



FIRST ITEM TOUCHED
BY Harry Zlirkellbach 1-31-2011

I like to get a head start on the topic assigned each Writers Meeting.

Do a recent Monday. do the same. Reach the condo, removed coat had head to the toilet. Remembered the topic, someone shout to my mind, "Don't Touch That!"

After all, this is a family gathering.
So I pour a glass of water, enjoy that.

Technically it is not the first thing touched, but is my topic, Water.
Make a positive statement, began a heated dispute, so here goes.
Life began, and continues, in water.

70% of the world is covered by water, most too salty for human drinking.
Water, the magical combination of two gasses, Hydrogen and Oxygen,
both also plentiful in air, do not immediately combine there into water.
Explain that!

In High School, our wonderful Science teacher spoke a full day on water and its properties. Most compelling, the small atom of water. His experiment.
Take a glass of water, drop in a red dye, coloring every atom red.
Dispose by drinking. Then tells, imagine,
Return in a zillion years, giving that glass of water time to be evenly mixed with every other water drop on earth. Turn on a tap, fill the same glass with water.
In that glass there will be 7,000 red atoms from the initial content.
How they manage that independence he would not touch.

So. water is the poor's beer, the rich's chaser, the world's cleanser.
And in all three jobs the water atom remains pure, unmolested;
it is still, the rather ubiquitous H(two)O.

Digressing, I was raised along the banks of the Beaver River, western Pennsylvania.
That water flowed ugly brown. No swimming!
Each city took water from the Beaver, added a white coloring, piped it into homes, where it was mistreated back to brown, dumped into the Beaver for further use down stream.
There was a small charge for this manipulation.

Our family later moved to the shore of Lake Erie. There was no river,
just tiny streams flowing into the Lake, which I learn was all fresh water.

Drinking it accidentally did not cause diarrhea, vomiting, death.

Here the city of Erie pumped water from that Lake,

ran it through some kind of fish sieve,

and after the same mistreatment in the home and factory,

dumped that liquid into a filtering system, then back to the Lake.

Yes, there was a fee for water in Erie. Here, this constant complaint,
“Why should we have to pay for something when we have so much of it?

Next thing, they’ll tax us for air.”

Moving along. Some predecessor to Soupy Sales decided there was an ocean of
profit in water mixed with something sweet. Now the world have been weaned

from a daily dozen glasses of water, to cans of things.

Or bottled water whose plastic containers are nearly indestructible.

Remember these words from that professor of my youth.

“When you see a water fountain, water pale and dipper, stop, refresh yourself.



You’ll live longer. It is up to you to make those years happy ones.“

And in closing, my favorite epitaph, for dead and living.

“May your God caress you, as the sea hold each drop of water.”

Ah, The mystery of it all.