



# HOMEWORDS: A Project of the Poet Laureate of Kansas

By Wyatt Townley

Our theme this week is HOME AS LAND. We're using the **American Cinquain** as our vehicle—5 lines

whose 22 syllables are arranged in this way: 2, 4, 6, 8, 2.

Nature writer **Cindy M. Amos** of Wichita holds a Masters degree in marine biology and has shifted her studies to the tallgrass prairie's inland sea. While she trained on the Outer Banks, she calls those islands "grasslands with water on both sides." Now she has the Flint Hills, "a worthy trade."

*Flint Hills*

*Cresting billows*

*On mid-continent sea*

*Toss wildflower meadows shoreward*

*Splash-grass.*

**Aladeen Stoll** is a teaching assistant for the University of Missouri-St. Louis who "romanticizes her childhood on a farm

between Chanute and Buffalo from her tiny apartment in St. Louis." There is much to admire in the originality, surprise, and energy of these lines.

*My head*

*lights start pack rat*

*hearts that you smoked from nests;*

*but I crossed Kansas cause you said*

*"Come home."*

**Karen I. Johnson** is a native Kansan who claims two hometowns, Alden and Hutchinson, and who has retired to the state's eastern edge in Westwood. While she wrote this for the "sky" category, it equally applies to house and land. At first I wasn't sure about tumbleweeds crashing, but in the end, I thought it might refer back to the inland sea—or even sleeping.

*Winds howl*

*Windows rattle*

*Dirt devils whirl skyward*

*Tumbleweeds crash on fences in*

*Kansas*

HomeWords is a weekly column that runs through National Poetry Month (April) as Wyatt Townley finishes her term as Poet Laureate of Kansas. To read past columns, visit [www.kansashumanities.org](http://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.



Poet Cindy M. Amos, the Flint Hills



Poet Aladeen Stoll, St. Louis