

Short Story 77: The Eyeflash Miracles Part 1

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 16 Sep 2014

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Marc Aramini — 16 Sep 2014, 02:49

THE EYEFLASH MIRACLES

"The Eyeflash Miracles" first appeared in **Future Power** in 1976 and is reprinted in **The Island of Doctor Death and Other Stories and Other Stories**. *Much of the identification of more obscure Oz references in the summary will rely on the work of William Ansley from the Urth Mailing List, though some allusions from the first novel and the movie are easily recognizable.

DETAILED SUMMARY WITH OZ REFERENCES:

The story begins with a quote from Anatole France's "Procurator of Judea" in which Pontius Pilate reviews his career in Judea, and when the topic of Jesus of Nazereth comes up, he says, "I cannot call him to mind."

Little Tib, a blind boy, feels and listens to a train coming. He finds a nearby body of water and drinks from it. He hopes to find Sugarland. The authoritative voice of Mr. Parker calls out to him that he should be in school, and another voice, that of Nitty, an ex-custodian, yells out not to hurt the child.

Nitty says the boy needs food and helps Little Tib across, while Mr. Parker says, "Fishing — that's what most of them do." Mr. Parker speaks of Grovehurst School in Martinsburg and enrolling Little Tibb, inquiring of his documentation and retinal pattern card. Nitty says they are two or three hundred kilometers from there, heading to Macon, and that the boy doesn't have papers: "Why he got to have papers" He ain't no dog!?

When Mr. Parker realizes the boy doesn't have retinas, he says, "A ghost. We're seeing a ghost, Nitty. Sociologically he's not real — he's been deprived of existence." All funds and identification are linked to retinal patterns in this society. Little Tib cries, and when Nitty says he has never seen a ghost, Mr. Parker breaks down, too: "You dumb bastard. All my life there's been nobody around but dumb bastards like you."

Nitty hatches a plan to have the blind boy infiltrate the central records computer system, since he would be more useful than a man with sight there. Mr. Parker has lost his position (he says "temporarily abrogated"), as has Nitty. He promises that when his position is restored he will get Little Tib enrolled in a school.

That night Tib thinks of the last thing he saw, red and yellow flashes like a real fire, and a golden nugget against a field of blue. Nitty says they are going to Martinsburg, but Tib says he wants to go to Sugarland, because there "they know who you are" (It is probably the location of his family's home).

Nitty says that in his life the only ones that truly knew him was little children. Lying by the fire, Tib dreams of his father. They walk through a glass turnstyle door past shopping centers, rising

in a glass elevator to reach a man in a white coat who examines Tib through a retinal scanner. The man concludes, "We don't know who this child is, but he certainly isn't anyone."

When Tib awakes, he hears the fire and soon sees flowers, knowing that they in turn can see him, before witnessing a miraculous city descend from the sky.

This is a distorted but recognizable reference to a scene in the twelfth chapter of **The Marvelous Land of Oz**, entitled "Mr. H. M. Woggle-Bug, T. E." Here, the Tin Woodman, the Scarecrow and Tip — are trying to get back to the Emerald City and are blocked by an enchantment that makes them see a field of sunflowers. These sunflowers whirl when they look at them and dazzle their vision and mystify them so they don't know which way to go. When the Tin Woodman tries to cut them down, they stop spinning and a girl's face appears at the center of each. The Woodman is too tender hearted to try to cut the flowers down after this, but they finally realize that the flowers are an illusion and by shutting their eyes they are able to pass beyond the field. (Ansley)

"Then the city came down like a cloud and settled on a hill in front of him. As soon as it was there it pretended that it had been there all the time, but Little Tib could feel it laughing underneath."

This also represents the first hint of a vision in the conceivably waking world for Little Tib, as it is unclear if he has fallen asleep or not, though the text shows him waking up after witnessing the apparitions. Green towers which look like glass and high walls evoke the Emerald City of Oz. Tip rushes to enter, asking to see the King, and the gate man pulls him through a window and puts glasses on him which become lines painted on his face. (In the Oz books, green glasses were employed by the Wizard to make visitors see the entire city as green — part of his charlatantry); here, since the vision of the marvelous city is from inside Tib [or, if it is external, is there because of Tib] the perception that makes the city wondrous is a part of him, symbolized by the glasses simply having no external existence, becoming a part of Tib.

