plotline: everything shifts w/ Berneta's death

through-line: the rest of us "at attention" because of her absence?

scene: Dad's and Grandma's letters?
HEART EARTH, possible form

Maudlow, June 15 postmark  
6,000-7,500 words (30-37 ms. pp.)

plotline: taking a seasonal (summer) job, future unsettled beyond that

through-line: Berneta enjoying "Heart Earth" home country, although she and Dad are back to their original 1934 sheepherding life.

scenes: her herding alone

Dad and I bring her boots and hat, they stay up late talking the night before my birthday
baptismal certificate (scroll), "Bernita (sic) Augusta Maggie" child of Mr. Thomas Ringer and his wife Bessie nee Glun, born Sept. 23rd, 1913 at Grand Rapids (my note: now Wisconsin Rapids?), baptised Oct. 6th, 1913 at

--in Grandma's handwriting on back: Paul Ringer born Sept. 17, 1918
William Ringer born Sept. 2, 1921
Wallace Ringer born Aug. 5, 1924
Livingston: my folks were married in St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, May 29, 1934—information from Rev. Michael Morgan, Aug. '34.

--Marriage service booklet is in the archival box.
from Theresa Buckingham letter, 1/14/91:

"When we were all at the old Luppoid that summer, I was impressed that your mom and dad went to several funerals, and I don't think they were all family and close friends. They always drove the car down to the creek crossing and your father washed it—-in preparation. Perhaps the funerals were for men that had worked for your father—-when I would ask who died I never knew the persons and they were usually men, but your mother always went. Maybe it was indicative of your mother's awareness that death was not an unknown horror but something one considered quietly and accepted."
R.L. "Bob" Prescott  
9615 47th SW, Seattle 98136—phone 932-7038

Allan Prescott's brother; might know Sweet Grass Hills lore; met him at fall '87 booksigning, at Tower?

- trailer camp
- 1999 Allan b.
- Winnie/Helena, as Prescotts were
gentry

Rocklerry

3- Fri

came out 35th to Barton
Westwood Village—term
in Barton dr. hill, 41

1970

Turn L at
47th—up hill a ways

1 block—

Brown house w
W"burg - Museum, postcards of (probably) late 1940's downtown 1/25/91

- then as now, traveler's town; cafes, cabins, gas stations
- wider & main st, evidently paved on main st (99, 90 - & dirt (sand?)

- prickly pear cactus beside on bank of Has'a H (beside bridge)
- occasional palm tree sprouting over neon sign (Budweiser)
- sign: glass-tube lettering over painted (painted) words -
  Budweiser - Cabins - Ted's Cafe - Bus - (Cabins Cafe Cabins Cafe)
  (none of trucking horse saloon signs of many, for ex)

- parallel pkg: different from WSS's angle
- specific stores: Safeway with ice cream parlor now is
  Standard gas station was part w/ store now is

Hotel Mecca - Cabins

My note: Wiburg Way (the main st.) welcomed the tourists (coming up the Phoenix Highway or the California Highway, as 89 and 60 were called) while around the corner, on Tegner, we: Safeway, drugstores, ... etc.
W'burg re-visit, 3/10/91

W'burg Sun., 2/10/66 p.5 - Victor Cadenstafll “has been coming to
W'burg past 20 yrs. His original Bola tie, made here in 1949…”

- d. '86, in Mich, 1/26 p.8 (age 81)
AZ H'ways, Oct. '66 - “The Bola Tie” by Eleanor Elliott Uellmann
  “”
  Oct. '76 - “An AZ Nechiefie Party”

WICKENBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY, Linda Brown, Librarian & Rosemary Clark, library Asst.
the scald of what had happened
unhoused again, we...
HEART EARTH--possible "imagining" scenes

I am put to bed (giving both Dad and my mother goodnight kisses) the night before my 6th birthday as they stay up late talking.

--next section, final section of book, begins w/ G'ma's postscript to Wally abt B's death?
gunning it: was Dad (in taking on the sheep deal in the Maudlow country) at last not? (i.e., overworking himself)
Dad's and Grandma's letters against each other: an archive of Hell.
in This voyage on her ink
done
None of us ever got over her. Not my grandmother, who'd had to toughen herself against (so much)... Not my father; when I came to write (Rascal Fair) a novel of a man who fell in love at once and never let her go in his mind...I had him for lifelong example. Nor Wally, even after his own life, lobbing the packet of letters from the past, from the Ault. And it turns out, not myself either...

