



Montana Ghost Dance: Essays on Land and Life

John B. Wright

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Montana has been the "last best place" for so many people. A century ago, Native Americans gathered here to perform the Ghost Dance—a last, doomed attempt to make white settlers vanish and bring back the old ways of life. Today, people are still pouring into Montana, looking for the pristine wilderness they saw in *A River Runs through It*.

The reality of Montana—indeed, of all the West—has never matched the myths, but this book eloquently explores how the search for a perfect place is driving growth, development, and resource exploitation in Big Sky country. In ten personal essays, John Wright looks at such things as Montana myths; old-timers; immigrants; elk; ways of seeing the landscape; land conservation and land trusts; the fate of the Blackfoot, Bitterroot, and Paradise valleys; and some means of preserving the last, best places.

These reflections offer a way of understanding Montana that goes far beyond the headlines about militia groups and celebrities' ranches. Montana never was or will be a pristine wilderness, but Wright believes that much can be saved if natives and newcomers alike see what stands to be lost. His book is a wake-up call, not a ghost dance.

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