The gardens of the city are sidewise, and the palace wall "was made by trees holding hands." Tib sees the "king" descending stairs from the clouds: "She was a beautiful woman, and although she did not look at all like her, Little Tib knew that she was his mother." (Ozma was disguised as the boy Tip by the witch Mombi in **The Marvelous Land of Oz** and was then reinstated as the rightful ruler of Oz, yet this city has parallels to the City of God and Vishnu's Vaikuntha as well). When Tib awakens, it is to darkness.

They determine to catch a train. Mr. Parker talks about the light modern train design, and says, "There only remained the awkward business of the crews — Fortunately it was found that mechanisms of the same type that had already displaced educators and others could be substituted for railway engineers and brakemen. Who would have believed that running a train was as routine and mechanical a business as teaching a class?"

Nitty carries Little Tib when they catch the train, and Mr. Parker goes to sleep. Nitty tries to describe the passing landscape, saying there is nothing but pinewood forests with animals. "You like animals, George" Bears and big old cats. (Of course echoing the "Lions and tigers and bears" of Oz fame). Nitty tells Tib that Mr. Parker's mind was augmented to make him a better superintendent, and the loss of the upgrades and his job has made him crazy and sometimes dangerous.

Here Tib begins to display signs of pallor and fever, which accompanies many of his miracles throughout the story (this time, the healing of Mr. Parker's fractured mind). Nitty sees a bear waving at them from the woods as two railway patrolwomen accost them. Mr. Parker wakes up

and begins to address the two women as if they were new teachers under his jurisdiction. They think he has been “shooting up on chalk” and also indicate that Nitty does not have to assume colloquial speech patterns for their benefit. (His exaggerated ethnic speech patterns were a charade for Mr. Parker’s benefit). The railway police tell them to get off at Howard and leave, but then toss a gas grenade into the car on their way out. Little Tib imagines himself on the hill above the creek, and “a kiteflying west wind was blowing” — this purifies the boxcar and blows all the gas out of the can as well. Afterwards, Mr. Parker returns to normal and feels as if he has awakened from a long dream. Tib has grown very hot and feverish, and the sound of the wheels becomes like “the rushing blood in the heart of a giantess.”

Tib enters another dream state, dominated by red: red leaves red grass, red birds, and even faces in the trunks of trees. A cardinal flickers to his shoulder and Tib says he wants to stay there forever, walking down that path. The cardinal assures him, “You will, my son,” and makes the sign of the cross. He comes across a red and white striped house and encounters a copper man. He hears hammering in the hills. The copper man says that the giant is making the noise. Tib winds up the copper man’s TALKING ACTION keyhole so that they can communicate. The man of copper says that his words will blow away the mist concealing the giantess. She has an enormous broom that continually swings at a passing rat.

Tib senses that this giantess, too, “was Little Tib’s mother, but he sensed that she would not know him — that she was cut off from him in some way by the mists, and the need to strike at the rat.” Tiktok says she is only hitting at it once, but over and over, indicating that Tib will die if the broom catches him and sweeps him away; he says he can stop it. Tib winds his MOVING ACTION key and Tiktok looks into his eyes, where Tib sees his own reflected with “little flames in them like the flames of two candles in church, and the flames were going out.” Finally, Tib attempts to wind Tiktok’s thinking key so that he can answer the question, “Don’t you know me??”, but there is no key.

The trees with faces in their trunks are from the movie (the scene in the apple orchard). The place where the leaves, grass, etc. are all red is in the Land of Oz; it is the portion known as the Country of the Quadlings or Quadlingland. In the Oz books the Munchkins are only one of the four major groups who live in Oz. To the north live the Quadlings, to the east live the Munchkins (blue), to the south live the Gillykins (red) and to the west live the Winkies (yellow). And in the center is the Emerald City where things are, of course, green. Oz is first described this way in *The Marvelous Land of Oz.*

The copper man is Tiktok, “Smith & Tinker’s Patent Double-Action, Extra-Responsive, Thought-Creating, Perfect-Talking Mechanical Man,” as it says at the beginning of his instruction manual. He is introduced in *Ozma of Oz* and appears in many books thereafter. Wolfe got a few details wrong (in the book he has one keyhole in the middle of his back and one under each arm and one key fits all of them) but his copper man is unmistakably Tiktok, who is often referred to as a copper man in the Oz books. One of the great pleasures of the Oz books is the illustrations. Wolfe obviously remembers the pictures of the characters; the drawings often showed details that Baum did not describe but that Wolfe does, such as Tiktok’s mustache.

