



# When You Were a Tadpole and I Was a Fish: And Other Speculations About This and That

*Martin Gardner*

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Best known as the longtime writer of the Mathematical Games column for *Scientific American*—which introduced generations of readers to the joys of recreational mathematics—Martin Gardner has for decades pursued a parallel career as a devastatingly effective debunker of what he once famously dubbed “fads and fallacies in the name of science.” It is mainly in this latter role that he is onstage in this collection of choice essays.

*When You Were a Tadpole and I Was a Fish* takes aim at a gallery of amusing targets, ranging from Ann Coulter’s qualifications as an evolutionary biologist to the logical fallacies of precognition and extrasensory perception, from Santa Claus to *The Wizard of Oz*, from mutilated chessboards to the little-known “one-poem poet” Langdon Smith (the original author of this volume’s title line). The writings assembled here fall naturally into seven broad categories: Science, Bogus Science, Mathematics, Logic, Literature, Religion and Philosophy, and Politics. Under each heading, Gardner displays an awesome level of erudition combined with a wicked sense of humor.

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