

IDEAS

VOICES



[COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE]

Here are two poems from the new edition of the University of Baltimore's literary magazine, *Welter*, which has been published since 1965. Stephen Matanle, who wrote "The Raveled Skeins," teaches creative writing at the university; Ian Mason-Smolka, who wrote "Smokey," is a student there.

THE RAVELED SKEINS

*The raveled skeins
of roots
in the dark ground,
the stars
like flecks of gilt
and tinsel.
What does the night
want of me?
I light a match and*

*the wind
blows it out.
I pray my
heart does not fail.
All I want to see
is sunlight
on a bedroom wall.
The pine-trees
lean into the night.*

SMOKEY

*There he sat,
shielded by the thick blanket of cigarette smoke rising like the steam from Grandma's tea kettle. Grabbing the Old Granddad he uttered in his smoke-ridden tone, "I want you to bury me with this," the bourbon scent consuming the air between us. I laughed, not seeing the day's rapid approach.*

He enlisted at fourteen. He fought in Korea. "You will outlive us all," I reminded, eyes darting from wall to wall. Pop wrapped his hand around my forearm, the tension, cooling the room. Pop's shoulders Straightened and Statuesque, "Don't let me down."

Reprinted with permission. This column does not accept submissions.