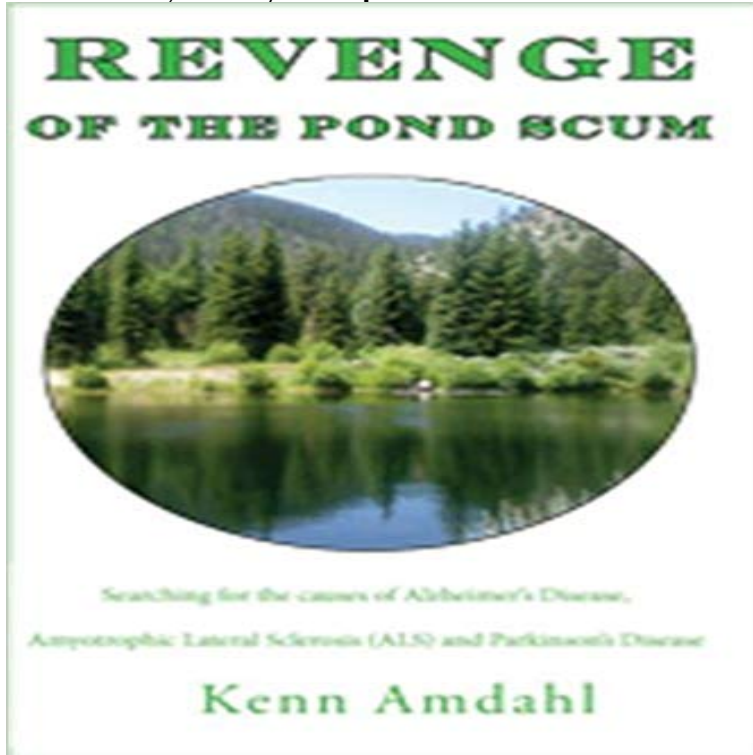


Revenge of the Pond Scum: Searching for the causes of Alzheimers Disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) and Parkinsons Disease



Strange criminals stalk our aging bodies. Millions of lives are destroyed each year by invisible killers who do their evil business and then escape into the night leaving behind sad victims and this mystery: what causes neurological diseases like Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), Alzheimers Disease, and Parkinsons Disease? Thats the question the author chases throughout this book. It begins as the journal of a writer (who is best known for his quirky and funny books about electricity and calculus) musing about tropical fish and the difficulties of gardening in Colorado. It morphs into a nonfiction mystery about biology and medicine with twists and turns, suspects and alibis just like a work of fiction. Unlike fiction, the characters it describes lurk in the shadows of your own life.

When a paralyzing disease strikes one of the writers friends, he tries to learn about it. He searches the Internet and the library. He reads books, abstracts and articles. He looks up the hard words and tries to make sense of it all. As he learns new information, he records it in a notebook. This book is that notebook. It became both a simplified explanation of science facts and the journal of the authors study of them. It does not follow a perfectly linear path; few adventures do. At first, he tries to learn about Progressive Muscular Atrophy. He discovers that PMA is related to ALS. As the clues come together, he learns that scientists have good reasons to think ALS, Alzheimers and Parkinsons are all related; things that seem to cause the symptoms of one can also cause the symptoms of the others. In an almost eerie way, some things in the authors daily life also turn out to have a relationship to his study of the diseases. Ultimately, a combination of factors probably work together to cause these mysterious ailments. The experts dont agree. Some of the contributing factors may be specific

toxins, perhaps working in combination. Other factors might include a genetic predisposition, environmental factors, dietary additives or deficiencies of various nutrients. The author describes the clues and leaves any conclusions up to the reader. Even when the science becomes more complicated, the language remains conversational, with moments of humor. When the author becomes fascinated with things you might think uninteresting or irrelevant, you'll follow right along. Don't worry, he'll veer back before too long. On the other hand, how could someone find the bacteria within pig intestines anything but fascinating? Is there anyone out there who does not love fruit bats? He tracks more than one promising lead only to realize it's a dead end or ancient history. Some of these are the most interesting sections. No matter how well educated you are, you will learn things you probably never even wondered about before. In a way, that's what this book is about: how the Internet is changing the way amateurs learn technical information. It's becoming easier to find facts; it's also easy to absorb false information. What's hard is telling them apart. It's a very, very interesting book indeed! -- Derrick Lonsdale, MD, formerly of the Cleveland Clinic, Fellow of the American College of Nutrition (FACN), Fellow of the American College for Advancement in Medicine (FACAM) A funny, compelling, provocative, intellectually stimulating book. --Cynthia Dormer, Ph.D. associate professor of nutrition, Metropolitan State University of Denver

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