



HOMEWORDS: A Project of the Poet Laureate of Kansas

By Wyatt Townley

This weekly poetry column explores the topic of “home” in four expanding contexts: from the mobile

home of the **body**, to the **house** it inhabits, to the **land** that anchors the house, to the **sky** in which it swirls.

We’ll approach this big idea with a microscope: the **American Cinquain**.

Its 5 lines contain, in order, 2, 4, 6, 8, and 2 syllables. The tension between the theme’s spacious content and the cinquain’s compressed form is what gives this project its energy.

This week’s theme is HOME AS BODY. **Shelbi Heikes** is a high school student in Pittsburg, and I’ve been saving her poem for the new year, when so many of us make fitness resolutions. The poem’s energy and its final pun won me over.

*Running
Oh Lord, this sucks
Blood rushes to my head
Lactic acid pulsing through me
Oh, cramp!*

Marilyn Underwood of Fairway describes herself as a wife, mother, writer, teacher, chef, and gardener. We follow her descriptive details into a surprise.

*Blue veins,
Tiny wrinkles,
A sprinkle of age spots.
Today I see my mother in
Myself.*

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.



Poet Marilyn Underwood of Fairway