



HOMEWORDS: A Project of the Poet Laureate of Kansas

By Wyatt Townley

This week our topic is **home as house**, cabin, room, apartment, tent— wherever we find ourselves at the end of the day. To address this theme, we'll use the small but mighty American Cinquain. Its 22 syllables divide among 5 lines in this order: 2, 4, 6, 8, and 2.

This week's poets explore their former homes with great depth of feeling. The muscular cinquain compresses and distills that big feeling into a tiny package. Our first poem comes from **Dan Bentley**, who lives with his wife in North Lawrence among their garden, cats, and art. Notice how the linebreak of his penultimate line leans into the last line and is changed by it. I like the resonance of "story" here, with all its implications.

*that place
was once a house
where children were born and
died like the wind in this second
story*

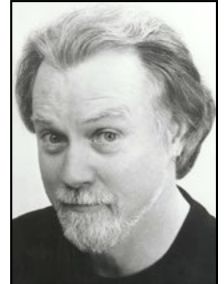
Chris O'Carroll is a writer and actor in Emporia whose poems have appeared in various journals. His cinquain works in a similar way as the last one, with the enjambment of the fourth line altering our experience of the line when surprised by the fifth.

*The sign
Outside the house
Says it's for sale. What our
Hearts keep from this place is our real
Estate.*

Poets and poets-to-be of all ages from across the state are invited to submit to

HomeWords. For guidelines, visit www.kansashumanities.org.

The Kansas Humanities Council is a nonprofit organization that supports community-based cultural programs and encourages Kansans to engage in the civic and cultural life of their communities.



Poets Dan Bentley, Lawrence, and Chris O'Carroll, Emporia