

Terra Nuova Edizioni

PESCIOLINO E IL GRANDE MARE

DI ALAN WATTS

ILLUSTRAZIONI DI KHOA LE




Once upon a time, there was a fish
who lived in the Great Sea.
And because he was just an ordinary fish
who had never known anything outside
the Great Sea, he was not really
aware that he was in it.



Then one day something peculiar happened to him. He began to think how curious it was that he could swim, for here he was moving up and down and around in the midst of nothing at all, and all by his own power.



This, he thought, was surely very clever of himself.

A vibrant underwater scene with a goldfish swimming through blue water, surrounded by red coral and bubbles. The goldfish is positioned in the upper right quadrant, swimming towards the right. The water is a deep, clear blue, filled with numerous white bubbles of various sizes. Red coral branches are visible in the upper and lower left corners, extending across the frame. The overall atmosphere is serene and slightly mysterious.

And then something else happened. You know how it is when you start thinking about something you do automatically, such as breathing or riding a bike: you begin to get confused.

It was the same with this fish.


He began to get confused in his swimming. Looking down into waters below him, he was suddenly terrified at the thought that he might forget how to swim altogether and go plunging forever into the darkness.

“That’s just what I can see,” the Great Sea went on patiently, “but apparently you can’t. You haven’t caught your tail; you haven’t fallen into the abyss; and yet you are still busy. How come?”

“Oh, don’t be stupid!” snapped the fish. “Of course I haven’t fallen down because I’m . . . Goodness! Because I’m swimming!”

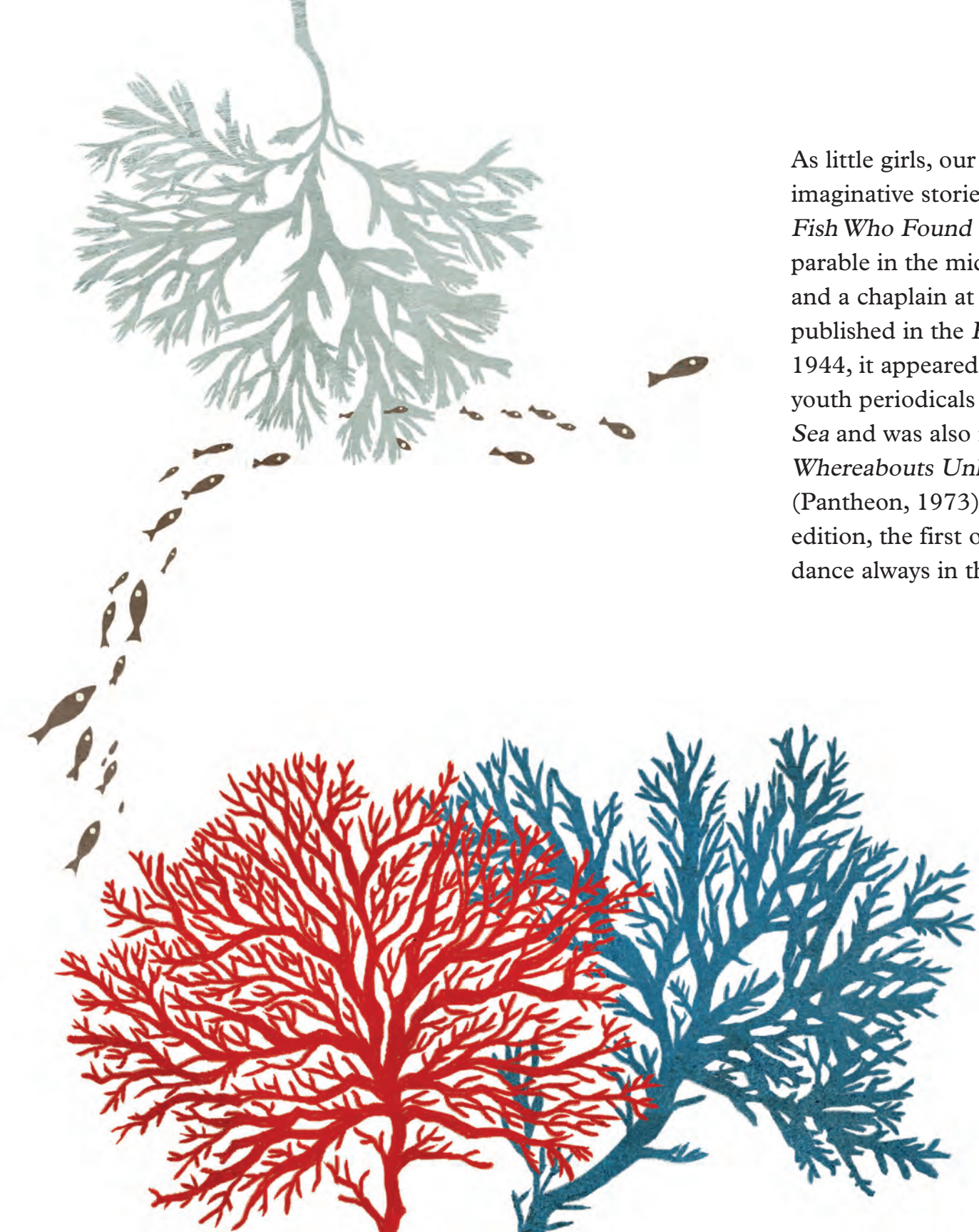
“You may well say ‘goodness,’” said the Great Sea, “for how does it happen that you have stayed afloat and been able to swim during all this absurd performance?”





From that moment, the fish was happier than any other fish in all the waters of the world. Setting his own end behind him, where it belonged, he set out to explore the ends of the Sea.

And he found that whether he moved up or down, to the left or to the right, everywhere the Great Sea expanded before him and supported him, so much so that he swooped and climbed and danced in joy—a creature in his true element, out of himself and into the Sea, where, indeed, he had been all the time.



As little girls, our father Alan Watts often regaled us with imaginative stories, limericks, and nonsense poems. *The Fish Who Found the Sea* is one such story. He wrote this parable in the mid-1940's when he was an Anglican priest and a chaplain at Northwestern University. Originally published in the *Holy Cross Magazine* in September 1944, it appeared three decades later in a couple of youth periodicals under the title *The Fish and the Great Sea* and was also included in the book *Cloud-Hidden, Whereabouts Unknown* in the essay "Spectrum of Love" (Pantheon, 1973). We hope you enjoy this picture book edition, the first of its kind. May you, like the little fish, dance always in the joy of your true element.

Joan and Anne Watts

