



HOMEWORDS: A Project of the Poet Laureate of Kansas

By Wyatt Townley

During this last month of HomeWords, we're printing a series of longer cinquain sequences that

explore the idea of "home." A number of poets really let their hems out in this project, some of them saying they've become "addicted" to the tiny cinquain. (I understand!)

It's a little like writing on a postage stamp. The **American Cinquain** is just 22 syllables divided among five lines in this order: 2, 4, 6, 8, and back to 2. In this case, the poet has varied the form a bit.

Trish Reeves of Prairie Village is an award-winning poet with books from BkMk Press and the Cleveland State University Poetry Center (winning its prize). She has received fellowships for her poetry from the National Endowment for the Arts and Yaddo, among others, and a Pushcart Prize Special Mention.

The National Institutes of Health considers Reeves' great-grandfather, Joseph J. Kinyoun, M.D., Ph.D, their founder. His first federal posting was at the U.S. Marine Hospital on Staten Island, New York, and his last was on Angel Island, California, during the bubonic plague outbreak.

ANGEL ISLAND

*one house
for leprosy
two for smallpox, they stood
up the hill from my grandmother's
new home*

*brothers
kept alligators
in a bathtub, they ate
each others' legs if the boys
forgot*

*across
the country on
Staten Island a mob
burned down the "Quarantine" long ago*

*back in
California:
parrots shrieked, a monkey
grabbed a riding crop and scared
the child*

*I tell
these stories of
Grandmother's life to speak
of the ways of children, and brave
adults*

To read past HomeWords columns, 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.

Note: submissions are now closed for HomeWords. The column will run through National Poetry Month (April) as Wyatt Townley finishes out her term as Poet Laureate of Kansas.



Poet Trish Reeves, Prairie Village