

## **Settling**

by Patrick Steele

*After No Place Like Home*

Ayahuasca dreams are all I've had since I've come here.  
When you're a bee, It's like star wars canyon, all the time.  
Twisting walls rushing by, vistas appearing and falling away,  
constant vertigo.  
My Mom helped me move in. She squeezed out a smile  
and said I would be okay.  
It was, I now see, a little healthy denial.  
I took everything from my bedroom back home  
that I thought I might need.  
I take three buses to work, three buses to get home,  
plus that last walking part, always my feet get wet,  
up into the canopy of trees.  
Work is fine, it's boring most of the time.  
I'd like to go out with the work people, but I haven't told anyone where I live. That  
I'm homeless, and car-less.  
I haven't told any of them about the dreams.  
I don't want to jinx it.  
Now this has me seriously thinking about grad school. A roof at night, a hot  
shower, dozing off in the library. I do love the woods, the falling leaves, the birds,  
the night breezes. The animal dreams I am having a hard time with.  
In my dreams, my hands are paws.  
I am the fox, the squirrel, the opossum.  
I get up and walk in the night, I can never sleep.  
In the morning my bed is filled with ashes.

**Bouncing Ball**

By Michele Mendelson

*After Bouncing Ball*

Emotions pound me  
Like a red bouncing ball  
Traveling through the forest  
of my grief  
Threatening insanity  
but promising peace  
Increasing in frequency  
but diminishing in power

**No Place Like Home**

By Michele Mendelson

*After No Place Like Home*

Take me out  
Out of these four walls  
of laundry  
and cooking  
and cleaning  
and bills  
and work  
and busy  
    busy  
    busy

Take me out  
And into the woods  
of lush green textures  
and avian amphibian melodies  
and flowery humus scents  
and sunlight dancing with shadows in the breeze  
and the flavor of clean summer rain on my lips

Take me out  
And onto the trails  
where I can breathe  
and live  
and rest  
and be

**Natural Consequences**

By Michele Mendelson

*After Natural Consequences*

I've come to the woods  
To clear my mind  
To find my center  
To let go of pain  
But all I see  
Are indigo images  
Of the hopes and fears  
That live inside me  
The natural consequences  
Of my actions  
Flutter silently  
Demanding attention  
Will I stand and stare  
At the negative scenes  
Or breathe and hope  
Something new develops

## **Rainbow Wall**

By Michele Mendelson

*After Rainbow Wall*

My heart bled red  
as it burst open  
from its long slumber  
My heart glowed orange  
with kind words  
and promises of love  
My heart screamed yellow  
as fear of death  
muffled each heartbeat  
My heart shuddered blue  
as each lie  
was unmasked  
My heart turned green  
with the sickness  
of betrayal  
My heart smelled purple  
as it bloomed again  
with kindness and hope  
Together they form  
a rainbow wall  
protecting me  
and holding me in  
Will you add a color  
or with your charm tied  
allow beams of light  
to heal me again

**Bittersweet Circles**

By Michele Mendelson

*After Wish Circles*

Collected items

with history

not mine

Fancifully decorate

corners of

my house

Brightly miming

their long

forgotten stories

Today

excised

set free

Hanging from Circles

as wishes

for memories of my own

## Shriven

By Anna Friendrich

*After No Place Like Home*

Lord, we have made  
our bed here  
in the dust, right  
where you placed us.  
Among trees, we are fellow  
creatures marking  
days, as if time  
is our territory,  
as if this canopy  
is of our making.  
Lord, remember us  
embedded in ecosystems,  
under earth's atmospheric blanket.  
All this cloud cover  
gathers to a greatness  
as if  
to smother.  
Mother us, Lord  
tucked in like chicks  
sheltered by  
Your greater wings, we huddle  
in the dust, right  
where you placed us,  
but do not rest.  
The lullaby we long for  
in the darkness  
goes unsung.  
It is the owl's turn —  
coyote's dirge —  
the trees of the field  
all cry out in numbers  
reported by the UN.  
Lord, who can count  
our losses? Who will win  
the wrestling match we're in?  
Gone to the mattresses,  
gone are the days when  
self-restraint was esteemed —  
nearly extinct  
we have made our bed  
here, Lord  
help us not to lie.

## **Power Button**

By Eric Nixon

*After Power Button*

A power button  
Works both ways  
To turn things off  
And to turn them on  
This one is no different  
Other than the materials used  
And the impressive size  
Which are important  
Since it has a big job to do  
Because when you come here,  
To nature,  
You need to turn off  
Your electronic devices  
You need to unplug  
Your attached distractions  
In order to appreciate  
The world around you  
And in doing so  
You are turning on  
The connected part  
Of yourself  
That's one with  
The natural environment  
You came from  
So, to activate  
The experience  
You're about to have  
Stand in the center,  
Power down your phone  
Take out your headphones  
Put them away  
And turn on your senses  
Open your eyes,  
Breathe in the freshness,  
Reach out and touch nature,  
(Except for poison ivy –  
you should leave that alone)  
And be present here and now  
To fully enjoy  
This beautiful place  
You are immersed in



**Wish Circle**

By Carla Schwartz

*After Wish Circles*

In my wish circle  
stones, heavier than your mother,  
a bicycle with one huge wheel.

In my circle,  
my circle, a needle  
threads through /fabric.

In my circle, I learn  
what I need  
to continue.

**What Are**

By Carla Schwartz

*After What Are*

Why look at ourselves  
when we can see through the frame  
of everything?

## **What is the Power Button?**

By Carla Schwartz

*After Power Button*

a turn on  
the maleness of it  
a hot button  
the button no one wants to push  
the button everyone pushes

**My Need is your Taking, Knotweed**

By Carla Schwartz

*After My Need is Your Taking*

My need is your taking?  
Because I'm selfish,  
I deserve to die?  
Do you know, you can cook me,  
make ice cream from me,  
pancakes, or bread?  
O.K. Take me, let me feed you.  
Burn me, turn me red,  
let me house you.  
Let's say my need is  
my  
taking,  
or, rather, my  
giving

.  
I want to give, not to take.  
I'm just trying to fit in,  
be a good citizen,  
like everyone.  
Yes, I have needs, drives.  
We all have needs.  
Do you condemn my knack to survive.  
Just because my home displaces others,  
does that mean I must perish?  
Now explain, please, what is justice?

## **Bouncing Ball**

By Carla Schwartz

*After Bouncing Ball*

If you want to know where I've been,  
just ask and I'll sing you a song.  
If you follow the bouncing ball  
you can sing along.  
I'll tell you a story, new,  
about something you never knew.  
Here is a fence in rot,  
and look, it brings you light.

## **What Are**

By Eric Nixon  
*After What Are*

What are  
The eyes  
Doing  
Looking  
At me  
Because  
They totally are  
But  
Never for long  
As they scan  
The forest  
To see if  
It's just me  
Or if anyone  
Is coming  
Is following  
Me, until I see  
An interloper  
Staring at me  
Staring back  
Which turns  
Out to be just  
My reflection  
Wide-eyed surprise  
Just for a second  
Until it turns  
And then it's gone  
I look around to see  
If anyone noticed  
The eyes, of course,  
But then again,  
There's nothing  
They don't see  
Out here  
On the trail