

**Wilderness House Literary Review 14/1**

*Cliff Saunders*  
**TORCH SONG**

I tell you to rely on empathy, to encourage ladybug love  
on your feet while painting yes on the sky. I tell you

to open in April like surgical pliers, like doors  
on Martha's Vineyard. Now I want to make you feel

like a Greek isle full of tombs for doomed lovers.  
Now I want to make you burst with blooms of red and white!

I'm your descent into darkness—lucid, sprawling, astonishing.  
Put your hand on my coat of sand and dance with me

through October until the campus dries out.  
We'll synchronize our hearts to the toss of a coin.

We won't be fooled again by stars and silence.  
I've been meaning to pick your vote out of a crowd

and protect you from small roots, but I'm too old  
and too full of holiday sweets to make your heart

reject me. If I am crazy, then you are on fire,  
but it's early. I highly recommend rappelling a tree,

singing a cappella to mating amphibians, and touching  
your eyebrows with platinum candlesticks.

Meanwhile, I will bask in the silver disc of a galaxy,  
with no torch down my throat for the soul to celebrate.