(Here or earlier: I'd figured that it was the storytelling of my father and my grandmother's turns of tongue that set me toward being a writer. Suddenly after almost fifty years, here is a mother with a knack for phrase, a sly eye, the hunch that her words ought to persevere...) In what proved to be the last chapter of her life, she too (like her ink) refused the fade of time.
the years were savage to him now.

Or, possible use abt the years before Dad asked Grandma to live with us:
Without my mother, the years were so savage to them both that (my father at last made the truce)...
possible final line for HEART EARTH:

...the letters that began their battle toward love.

(letters now are in a sense to me, as if I was distant on the ocean of time...)
21 Dec. '90: called Lee Goerner to say Merry Xmas etc., and to suggest we talk soon in the New Year about any ideas he has toward Heart Earth, flavors from House of Sky that should or shouldn't be in this one, for instance. Lee said what struck him from recently re-reading Sky was how hard that life was. I should keep that in mind for Heart Earth too, the main point perhaps that my folks could put up with hard work and hard finances, but not those and lack of community in Arizona as well.

—Out of Lee's comment, too, I should keep some focus on the day-by-day details, the work and chores that made up my folks' life.

—The larger historical theme behind this turning point in their lives was that America's turn to suburbia and automation was beginning to happen. In a sense, the return to Montana was a choice to stay marginal. ("margin" a key word to use, in connection with her letters?)
As forensic as I can be,
Heart Earth

The high mountain summer was one brink too many, and now he had lost his wife. (Grandma's new grudge, spoken or un--, against him now for that.)
rehabilitation

Everybody’s "... (after Dad & G'ma called truce)
havoc
- are abt B's death, in ch. 5?
- Dad/G'me's letters?
white-hot shadow (of atomic bomb)

seared to death

Hiroshima gone one day, Nagasaki another
This latest ricochet of ours, from WSS to the Morgan ranch, seemed to have more zing to it than most; but how long could it carry?
To try to put a denominator on these scamps who also had a reputation for the Doig boys were working like blazes, ... (practical throwers of flings).

The common experience of people after those rural nightfuls of music and other intoxicants was to wobble home for too few hours' sleep before groaning up to milk the cow or feed the livestock or other looming chores. The Doig boys, whatever their state, flew at the chores the minute they reached home and slept uninterrupted after.
My father had ended up married and settled, but not napkined and pinkie-lifted. He could have made it if he had, but he didn’t. His mother-in-law.

she wanted them audited.

In the same way that my mother could be consigned to a prairie chapter of stalwart women, the Doig boys look like a group picture of carefree cowboyism. Again, the frame is too handy. Every blessed one of them ended up married and settled, napkined and patriarchal.
The war never got past the gunwales of the Ault...

The war lapping at the gunwales of the Ault, kamikaze planes...
as far north as we could go--unknown cont'l divide beyond (Hudson Bay Divide)
thic country where winters were always killing off an industry
Even sage, the element of that land, is vanishing
the sun bowléd down on us, resentful, in the trailer
or any snatch of shade to be found
Jensen ranch: not even the satisfaction of trying to make anything better, because it wasn't ours. And just when the ranch began to green, we would leave it for the Reservation...
riveted onto the countryside
The Hoots were craftsmen, making their own shoes, clothes. The colony also made fine short stock whips, the kind for use in loading pens. McGrath bought one, and asked why the whips weren't made a foot or so longer. It was explained to him that they were just the length to fit along the body from armpit to bootheel so they could be sneaked out for sale.
the passing of silver dollars; before, a person never saw paper, would keep a dollar bill as oddity
rough edges weren't off the country
Grindstone country, Mr's father had called it.
Deal first with the dread. The knowing that the story of my parents will turn a dark side and we will be lost.
I am sure

My parents were allegiant to the usual (customary) Americanisms...
had a tongue in him like a clapper of a bell.
exploded view (see Am Heritage dic)
without thinking it through—-not knowing how to, really--she was unafraid of the land. It was the disasters of people she could not handle Of darkness, lightning, snakes, perhaps--but not of the life there itself.

spiders

Some were afraid of land. Some wives, I more than a few husbands.
G'ma's mother did not recognize her
Grant & Kohrs at Deer Lodge said they were "mining the miners" by selling them provisions. Similarly, the Silver Dollar Bar w. of Missoula, Frontier Town at MacDonald Pass, are traplines for tourists.
Mont., 3 July '85

Drought ya: no wildflowers bloomed (Ron Bishop reports from Coody)
THE MONTANIANS

lingering smell of skunk after you drive past one run over on road.
trying to get a little ahead of nature
. . . to whir up inside myself . . .
This story out of memory flows through three people, then two, then three again, and at last--now--one. I am the last of memory's people, and through me the story shapes itself like this:
slap-dash
being dunned
nips away at...

