



HOMEWORDS: A Project of the Poet Laureate of Kansas

By Wyatt Townley

It's National Poetry Month. So we're doubly excited to debut my Poet Laureate project, and to invite you to be a part of it, both as reader and writer. This is the second installment of HomeWords, a weekly column syndicated in newspapers around our great state.

Our subject is the concept of "home"—a longheld Kansas value—from micro to macro: from the mobile home of the body, to the room or house we live in, to the land that anchors us, to the sky that envelops it all.

To explore these big themes, we'll use a tiny form. The **American Cinquain** is a five-line poem whose lines comprise, in order, 2, 4, 6, 8, and 2 syllables. It's a simple yet muscular form that both beginners and longtime poets can write successfully.

This week we'll be looking at "home" as house, and this unusual cinquain comes to us from William Sheldon, longtime teacher at Hutchinson Community College. Here he explores impermanence, and I especially like his consideration of the place's "ribs."

*This house
will fall—a fate
hungered for, if not sought—
coffin cutters turning its ribs
to dirt.*

William Sheldon has published three books of poems, most recently *Rain Comes Riding*, and lives with his family in Hutchinson, which, as much as any place, he calls home.

Poets and poets-to-be of all ages from across the state are invited to submit to HomeWords. For guidelines, visit www.kansashumanities.org.



Poet William Sheldon, Hutchinson

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.