

STACY KIDD

*This is one of the nine wide worlds, and the
creatures that inhabit it lull*

First of all, it isn't tenderhearted.
Boys are as small
as their fathers' fingers, their tongues stained
with wild plum, their faces vapid
little things all the way from West Texas,
a place even wilder than this
wind where the river appears
only an inch deep. If you look
near the surface, the boys
might betray light that leans in
from backwoods for a can of snuff
or stick of black-jack if
that's all you have. They'll tell you
about the calf cut last December
from the ice, but in the case
of their own lives, they'll grow quiet,
and the quiet will grow like nails
from the tips of their fingers,
and the stillness will scratch at anything.