose