

# A THIMBLEFUL OF WATER

By Ernest Wilkins

Well, our distinguished panel of judges have rendered their verdict and the winning story has been announced in the *Excalibur*/Calumet Short Fiction Contest. When contacted by phone, winner Ernest Wilkins excitedly responded to the news by saying, "I don't know what to say. I'm happy—that's fine." Wilkins, who receives the first prize award of \$100, was chosen by two of the three judges. Honorable mentions go to Bryan Bruce, Marlene Goldman, and Michael Boyce. Thanks again to our judges: Frank Davey, Don Coles, and Katharine Govier.



The little brown boy jumped nimbly over the turtle-stile between the fields of hay-corn. Grasping quickly to his side his satchel of special things—buttons, turkeyskins, thimble, and holes—he rushed on across the tundra. Madly blasting through the high standing waves of wheat he burst succinctly upon the roadway in the path of the mysterious car. There halting, the car left the Earth cavorting to spindle upon the sky in a silhouette dance to Nimrod the mighty. The boy crushed on across the road, scarcely having noticed this past event already dwindly in time's memory.

The boy raced up the long pathway, until reaching the steps of the house he paused to assess his situation; his first thoughts as to his headlong mad rush. Now should he enter and expose his inmost feelings of brandishment to those within? Mom? Pop?—what then would they think of his escapade out beyond the 2nd pasture where wild things dwell—but those only in mists of fog? Dismissing these thoughts as propagandistic attempts by his second mind to halt him from his immediate temporal purpose, he disheeded any non-compulsion to move, and proceeded less resolutely inward to the house.

There, on the divan, sat Dad—Dad being his name of now 27 ages and 434 parsecs. Quickly the boy sat down before him upon the stool, stopping only to open his satchel to begin to reveal all that was within.

—Dad, me Pop, here you see it, what I have ventured to gain out there beyond the 2nd pasture. What now do you think?

Harumphing harumph, Dad spectacted a look upon his sun sitting mildly, displaying all curious as a new boy.

—There it is my boy, my boy, my boy. When i tell you must not go beyond the pasture beyond the pasture, you obey me not, and go there. Yet, these things you bring back . . . tell me of what their purpose is to be.

—Well, me Pop, says boy little boy, this one here, this one that shapes itself as a thimble, i perceive believe it to be an inverted library of self-evident matter transforming compounds as related to literary nimbleness. You see me dad?—I clearly reveall all that lies within me to know what i have squandered off the ground beyond the 2nd pasture and in among the mists.

—My son, my boy. Being yet of less than, but only marginally so, 3 ages old old, and beyond your time telling me sitting here that which i do not know, it surpleases me i admit gladly. But to study this generally my boy, into the laboratory basement we must go to test out your teoristic views upon this matter so very possibly urgent. My boy my boy, let us go down.

So he followed, the little boy, followed he his dad, his Pop dear old, down to their laboratory beneath the floor. Therein they tested, and were to test long times and tests, all that the little boy found within the pasture beyond the pasture beyond the pasture, and returned with him to home in his little satchel.

And the results of the test they them to be?—What then were they, but only so profound and significant as the distance to that far away misty place of the 2nd pasture beyond. But very tell told they were.

They were; significantly to behold. Dad and little boy found that there was another peoples out beyond the 2nd pasture; and these peoples, so small of stature and of wide being and thinking big, were burning up that possibility they lived upon—only because the boy had taken the thimble. But the little boy, he had only ventured there in causality, in accident or adventure. Knowingly not, the people of that place became less to be. And they were.

It was the people's thimbleful of self-evident knowledge that little boy brown had wrested from them, unknowingly. So they became to be without all the tales of telling that would tell them, though they thought not, what when to do; and, rightly so, to do at those times when to do's were important. Now, to-doing without their thimbleful of knowledge they became less and less and less able to perceive all the important meanings of this and that that were important to their being, and still to be, out beyond the 2nd pasture.

But the boy little boy, urged on by his Dad, was told, after they had figured out that that was knowledge in the thimble, to bring it back out beyond the 2nd pasture to those people there. The boy then retraced his steps of that long time past, but not so long time to Dad, and found his way down the path.

There again, the mysterious car was. Madly rushing to be on his way, the boy madly rushed across the road to get beyond to the 2nd pasture beyond, but he, again scarcely noticing, did not miss the car this time. The car, spinning endlessly down upon the turf, blasted through and past the place where the boy was, but no more. So they two met. But not only was a boy lost upon the bumper black needle-like of a devil mask car, a thimble full of now meaninglessness was lost to lie beside the road.

Being, all this rushing to and fro, and testing, and cars hitting, a very very age long in time for those peoples out beyond the 2nd pasture, they already had pit descended beyond almost total recall; and without their special thimble, of which they knew not any existence, they headlong fill into the mists. And the fires burned brighter.