



11-15-2001

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Recommended Citation

Wright, Carolyne (2001) "Stealing the Children: After a Big Wind in Wyoming," *Westview*: Vol. 21 : Iss. 1 , Article 10.
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol21/iss1/10>

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Stealing the Children: After a Big Wind in Wyoming

by Carolyne Wright

It's not the kind of country where you can walk
dry-eyed. An olive-green wind blows
dust up and down the alleys,
gathers dry leaves in its fists for storm.
It's the kind of town where,
if you leave your children unattended,
the wind drives up for them
in its long, black station wagon.
They go so willingly they leave their tricycles
scattered over three backyards.
Later, you roam the feedlots,
poking among freight rails that writhed
like wounded serpents while the twister
passed over. Your own mind
is blown so dry it can't recall
who they were, those who left in mid-gale,
clambering into the front seat of the wind,
not even waving goodbye as they blew down
the street, leaving only scraps of their voices,
like strewn toys, on your lawn.

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from *Stealing the Children* (Ahsahta Press)