The giant version of Little Tib’s mother is based on a giant in *Ozma of Oz*. The giant in the book is another clockwork man, made of iron, by the same manufacturer as Tiktok. All the iron giant can do is pound the path that runs by him with his giant hammer; he is meant to discourage people from using the path. But if you move quickly and time it just right, you can run under his hammer. Otherwise you will be crushed. In a typical Wolfe touch, when Little Tib comments to Tiktok that he remembers his mother trying to hit a rat with a broom just once, Tiktok replies that she *is* only swinging the broom once, but that moment is occurring over and over. (Ansley)

Tib awakens to a baby crying in a doctor's office and the touch of a strange woman who has "the hard cold hands of the copper man. Embarrassed, Tib finds himself on Nitty's lap, his stick gone. He says hello to a little girl with only one leg and hears the "Bam. Bam. Bam." sound of the giantess' broom. The girl's mother warns her not to let Tib touch her face with his dirty hands. When Tib feels the little girl's artificial leg, he notices "a rubber thing with metal under it, and metal strips like the copper man's neck going down at the sides. Little Tib reached inside them and found her leg again, but it was smaller than his own arm."

He thinks of walking amongst the spinning flowers towards the green city and the girl's leg grows to full size. The mother screams. Tib still has a fever and the doctor's office refuses to see him without a retinal scan. The doctor's employee says, "They'll think he might be in the country illegally. Once an investigation like that starts, you can never stop it."

Mr. Parker asserts that he is himself ill and that Nitty must leave so the boy must accompany him in to see the doctor. The doctor gives him medication for influenza. Nitty and Mr. Parker later discuss their plans to reprogram the machine. "You work that program right and that machine will find out they need a man running it again. Need a maintenance man too. Why does a man feel so bad if he don't have real payin'- work to do — tell me that."

Tib comes to the realization that he must have dreamed the healing, and that the other world in which he can see must be the real world. After sleeping for a bit, they decide to hitchhike to Martinsburg. Nitty tells him to wash to get rid of his tear streaks, and when they go down to the creek Nitty pours water over Little Tib's head and ducks him under in a classic baptism scene. As they are hitchhiking, Nitty assures Little Tib that they will get a ride before ten because of his prayers. Tib says Nitty should pray for a job, and the older man says, "I did that, right after I lost my old one. Then I saw Mr. Parker again and how he had got to be, and I started going around with him to look after him. So then I had a job — I've got it now Mr. Parker's the one that doesn't have a job."

Tib prays, begging that he would even ride with cattle or garbage. A bus stops and welcomes them to the "temple of Deva". The bus' driver, Dr. Prithivi, is a syncretic spiritualist who wears a cross with three crossbars on his neck. Dr. Prithivi claims to be a doctor of the soul: "If someone is sick a physician should be summoned. Should they be evil they should summon me." Nitty comments that no one would seek that aid — for the evil one would be making money. Dr. Prithivi says that all men are evil but few make money. The bus stops at a road side park so that they can "recreate" themselves. Looking over the high view from the park, Dr. Prithivi recalls his boyhood in the Himalayas, where he once saw a leopard in his garden.

Little Tib tries to picture a leopard or even a cat, and eventually sees a lion standing on its hind feet in front of him, with a red ribbon knotted in its mane dancing to "the remembered flute music of Dr. Prithivi's laughter." Tib dances with the lion over the air, whose description matches that of the lion from *The Wizard of Oz*. The crowd pulls him back from the ledge.

Dr. Prithivi says that Tib must be presented to the god and unveils his six-armed statue of Deva holding syncretic symbols of many of the world's major religions (and even a phallus thrown in for good measure). Tib imagines being crushed on the stones below and pictures them in his mind, and soon sees himself pressed against a wall of stone in a rocky land. He follows the shadows into the mountain until he hears a tapping as of marbles poured on a floor and sees torches kindled. (After the baptism and the dance with the lion, the fantasy of his visions are no longer relegated to dreams, and freely interact with the waking world — his visit to the gnome kingdom here echoes his later trip to the dark realm of the computer in the County

Administrative Building). Here gnomes with axes accost him, stating they are a police state and that Tib will be drafted into the labor force. They take him to their king sitting on his cushions behind gold curtains, who accuses Tib of trespassing and asks how he pleads. Asking for mercy, Tib says that trespasses should be forgiven, while the Gnome King sees it as an admission of guilt. The lights go out and Tib manages to run away as the gnomes struggle in the dark, but soon he sees another faint light which he wills to be Mr. Parker and Nitty near a cold water creek.