Memory nips away at it. (my reconstruction of spring-summer '45?)
grope

not even able to grope yet; frozen to attention. (by Berneta's death)
It has magic and death, and feats—oh, a skein of feats like a tapestry hung through the mind

- Culture of coastal tribes
- Use of totem scenes?
- Raven does oo... Wolves etc. ...
- a cosmology of oo
It was them part of us now.
fissure

Two Medicine?
What is memory, what is imagination? Where the line between?
Why wouldn't the mind's set of eyes take in and hold those things nearest them, every day, all day long?
This is a book of echoes, and like sounds repeating themselves against canyon walls, memory/echoes alter and lap over each other.
like a collision of meteors

unlikely as

but once it had happened, as hard to sort out, too.
summer is always the most temporary season for me
unlovely country, yet glorious
(Jick: his wife has died of cancer, and he says something like:)

The whole damn world is gonna die of cancer...
Jick or someone else says, about Reagan adminstr. "This country is being run by guys who can barely operate an umbrella."
The Ford once more loaded and into action (in the mudhole scene?)
We were migrants who didn't see ourselves that way; didn't admit it, except in B's letters.
allegiance (to heart earth)
godsend
AZ had turned out not to be a...
We still were marginal, still were frail
That hope ran into the sand. (go on to quote B's letter and our lack of money?)

(Arizona plans, Wickenburg plans)
The world is not our windowbox. (i.e., my mother's determination to be out in, on
the land)
allude to the sheep deal, just glancingly, in ch. 3 "heart earth" section; then accelerate its importance, as part of the plot, in ch. 4, culminating in dialogue about it in mudhole scene; then in ch. 5, it straightforwardly operates our life.
I still meet people who remember me asleep on bench at dances
I was the line across the middle of their life.

(Being their only possible child meant that their pride in me was intensified, their focus on me was narrower and stronger.)

--or use the above graf just abt Dad?
Since Dad began raising me by himself, I have always been about halfway into the next generation older than me; in creating Jick, I've followed this overlap in my writing.

—whether or not to say this explicitly, this relates to my not having had playmates (and thus the "social interplay") before the Buckinghams in summer of '44.
I was reading by then...

Evidently a sanity-saving measure by my mother [and others]? I pestered to read to me:

oh well, might as well pass the time teaching him what the words are...
self-propelled

I am not as self-propelled as I thought.

None of us are we think.
Easy enough to say, (that she knew the risk of a mountain summer...)
Life here was going to take some acrobatics. "Rifleshot country" was the term for such abrupt terrain; so up and down that only a bullet could travel direct. We were in for a climbing summer, the saddlehorses constantly huffing on the slopes. But the meadows of the Bridgers were going to be worth it—such splendid grass, this rain-fed early summer, that the sheep would fatten on it as if it were candied.
(Mayakovsky "carry your lungs" quote)

Short of that, what is there to say.

(Other lung cases: Camille, Robt Louis Stevenson, Hans Castorp)
she was not a contemplating person, her mind more edgy than that.

I wonder now if she ever daydreamed (reservation life).

That Dad did, I am sure. I can see in his mind the waft of himself at last come well and wise and wealth, with me reflecting a steady glory for him to warm in. But G'ma, no: her mind wanted tasks, busyness at small things. Not for her the drift of notion.

