



HOMEWORDS: A Project of the Poet Laureate of Kansas

By Wyatt Townley

This week our topic is **home as land**. We'll be exploring the landscape using the American Cinquain, just 5 lines with 22 syllables divided up this way: 2, 4, 6, 8, 2.

I like the contrasting tempos of this week's cinquains. The first comes to us from **Al Ortolani**, a high school English teacher in Lenexa who edits *Little Balkans Review* and whose fifth book of poetry is due out this year. His "leaping blur" really captures the squirrels' mad chase.

*gray squirrels
run the neighbor's
sycamore—one leaping
blur indistinguishable from
the next*

Originally from Lincoln, Nebraska, **Jacqueline Metzger Murray** has lived in

Pittsburg for a long time, "with cat." Contrast the kinetics of Ortolani's poem to the static scene Murray has created below. I especially like her "wet cows / marinate" and the internal rhyme.

*Wet cows
marinate in
the drizzle and eat their
pasture salad, oblivious
to fate.*

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.