

Sponges and Sweeteners(Fire Furniture Sale)

by Darryl Price

I'm sorry the frightful
women got to you before
I could. They turned you
into sandstone. They poured
red paint over your face

and beautiful hands. Now
you don't have to worry,
they said, no one will know
who you are in there. I
will, I raised my hand, because
I saw her in the

fairest morning light when
she wasn't your member.
Kill him, they screeched, kill the
intruder. He doesn't
deserve to be inside.
Her beauty belongs with

us alone! The surly
women carved a mirror
out of your mountain and
praised themselves in its glow.
More paint, they growled, more paint
to cement her pores to

ugly perfection. But
it's all a lie, I sang,
hoping my melody
might free her from prison.
She doesn't need captured
stars to shine in her polished

stables, but in their
own wild nights, free and noisy
as they please. Then they
built castles beneath your
feet to keep you afraid
of heights. Don't worry, they

smiled, we'll keep you on your
toes. The hideous wives
lied through their ugly, bitter
grabs for power like
razor sharp teeth clenching

soft and vulnerable
flesh. Don't listen to him,
they chanted, stirring their
hate and jealousy into
a sickening soup.
We will feed you on our

own special healthy recipes,
they cooed, looking
sideways at each other.
You are not someone else,
I sing, you are not one
of them, not in that way.

The repulsive ones placed

harsh plastic palms over
your yearning ears. You are
not a sculpture for their
hidden gardens, I sing,
you are the one who belongs

to you. It is you who
must decide how to treat
others who come to you
for love or comfort. You
to say how much is too
much to give. Your power

to live through it all, even
sadness. The awful
creatures will tell you how
cute you look in that new
hat. I think you look cute
as yourself. Hat or no.