(she could think matters through; sometimes missing a facet which I would point out to her, she would say Well, that's so, I hadn't thought of that, and think it through again.)
It is a sunset at high noon, a season
turning leaves
remaking hell & undoing trees in a single
instant...
Just once, it was explained to me that I should not be stricken by her sharpness, that it was a mood. Once was not enough; I wanted more said, some love declared. Some arrangement that we would leave each other alone—rather, that they would leave each other alone, not pick at the scabs.
small pink wild rosies (G'ma's saying)
He was right that she wanted me—wanted any family, anyone to fuss over, do for, laugh with.
More straightforward than clever, more abrupt than museful, she had little temper with those who tried to finesse through life.
It was sufficiently agreed that the three of us should not live apart. The next question was whether we could live together.
Where my father's mind could be canny and accepting, hers could refuse anyone else's viewpoint, even when they were unarguably right. Where he could feel defeat and make some terms with it, hers was rock which knew it could outstubborn this storm, and any future ones.
It may have been an idea worth its weight in moonbeams, but OO held to it...

OO's belief was that...
What turned her?

or: It turned me.
Berneta's letters pulsed in (to Wally on the destroyer) like starshine, light of events long gone by the time he read of them.
walking on fire

(Wally's war career may seem like, but actuality was long periods of routine between intense action)
Heart Earth

taproot (of our family)
timestripes (timeprint, timestamp, margin): Dad—and I?—ride with Wally in the snowplow; Wally drops the blade to send the new reflector posts zinging into the forest like an arrow.
We still were trying to find a stance in the world.

(My folks finally had found...
I tapered my enthusiasm after that.

Wally
his

alt Wurina
the Bridgers can be seen from the barber shop.
every way, that was the sound of power. We had just a diesel tidbit of
it there at the Stewart ranch, but the generating was beginning to put
a new nervous system into the world, the neural paths of computers.
My parents were of the ancient world, yet like bystanders (at an event)
they [witnessed] power. One of the great facts of World War Two was that
power kettled an ore called bauxite into aluminum.
Wally saved the letters as last memento of his lost sister?
(After the war) Wally was a bit like the sea captain who retired by walking inland with an oar over his shoulder until no one could recognize the implement. (settled back into Smith River Valley life, trucking, the highway work)
Wally: three different cancers at him

--in his last months when cancer came at him from three directions.
B. hands were large for a woman; I am square-handed like her.
six kinds of weather at once (herding day on the mountain?)
she thinks

case this as a cross-cut, or some mention of "six" - or make this "sixteen"? - by us in town?
a mudhole that would swallow your shadow. (Maudlow road scene?)
Maybe we weren't just rehashing...

All years lead somewhere.
My mother's concern for Dad's health after AZ, his concern to get us enough money to maintain her health: so, each reaches the decision for the sheep deal in the Bridgers from a different direction. She sees it as the least work-hazardous for him (deciding against contracting hay that summer, for ex), he sees it as the most profitable. If either had been more selfish (callous?), the Bridger summer might not have happened.

each trying to preserve the health of the other.
From Phoenix to Wickenburg to White Sulphur Springs to Maudlow, we had been aswim.
while we at last

B skylarked...

(harding cabin; fishing etc.)
prosperous-looking (Galáatin Valley?)
as a rough spot on the calendar, but now it was brave new 1945, February in fact, next thing to spring in this palmy climate. As Montanans we of course knew that so far, so good always really means too soon to tell, too good to last.
Her letters unparagraphed, uncomma'ed

C'ma'd
Harsh rusts (in somebody? on some piece of geography?)
too soon
began in Wally, too. He was dead at (62?)

The harsh rusts of those letters took five years to wear away.
(I became part of...)

the Montana diaspora
For once, for my sake, my father bent before he broke, and (our story; my life) goes on at a new slant from there.
The land that kept her alive, until it killed her.
Time compacted (itself) to moments oddly there.
aquifer of grief
The loneliness was different in each of us, as if it was trying out tones (moods). Dad's seeped, like a sour fog, from a mountain where death had come with daybreak—and although he could not have said it in words, from his own moments close by his own death. Grandma’s was simpler, a hollowed place in existence in which she had to keep busy or hear its silences. Mine was--mine, a confusion about time and how we went through it...
Their (Dad and Grandma's) Coventries and Dresdens and Nagasakis were in her (lungs), burning down a life.
A time when they ran a trapline every winter without thinking about it.
Better to wear out than rust out.
inscape (used by Gerard Manley Hopkins)
makes no bones about it (Berneta's straightforwardness in the letters)
clinical
Berneta's sense of—search for—community.
I am told she was soft-voiced.
Berneta grew up saying fee-fee for barefoot
cost of air\$ per oz.
Berneta's high school record, showing she entered at Ringling Sept. 1928, age 15, and withdrew after her second year, 1929-30.

