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*The Sound of Purple*

haiku

Steven Carter



# *The Sound of Purple*

haiku

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*The Sound  
of Purple*

By the same author

*Snow Moon*

*After Blossom Viewing*

*Pillars of Fire*

*Ginkgo Leaves*

*Chrysanthemum Garden*

*Interiors*

*The Distances*

*Leaves and Angels*

*Ekphrasis*

*River Mist*

*Invisible Rivers*

# *The Sound of Purple*

haiku

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 Alba Publishing

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In memory of Stephen N. Dirks

Book I  
*The Sound of Purple*



ocean

in the drop

—all my farewells

torrent—  
my shadow  
going nowhere

the sound of purple  
jacaranda moon

open wound tonight's lovely sunset

Easter morning  
query of a mourning dove  
—*Was it true*

the perfect shape of  
this Easter lily  
—something not quite right

Mum cradles the urn  
like a newborn  
shadow on shadow

clinging

to one wild rose

Crane Mountain

emptied of purpose

—gently, grandpa removes

the baggie from a thorn

leaving out

*It just happened*

she tells me again

taking a step backward

*Well, keep in touch*

*CHARLTON CEMETERY*  
A HAIKU SEQUENCE

cold stones  
—touching  
any name

comforting the dead  
the quiet breathing  
of rain

the pain

of feeling

no pain

glancing at his watch

the pastor

—cloud-shadows



placing chrysanthemums  
on strangers' graves  
a stranger

looking up at Mum  
the three-year-old  
*Why are we here?*

Dover  
waiting for the lighthouse flash  
empty ocean

*Why are we here?*  
—silent choir  
of headstones



Book II  
*Spindrift*

heart

up her sleeve

I cheat at Solitaire

fireflies in love

—morning shadows

take me for a walk

whale watching  
gaze  
of a California gray

shadows not quite touching  
1-1=1—  
remainders of the day

pronounced *sigh*  
or *scythe*  
—rust on rust

something in me  
stands on its own two feet—  
6.5 temblor

eye exam—  
the ophthalmologist  
drops his model eye

cataract surgery                      I think of waterfalls



ancient Underwood—  
stuck forever  
the “I” key

giving up on the watercolor      painted sky

Nana forgetting to pretend she remembers our names

downpour

your umbrella

not quite sheltering me

desert moonlight 3 a.m.    I hear Munch's *The Scream*

Paris bus tour  
the girl across from me  
studying her hands

always the last word  
—last word in her diary  
*sad*

pinks of dawn  
not quite awake  
I forget to think about dying

my eighth decade  
    little grandson  
        turning the light on and off

OR CURRENT OCCUPANT           she forwards it to me

putting chrysanthemums in your hair      the dream ends

curve of her breast the nurse admires my veins

letter explaining why we can never—

postage due

winking Coors sign wondering if the barmaid means it

whistling past the graveyard I hear whistling





Book III  
*Glass-wing*

shaping our silences  
you, blue thrush!

clicking *send*  
—caw-caws of a raven

deepening the darkness  
—fireflies

*I forgot to water  
the forget-me-nots*

filled with emptiness  
city windows

thou shalt not be melted  
by her frozen smile

dreaming I'm dreaming  
I'm

storm down south  
thunder trumps the assonance

gallant flags in the ranks of death  
autumn leaves

violet star  
we go indoors

shooting star  
too late  
to regret a wish

trouble with his r's  
—*so shall you weep*



THE LOST ONES: A DUET

I

shaman songs

—Indian summer's Indian summer

II

Montana Blackfeet in sepia

not one smile

trembling for both of us  
reflections in the pond

roots above ground  
dead live-oak

*Don't you remember? You said—*  
prodigal moon

shaping loneliness  
a twilight bell

soft gleams—  
starlight on broken glass

adding up my sins  
—squandered moonlight

*What a friend we have in—*  
Cheshire moon

tricycle bell  
*Ask not for whom—*

my friend's daughter's cartwheels  
*The worlds revolve—*

morning after                      mourning before

softness of the poppy  
—heart's needle

in partial eclipse  
the woman in the moon

death of a glass-wing

*What thou lovest well remains—*





Book IV  
*Stalactites*

from ?

*distant*

to?

*thunder*

from?

*getting*

to?

*nearer*

TO

loneliness  
*loneliness*  
of  
*of*  
the  
*the*  
crows  
*scarecrow*

no  
one  
under  
the  
mistletoe—  
no,  
one

bridge—  
*cold*  
too  
*pale*  
narrow  
*purple*  
for  
*shadows*  
two

swinging                      and  
swaying                      the  
empty                      web—  
Mr.                      Spider  
missing                      the  
fun

making  
*always*  
love  
*the*  
is  
*thing*  
prayer  
*missing*



river  
*always*  
rising  
*the*  
river  
*darkness*  
falling

words  
*eloquence*  
floating  
*of*  
on  
*our*  
the  
*wind-chimes'*  
darkness  
*silence*

*Z*  
the stone seeks  
*E*  
to persist  
*N*  
as the stone

kids  
*I*  
in  
*stroll*  
and  
*the*  
out  
*Garden*  
of  
*of*  
the  
*their*  
rose  
*eternal*  
garden  
*hours*

in the photo  
*and*  
a  
*in*  
stranger  
*the*  
disguised  
*mirror*  
with my face

Big  
Bang  
Big  
Whimper  
morning  
mountains  
ma-  
ter-  
ial-  
izing

cold  
*blowing*  
comforter  
*out*  
of  
*Grandpa's*  
spring  
*candles*  
snow

bald  
*Good*  
eagle  
*will*  
leaping  
*win*  
skyward—  
*Armageddon*  
the  
*by*  
branch  
*not*  
still  
*showing*  
rocking  
*up*



I

colors  
*finger-tips*  
grazing  
*grazing*  
the  
*my*  
lake  
*back*

||

colors  
*all*  
touching  
*those*  
the  
*lovely*  
lake  
*drinks*

AGE 27—

*Jimi Hendrix*

Jim Morrison

*Alan Wilson*

Mama Cass

*Otis Redding*

Janis Joplin

*Curt Cobain*

Brian Jones

*Amy Winehouse*

*companionably*

the

*leaning*

last

*toward*

gingko

*each*

leaf

*other:*

tumbles

*headstones*

roaming  
*cage*  
at  
*door*  
will  
*open—*  
on  
*the*  
the  
*budgie*  
lake—  
*doesn't*  
shadows  
*budge*

*Beauty is truth, truth  
beauty—  
That is all ye know on earth  
And all ye need to know*  
—John Keats

Gaia—  
**green**  
too  
**breathing**  
beautiful  
**of**  
to  
**Earthly**  
be  
**hills**  
true?

darkness  
*one*  
embracing  
*size*  
us  
*fits*  
both  
*none*

## POSTSCRIPT

These night-blossoms, so—melodious! No, I'm not talking about wind and the accompanying solos of leaves and branches; the air is still as still.

—Music for the inner ear: assuring me that the blossoms will be there in the morning. What am I saying? That they're there now, as we whisper in the darkness, safe-keeping the faith, Baby.

Then, at dawn, the wind picks up, and sudden waves on the beach remind me of the long-lost music of Matthew Arnold:

*The Sea of Faith*

*Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore*

*Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.*

*But now I only hear*

*Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar—*



