characters' ages:

Susan b. 1884—40 in opening scene

Wes b. 1878—10 when he sees Mose Rathbun in 1888, after (during?) Cree roundup

--20 @ time of Sp-American War

--40 in 1918, WWI

Wendell b. 1876?
- 63 in English Creek

Monty b. 1885—4 when Mose "disappears"

12-13 in 7th-8th grades @ Kooten Creek school, '77-8; Anna Ramsay

became teacher the in April '97 in A Fair
"Prairie Dominion" ch. heading changed, now available
falling up as cottonwood (wisps) drop from the branch by falling up, catching at currents of chance, until they at last lodge
falling up
— possible title instead of Prairie Nocturne;
introduce it in Susan's 1st scene @ homestead, where she muses on ghosts?... a rise out of the usual element of life, unaccountable as bread dough? or the way music carries, falls up into the air...
— or as cottonwood snow does
Samuel Duff subplot:

If I keep this angle—Wes having been Samuel’s commanding officer in France, and contributory to his death—Susan could have Samuel’s diary; she ultimately shows it to Wes, letting him know that she has been aware of that part of the past and let it go, between them.

This could tie in w/ her showing him, at the end, her "I more fit now...than when I was alive" inscription.
see 1st yellow pad fox @ paperclip for course of plot and plot elements
the black and white keys (Susan's fingers on them?)

--possible final image? (as Wes in the audience wonders what he has wrought)
the book of Susan Duff:

--title: There's No Better Trouble You Can Have

--lead: Susan Duff was liberal with the night. She counted as her own, The hours beyond dark were free and clear of.

--This could be the longitudinal novel, from a woman's focus, suggested by John Buckley. In Rascal Fair, I left it that Susan Duff had grown up to become a teacher in Helena. Thus she could become involved, perhaps in middle-age, with politics, and/or a powerful man, probably married; thrust of the novel would be her implacable sense of herself, her going ahead on her own course regardless of consequences. The title line likely would be hers, said to the man she chooses to become involved with.

--The man could be a railroad promoter, similar to Harlow, whose building of the Jawbone is outlined in Don Baker, THE MONTANA RAILROAD. Perhaps have him building the route from Valier to Gros Ventre? Browning to Gros Ventre? Or keep the story, as in actuality, in the Big Belts-to-Castle?
check the Montana miscegenation laws: illegal for white and colored to cohabit in 1920's? (See Lang's PNQ article)
Wes gives the two of them tickets to Europe?

—could Wes and Susan have seen Josephine Baker in perform in Paris in 1919? If not, make up a black performer...

—the plot seed to be planted here is that Susan would have seen blacks and whites mingle there.

—Wes might give, along w/ tix, money to launch their life in Europe, along w/ note to Susan that she's not to let Monty gamble it away.
Susan's diary as a plot pivot, later in the book?

---Monty reads in it what she thinks of him?

---an ambiguous line, which he takes offense at?
possible title: The Music of Fireflies

In Susan's Book

"" " Ballad...

The Ballad of Susan Duff

Prairie Nocturne
Susan Duff was liberal with the night. The hours beyond dark she counted as her own, free and clear of lessons and necessary music. It was nearing one, she had just begun to salt away another day in a diary page, when she heard the turn of a key in the front door and the rhythm of him coming up the stairs to her for the first time in four years.
Within a hand's turn, a governorship was lost.
It was nearing midnight, she had just begun salting away the matters of the day into her diary pages when she heard the key turn in the front door and then the rhythm of him coming up the stairs to her for the first time in four years.
Love Alley
"hold the tension of opposites" in growing up

--"tension of opposites" letter/Jan Elpel
funeral of Angus McCaskill?
Does Wes know Ninian lynched Monty's father?
plot possibility:

if Monty's career keeps being forestalled on stage, he could go onto radio;
Wes buys one of the first stations?
possible plot angle I haven't pursued: daughter of Karen Peterson, of Angus's school, is promising singer, taken under wing by Susan.