---best grades were algebra (B+) and English (B-); she did take 2 yrs Latin, C & C+
---her autograph book lists Latin as favorite subject
Moss Agate: a melancholy place? or not, the Ringer family reasonably content?

--a feudal way of life, vassals for the Ringlings? (check dic. for exact "vassal", "liege", etc.)
snow angel (sand angel, grass angel)

--what the tenderness of memory does to the actuality of someone who dies young and tragically as B. did; i.e., the glorified outline made as people talk about her.
--the habit of reading publications back to front from turning to the Hazel cartoon in old Saturday Evening Post.

(check whether Hazel was in 1945 SEP's)
scrim

scrimshaw...scrimshander (have B take up scrimshaw?) No

Berneta's letters a kind of scrimshaw of our life then...
the camera finds her as a sprite in a peaked cap for a grade-school play or as our young lady of the horses, confident five feet of teenager in enveloping leather chaps borrowed from a Doig boy, or gussied up as a very passable flapper, she invariably seems a number of years beyond her actual age at the time, someone at a harder-earned level of life than anybody else in the picture, independent as a comet.
speculate on the other letters she was writing: to Grandma, to Hazel, etc.?

--The act of writing: focusing herself down into the info, the code of looping greetings to Wally and filling the sheets of paper.

--The phone then was the messenger of death; i.e., was only resorted to in terrible emergency.
Moss Agate was bone-and-gristle country.
imagine my mother's life in terms of Jill Ker Conway's analysis of hers, late in THE ROAD FROM COORAIN.

--and from the viewpoints of "women's west" history now being written.
Berneta worried about the roads.

(find references in letters; getting stuck, preferring to herd sheep instead of taking herder to town, etc.)

(link this to Wally snowplowing, Dad riding with him? Me riding with him?)

see Bill Lang/Stan Davison reference in Ideas notebook.
chased by the agony of her asthma attacks
what the asthma was doing to her
Heart Earth

link, though perhaps without openly saying to, Berneta's use of return address "Mrs. Chas. Doig" w/ newspaper headline similar use in her obituary.
Dr. Mike Stewart: told C on 7/1/91 that my mother's early death by asthma never would have happened today. Get details from Mike, what soon-to-be-invented medication she just missed out on.
role of patient: how did Berneta take it?
this unhoused life... (, she was growing tired of)
with catastrophe in her.
Did she model herself after (Theresa Buckingham, her most astute ranchwoman friend)
the act of breath (sometimes was harder for than other times, but it was never easy.
food (cooking) was the \textit{mix} palette, the art, of my mother and grandmother.
Kitten-katten

(A cat was never less than a...)
lungs stippled with disaster
It was told on him that... her

G'ma, baby buggy/chicken story
Just what my life needed in it, another negotiator. (Grandma)

---Grandma was another negotiator, not a director, in my life.
my father on his high horse against her
(horse...?)
Heart Earth

...who never saw an ocean.

(coming to her through Wally's letters)
Heart Earth

sculpted in sugar (everybody's too kind descriptions of Berneta after her tragically early death)
the chokehold in her lungs
Being fretted over had always put a crowbar in her spine, and it did again now.
suffer/suffocate: same root word?

Not quite: suffer ≠ suffocate
tatoo of illness

--HH hunched into herself as if tracing the tattoo inside
Breath dragged in and out of her grudgingly
Small as she was, ill as she so often was, she grew up on horseback, a saddle the main mode across country to schoolhouse and neighbors and Saturday night dances.
hairstyles (trace them to movies or magazines of the moment) do not flatter Berneta; she looks much her best in teenager long hair.
insert on p. 18 a "curtain" reference: that one of the things obscuring my mother was the common report of how brave she was against the asthma.

...yet she must have been sick of being sick?
take care not to make Berneta a replica of any of the women of the trilogy.
...independent as a comet (in her growing up; dating my dad when she was 15, for ex.)