Instead, it is a forest of silver and gold trees emitting light, the sky a vault of cold stone. Grapefruit sized fruit dangles from the trees, and when he pulls one off he sees that it unscrews (the grass which had been gems turning into "real grass in some way, or perhaps a carpet or a bedspread"). Inside the fruit are hot meat and gravy and other food "so hot and dry he did not even try to put them in his mouth." He finds hot tea and manages to drink a bit despite the heat, finally in the dark again.

Knowing that he is waking up, Tib hears "the noise of hundreds and hundreds of picks" and a star shaped shadow in a new light congeals into a gnome coming after him, then an army of gnomes with arms "sticking out at every angle, so that it looked like one gnome with a hundred arms, all reaching for him." This image of the gnomes and their sounds will resemble the possessed demon legion of the computer Tib will soon find when he finally confronts the darkness in Martinsburg. In addition, the demon depicted on the side of Prithivi's bus, Hiranyakasipu, has a name which means "clothed in gold" or "soft cushions" - and the king of the gnome's throne is fitted with real gold curtains, as he sits on a bed spread with linked diamonds. These gnome scenes, too, are based on Oz books. Baum elected to spell gnome without the g to avoid confusions in pronunciation.

The nomes are introduced in **Ozma of Oz.** The land outside the Nome King's cave is very much as Wolfe describes it. Baum's Nome King's throne room is similar to Wolfe's description, but there are differences. Baum's nomes are constantly digging with picks and shovels when they are not smelting gold or hammering it in their smithies. They only stop when the Nome King needs them to serve as soldiers. The Metal Forest is described in **Tik-Tok of Oz** (Chapter 19, "King Kaliko"). It is a sort of treasury for the nomes. Again some details differ from Wolfe's description. The major one is that the cave of the Metal Forest also contains living trees called Hotel Trees which bear Three-Course Nuts (described in Chapter 22: "Kindly Kisses"). The fruits are coconut-sized [sic] and unscrew into three sections (soup, main course and dessert) but they are obviously the source of Little Tib's golden fruit. (Ansley)The heat of the meal stems from the terrible fever Tib has after actually walking on air, and he awakens in a motel which Dr. Prithivi has paid for by taking up a collection. Nitty believes the hot tea in Tib's dream was the ice water and medicine he administered to the boy. Nitty calls Prithivi, and when he arrives they discuss the lion that Tib saw. Prithivi says his bus has, "a picture of a man with a lion's head. It is Vishnu destroying the demon Hiranyakasipu. — It was Vishnu also who circled the universe in two strides; this is a kind of dancing on air perhaps." He goes on to discuss the significance of the lion — it symbolizes Christ (a winged lion is the badge of St. Mark), it is the emblem of the tribe of Judah, and the son-in-law of Mohammed was called the Lion of God. Prithivi indicates the lion represents Christ because they were thought to lick their cubs to life, which are born dead. Prithivi asserts that the hand of god is in all. Mr. Parker prefers other paranormal explanations, such as levitation, rather than a spiritual one for Tib's miracle. Prithivi lets Little Tib know his plan to have him star as Krishna in a play, which will ultimately give Mr. Parker time to enter the County Administration Building and reprogram the computer. Nitty identifies Little Tib as a wonder-worker who cured Mr. Parker of his mental problems and says that even Jesus did not always know when he performed miracles. "You don't have to believe he was God. He was a real man, and he did those things. He cured all those people, and he walked on that water. — Saint Peter walked on it too. Saint Peter saw Him. But what I'm wondering

about is, if it is the boy, what would happen to you if he was to go away?" Mr. Parker describes how to unlock the County Building to Tib and they hear the music of Dr. Prithivi's play, which Tib identifies as remote and foreign. Mr. Parker says, "What you sense is remoteness in time — It's like an old, old thing that never knew when to die, that's still wandering over the earth." Tib says, "It never was here before, was it" — Then maybe it isn't an old thing at all. He remembers a baby he once saw, which he had thought "was old until everyone told him it was very new, and it would be alive, probably, when its mother was an old woman and dead. He wondered who would be alive a long time from now — Mr. Parker, or Dr. Prithivi." This talk probably invokes religious ideologies such as the coming of Christ and other myths in antiquity — if they have never been "here" before, then they are new, though the ideas and their very being is not necessarily of this time. They lift Tib through the bars in the window and he proceeds in the darkness until "the funniest-looking man Little Tib had ever seen" shows up and offers to go ahead of him. The Clothes Man, as Tib considers him, says sighted people in the light see things that are there, while blind people in the dark see things that aren't there. He also says that his brain came from the Wizard himself, revealing that he is the Scarecrow of Oz. Tib comes to a locked door and the Scarecrow says he could get through it if only he had the ruby slippers. It seems that Tib is teleported through the door; he then goes up the stairs to hear the computer calling out to him amidst a terrible sound like thunder and dropping stones which reminds him of his encounter with the gnomes.