I am not keen on paradox, thinking as I do that it gets to be an excuse for plunging off deep ends, but here seems to be the paradoxical part of my mother's life, that her illness set her free...
What would you have me do, watch the sunset and count one more day off my life?
Heart Earth

the motion of her mind...
changed in Jan. '92 revise:

to the tidings. This is not Moss Agate but higher bolder country, and she has costumed herself up to it to the best of her capacity; not more than sixteen years old, she seems to have known forever the pose of that moment--the mountain West as a stone rainbow, a girl-turning-woman poised beneath it.
dasn't (usage for Berneta?) -- insert early in the book (at Moss Agate?) to chime with "Dasn't fling the tin cans at the sheep too much" (and Dad too?) refer in ch. 5

Dictionary of Am'n Regional English refer: under "dare", pp. 12-13, v. II
from Theresa Buckingham:

"Your mother would read to you; she'd read by the hour, on a hot afternoon she'd keep you cool and quiet just sitting there reading..."

"She was so quiet, had a real soft voice."
pernicious

(use to describe B's asthma; perhaps also use later in the book in another sense)
aspiration: to aspire, but also to breathe
A bum go: Dad's—and Berneta's and Grandma's?—saying for "hard luck";

--as in, "That's a bum go."

insert about B's health?

use later in connection with Maudlow gumbo? (rhyme: Maudlow gumbo, a bum go, Maudlow.)
shack-and-clutter

(Tom Ringer's life at the end?)
As was getting to be usual, here we were, wherever under the uncertain sun this was.
I am pleased to find her opinionated, angry, a little sarcastic...

(instead of snow angel)
Chained across the lungs as she was,
the slack lungs

Her (traitorous) lungs were the only thing slack about her.
speculate on the name Berneta (German origins?), which seems mx to have been unshortenable; have never heard any reference to her except by full name.
(didn't use in ch. 1 because device seemed too close to describing pics of Dad early in Sky, but this can be considered again:)

This young Berneta has the strange magic of seeming a different person from one camera-caught mood to the next.

--Later in the book, I could say instead: In those photos my mother often seemed a different person from one camera-caught moment to the next.... Just so, this is a new her (to me)....
My mother's picture in album—my own face reflects in it, can almost fit my nose and lines onto hers.
All the sympathy in the world couldn’t magic away the situation next to her heart.
(wishes)
At some point, deal with why Berneta "had to spill over to someone"—Wally—rather than to Dad. Perhaps ask it:

Wherefrom that need to spill over to somebody, somebody evidently not the man she was married to?

... vent...

They each were up against their limits:
I am glad to think of her as occasionally cross, ablaze in the unemotioned void (of her absence)...

For that matter, I'm pleased to look back on myself as an angry imp...

Like missionaries, mothers annoy merely by doing their job.
The lack of community—family, friends—in Arizona turned my parents back to Montana. Use this as historical theme, maybe the theme, of Heart Earth: refusal, bewilderment, whatever it was, to become new atomized Americans, suburbanites—out of the cycle of seasons, for instance.

--My hunch is that the cycle of seasons, which their livelihoods were crafted to, is what drew them back to Montana at that specific time of year; spring, northward, to lambing time etc.

--the word "atomized": link with the atomic aspects of the time, there when the A-bomb was being built and tested? This maybe doesn't need to be dwelt on, but could be handled in a quick there-it-is, take-it-or-leave it sentence or two.
Name off any of the places and persons in which my mother's past was restlessly boxed, and in that spring of 1945 their condition was more woe than not.
places hold the past for us in "geologic" strata: memory, familiarity, family identification; ...lead into "heart earth" phrasing?
to be done in Oct.-Nov. '92 revise:

--show B. active in the horseback riding, going up to the sheep w/ Dad and me etc.

--introduce ring of tin cans into herding scene

--show that the Morgan camp tender is temporarily tending us at the cabin.

--make "ridge-runs the country of his head" in ch. 5 chime w/ ch. 2 Faulkner Crk ridge

—in ch. 3 or even earlier, show the physiological basis for B's enjoyment of high country; literally, a "mountain high".
According to our family diarist, the Brownie box camera, my mother's allegiance was that of a convert (to Wall Mtn.).
or as a rhinestone cowgirl of the time, confident five feet of mounted teenager wearing chaps with MONTANA spelled out in fancy rivets down the leg-length of leather and a heart outline putting period to those tidings, or gussied up as a very passable flapper, the young Berneta invariably seems advanced beyond her numerical age at the time, at some pushed pitch of existence not available to anyone else in the picture, trying to be independent as a comet.

Enter the Doigs, at a gallop.

Their place was
B.--felt alone in the thronging city of Phoenix but (comfortable) in isolated mountain country.
In our family, when we had a quantity of anything we said we had oceans of it.

Well, we now had oceans of...

(outdoors?) @ sheep camp

- asking
Tom Ringer: Probably, too, his hardihood had been damaged by his earlier life as a housepainter.
Dad in aluminum plants was part of Fussell's point abt factory-ization of the war.

--So, was Algona Park where we met the future?
worried to death, such a void of Alzona aloneness that I have to spill
over to someone. The shoulder to cry on is unreachable in the Pacific,
some seems
but this paper shape of it is the next best. of why is that?
The Stewart ranch was the only place we spent a year in the same house.
We have been a family line drawn to margins.
unused in Ringling dance scene:

Tew dews in a dewcut, the incessant Scotch tribe of Doigs was saying about Charlie and his new girl before the night was out; two doves in a dovecote do make a lovely murmur in any tongue, all right.
A do-it-yourself expanse, the West was supposed to be. The makings were there.

If the neighbors wouldn't be charitable, perhaps they at least could be distant.
Grandma provided me an upbringing of two generations of mothers.
As for me, this book is my try at gathering the ricochets—thiers, mine, ours.

there has been a long ricochet, from that to realization of now.
(nonsense of inside of her head
The writer must put the words one after another, at whatever cost.
my grandmother's history of fending
My business is making days into words.

My business is to turn days into words. Whether this is a worthwhile proposition in not definite, but the days would turn into something else anyway...
the juice of youth
squares in an album, as if the world were cornered and indexed.
a life of stoop labor, really, all those cows to be milked...

Gimma had come un(bent) (undisturbed) out of that life of...
Grandma never called one of her sons (William) anything but his nickname, Bud, and never called Wally by anything but his full name, Wallace.
...Her boundaries narrowed to the atoms of air she could summon into a breath.
The medicines to control asthma were years ahead yet.

...in the antihistamine future.
swerves (use as noun, to desc. my folks' life?)

Why did she put up with my father's swerves?

...she was used to a life of swerves
Like missionaries, (wives) annoyed simply by doing their jbb.

--my mother, on need for us to find a lasting place to live.
His life ended before his existence (Dad w/ emphysema)...

Her life had ended; her existence wove into us...
Her footfall was nearly mine
focus on life narrows when you're sick; Dad's last efforts were simply from bed to oxygen tank.
"...swallows clothespegged on a telephone wire" (Norman McCaig poem, in Comparison & Description notebook)
possible add to trapper scene: (cut from Eng Crk; adapt)

My father never said so—again, not what you'd expect, because otherwise he seldom minded talking—but the way a trapped animal dies must have bothered him. However many gnawed-off feet it had taken to persuade him, by the time he was teaching Alec and me he insisted that we set spring poles on at least the weasel traps; ...With a spring pole, the weasel or mink would be snapped off the ground and hung into the air to freeze to death within an hour or so, rather than fighting the trap for days or gnawing its own foot off. I suppose that my father's view was that a spring pole was not much mercy in a cruel situation, but some.
Sage reached up over the stirrups, swatted the leather of a rider's chaps until they looked polished.
check W Bros (but the other bks too) to see if I already used "I have stared holes into"...
But eventually the road dropped, and dropped some more, and suddenly we were in a gap between the highest ridges, and the Gallatin Valley opened up for twenty miles ahead.
Dad was in Blue Cross while working in aluminum plant; would he show up in records, late '44-spring of '45?
In the back country around Ringling, see three or four running horses on a distant butte and they were apt to be ours.

--small herd of cattle w/Angus

--patch it (a living) together, keep patching at it.
treated as virtually next-door. By dint of the family homestead the Doigs had a twenty-year jump on the Ringers.

Six brothers and a sister, with aunts and uncles and cousins and double cousins up every coulee, the Doigs were as much clan as family. Once,
The Doigs were descended from the homestead effort of their father, which had killed him young, the bunch of them honed by necessity.
The country my parents came out of was an uphill treadmill. My father grew up in what amounted to a family bunkhouse—he and five brothers barracking in the long end of the homestead house.
My parents' ranch work as a commodity: something definite that could be sold.

--The one commodity they had.
Moss Agate: just this side of desolate

wind-desolated

dreary

drear
Early graves (were part of our family line: Peter Doig, and Dad's brother Jim)
(My mother?) going around the house with coffee cup in her hand (early in the morning?), as if she had the cup out for a walk.
She had had enough teases of fate.
She had

the ability to trudge

We all had...