It identifies itself as many and legion, and Tib instructs them to "Get out", at which point the computer goes dead and the Scarecrow tells him they are gone, though Tib might encounter them again. Tib opens the door and they return to act in Prithivi's play.

Prithivi gives him a flute as a prop, which Tib knows he can use to feel his way as a walking stick, and introduces him to the performer playing Indra. Prithivi recaps the story of Krishna (see Religious Allusions below) and instructs Tib not to drop the mountain when he lifts it in the play. When the gong strikes thrice, Tib is to exit the bus and go onstage.

Left alone with Indra, Tib notices that he is not from this region. Indra says he is from the capital, Niagara, and begins to tell him a story of women who wanted to do something nice for the world, so they volunteered their eggs for genetic modification "that would make the girls and boys smarter and stronger and healthier." Scientists studied these children along with control groups of regular children, brought from farm, ranch, and factory families from neighboring towns. (The experiments were done in Houston, and the Sugarland Tib seeks is but a few miles away from there).

When the children turn six, strange things happen:

"People and animals — sometimes even monsters — were seen in the corridors and therapy rooms who had never entered the complex and were never observed to leave it. Experimental animals were freed — apparently without their cages having been opened. Furniture was rearranged, and on several different occasions large quantities of food that could not be accounted for was found in the common rooms."

They notice that the strange events coincided with the examinations of the genetically improved children. Tib insists, "I'm not one of those." The groups were separated in two but the paranormal activity continued to be observed for both groups. A belief that the mutations could occur spontaneously spurred those in central data processing to enable the retinal scanners to identify these individuals. No abnormalities were found amongst the children, so the President "under the present unsettled economic conditions" in the fear of social unrest, pushed to terminate the experiment. "The brains and spinal cords of the boys and girls involved would be turned over to the biologists for examination." Little Tib says he knows this story: the three

Wise Men warn Joseph and Mary, so they take Jesus to Egypt. Indra says, "No — that isn't this story at all." He then reveals that an individual was identified at a retinal station, but the normal detention methods involved burning out the retina of the criminal (which rendered criminals helpless and was accomplished quite cheaply with sodium vapor light overvoltage). Alas, the subject could never be identified in this fashion again and in this case they failed to accost the suspect.

They did find that it was one of the boys involved in the experiment as a control. The scientists and government people knew that it could not really be one of the controls and believed that "one of the mothers — possibly one of the fathers, but more likely one of the mothers — saw it coming a long way off and exchanged infants to save her own. It must have happened years before."

Tib says, "Like Krishna's mother."

Indra replies, "Yes. Gods aren't born in cowsheds." Indra says that he will kill the boy soon, and the thunder prompts Nitty to come in and call them out so that they show can start.

When Tib ascends the seven stairs to the stage, he can see a village of mud houses and people all around him, with a mountain in the distance "and beyond the mountain a marvelous sky full of palaces and chariots and painted elephants; and beyond the sky, more faces than he could count."

He believes that this is Prithivi's dream, one so strong that the angels had come to make it true, or "Dr. Prithivi's dream working through him. He thought of what Indra had said — that his mother was not his real mother, and knew that could not be so." He pipes a music that isn't his, and Indra comes, "his face — a carved, hooked-nose mask. In his right hand he had a cruel sword that curved and recurved like a snake, and in his left a glittering eye." Tib knows that the eye is to record any of the strange things that surround him and that Indra cannot strike without that evidence. The rain comes (echoing the play's story of Indra's anger [he is the god of rain and thunderstorms] when Krishna's usurps his worship in favor of the mountain).

When everyone runs for cover, Indra and Tibb are left alone. The Tin Woodsman appears with his ax, declaring that wood has never stood long against him, and cuts off Indra's mask. Tib recognizes his father and the Tin Woodsman asks, "Don't you know me, Georgie?" indicating that the father was once enamored of the Oz books. George reassures his son that he need fear no longer, but as he steps forward, he strikes with his sword. The Tin Woodsman intercepts the blow. It becomes dark, and Tib realizes he is still standing in front of the computer, "with the devils not yet driven out."

His father sits down with him on the ledge and begins to explain why he has to hunt for his son: the subsistence farming his people have done is becoming obsolete, and they will become extinct like other useless animals, so "we've got to join them before it's too late." His father knows that the "great men and kings and queens and Presidents" he dreamed of being related to in school are really not a part of his family, but recognizes that Tib is a prodigy and healer. "You're our ticket. Everybody was born for something, and that was what you were born for, son. Just because of you, the family is going to get in before it's too late."

He touches his father's face, and again it comes off, revealing a metal mask. He says he is the president's man now and that Tib's mother is in a different division, probably in Atlanta (gee-seven).

"Inside himself he said forever that that was not his real mother, and this was not his real

father; that his real mother and father were the mother and father he had had at the old place he would keep them inside for always, his real mother and father." He cries, and the mask comes off once again to reveal his father's face, saying that it is actually the Federal Reserve Card and being so poor all the time that has driven him to this betrayal, as well as the conditioning. Tib runs away and bumps into Nitty.

The next day Little Tib is taken to a school for special classes for the blind. Since the computer no longer works, Mr. Parker offered his services and sent a woman named Ms. Munson to get Tib for the school. On the fifth day of school, he hears his father's voice in the corridor, calling himself Mr. Jefferson. He takes Little Tib out front, to send Tib to Niagara for examination. As they are walking, Tib sees a small man in front of him in a bright green coat — the Wizard of Oz. Tib asks to be freed, and the Wizard warns that if he is caught again it will be for good. "You remind me of a friend of mine named *Tip*. Tip with a* p.* A *b* is just a *p* turned upside down — Tip turned out to be the ruler of all of us in the end, you know," the Wizard says. Then Tib sees two realities at once, and time seems to reverse so that Tib's father is once again about to pull him from the school. This time, he gives his name as George Tibbs rather than Jefferson and claims to be from the Office of Biogenetic Improvement through his dirt farming expertise? part of the agricultural program.

[Tib] thought about what he was going to do, and not running. Then about Krishna, because he had been Krishna. Had Krishna run? Or had he gone back to fight the king who had wanted to kill him? He could not be sure, but he did not think Krishna had run. Jesus had fled into Egypt, he remembered that. But he had come back. — He remembered talking about the Jesus story to his father when they were sitting on the stage. His father had brushed it aside; but Little Tib felt it might be important somehow.

As Tib sits there, his chair bothers him: "The chair was hard - harder than any rock he had ever sat on. He felt the unyielding wood of its arms stretching to either side of him while he thought. There was something horrible about those arms, something he could not remember." (It seems this could echo the crucifixion of Jesus, a dim memory of something horrible, and Tib makes his decision).

Tib escapes in the crowd of children and walks away from the school, until he hears the whistle of a train He heads toward it. He sees a little girl ahead of him, "so he knew she was an angel." She will not tell him her name, but says he can call her Dorothy, claiming he fixed her leg. She says she can help him, telling him what to look out for. She tells him a shaggy man is ahead, and Tib once again runs into Nitty, who says Mr. Parker forgot him.

"Well, little blind boy, Mr. Parker is white — and when a white man has been helped out by a black one, he likes to forget it sometimes." To Tib, "black and white seemed very unimportant." Nitty says it works the other way, too, and Tib introduces Dorothy to him.

The final Oz character referred to in "The Eyeflash Miracles" is the Shaggy Man. A character with this name first appears in *The Road to Oz*, the fifth Oz book. He is a hobo Dorothy meets in Kansas, near her Uncle's farm, when she is trying to find her way home. He and Dorothy become magically lost and, after many adventures, find their way to Oz, just in time for Ozma's birthday party. The Shaggy Man appears in most of the Oz books that follow *The Road to Oz*, at least briefly. Wolfe breaks the pattern of the story here. Until this point, all of the Oz characters were in Little Tib's dreams or visions and they had very little, if any lasting reality in the "real" world of the story. But Nitty is a real person and he also is identified with an Oz character. (Ansley)

Here Nitty asks if Sugarland is real, and Tib says it's in Texas. They walk hand in hand down the

railroad ties turning yellow in the light of the setting sun, soon starting to skip.