Gumboot dialogue, which squishes with regional affectation. Moccasin dialogue, scarcely discernible from the narrative prose. I'm trying for honest workshoe dialogue.
Sir Laurence Olivier—

p. 29—"Observe the speech patterns; keep them in your head, in your magic box. Store them until you need them, then use them."

—the London Underground, the Circle Line. "Everything you need will be there."
"some here and some there," as Kamante said of Isak Dinesen's manuscript pages,

If I am trying to use ingredients such as these to write about what I see as the reality of Western rural life, I am also trying to do it now in the voice of a Westerner. Specifically, in English Creek, in the voice of my narrator, Jack McCaskill, who when someone asks him if they're about done having, answers: "We've pretty close to got it." Who says to himself, as he watches his older brother become involved with the local dazzling young person of the opposite sex: "If I ever get old enough to have brains, I will work on the question of man and woman."

In this matter of voice, I think I'm working under the inspiration of a couple of great accomplishments of the past few years—G.B. Edwards' novel of life on the isle of Guernsey in the English Channel, titled The Book of Ebenezer LePage; and Russell Hoban's remarkable tale of tribal life after a nuclear holocaust,
Riddley Walker. Those two first-person pieces of fiction seem to me to succeed miraculously in converting a fluid spoken language into a fixed written one. They make sound visible on the page: and my hope is that the voice of my narrator, Jick McCaskill, is westernly indelible in its own way. More than that, I hope to carry on with this ventriloquism for two more novels, to make this a trilogy which will cover Montana's century of statehood. Jick's grandfather, who is the one who leaves Scotland to take up a homestead, is beginning to talk to me, up through my typewriter, for the novel of a couple of years from now. And I think Jick himself will be back for a novel about Montana's centennial in 1989—none of us westerners have had a chance for centennial hoopla since you Coloradans eight years ago, but Montana and both Dakotas and the state of Washington all get to celebrate in '89.
So, those are at least a handful of the makings of books such as mine, and maybe those of other writers out here as well. They seem to me ingredients we haven't even begun to exhaust. And this corner of the country being the worthwhile place it still is, there seems to be incentive for writers to continue to work with these materials. We're at least trying, as Isak Dinesen's houseboy Kamante wanted, to make our pages hang together from one end to the other. With a little luck, maybe some of them will even turn out to be good enough to be bound in blue. Thank you.
seeing into the language—using the ear.
Speaking in Tongues

--absurd amt of critical praise given Penelope Fitzgerald for Teutonic "the" in The Blue Flower.

--Flannery O'Connor on how much slang to use
Their Scots talk whirred in the air. (Dad and McTaggart)

Dad's inherited Dundonian purr against McT's sharper Glaswegian.
I remember the Dupuyer trapper, Joe Smith. He would disappear from town for days, studying the paths of beaver, setting his traps in the calculated harvest which always left beaver for another season. Joe trapped always alone, yet I believe he would have taken me once if I had turned to him as we took our meals in the Dupuyer cafe and asked. I never managed to speak that request, and sometime in my college years Joe disappeared longer than usual, to be found face-down beside a brush creekbank. And now I intersect with animal tracks here in the snow of twenty years later.
My grandmother, Annie Campbell Doig, born in Perth, in old age wd go to bed for a few hours after supper, then get up to listen Harry Lauder when he came on the radio.

--The staying power of old tunes and rhymes: my doch dad cd barely carry a tune, yet he knew the words of Loch Lomond, and for that matter, When It's Springtime in the Rockies. There were a lot of stray bits firmly in his memory; his knack for storytelling, for instance, and the day on the Resvtn when he and I were in the pickup or the Jeep and conversation about what I was doing in school somehow led him to begin reciting "Hiawatha."

--I of course used this with Angus in Dancing, his headful of poetry.
Toasts: chronologically in this trilogy, from
Scotch: Broth to the ill, stilts to the lame.
1930's and after, my dad's generation: "Here's how."
I hope to
And while it's not exactly a toast, in the last novel I'll have a chance
to use something I once heard: a guy ordering a round of drinks by calling
out to the barmaid, "Nurse, we'll have another round of jelly sandwiches."
to Shelby
up to Shelby
on up to Shelby
on up through to Shelby
Stegner: (LA Times profile?)

The stuff all sits there. It's absolutely possible. What it takes is a burning enthusiasm for someone to go in and get it.
Mariah songs etc.

Dancing at the rascal fair,
devils and angels all were there,
heel and toe, pair by pair,
dancing at the rascal fair.

Burns' poetry:
"Your poor narrow footpath of a street/
where two wheelbarrows tremble when they meet."

(Jick now: neon-radio-phones-TV-ultimately fax in a campground)
ball caps: I red-heart bowling; where else can you get a pair of shoes so cheap?

King's X, you said the last time
we played this lover's game.
"Time out," you called just when
I'd chosen you by name. (pp. 192-3)

"Somewhere south of Browning,
along Highway 89!
Just another roadkill,
beside life's yellow line!"
Breslin's ear for one dialect is a sonor wonder.
( Irish ear - Breslin, Geo Higgins, Wm Kennedy, Frank O'Connor)
Syngé - Riders from Sea, pig e 00 feet
ambelofs
ratin pepr

--Feb. '86: C's female cop student encountered these spellings in a prisoner's request for envelopes and writing paper.
"The past is a different country, they talk funny there." (check against Go-Between)
The Bush Soldiers, p. 327+ --example of several pp. of crisp useful dialogue
(by John Hooker)
The Rush Soldier, John Horner

p.106 - "I've got an Indian Scout & sidecar..."

get example of showing more than punctuation - Sartell's blunted offer in all phrases & commas. Then definiteness of Marcia's reply.
for UW reading: guts of the language--

Jemmy is kenski Glaswegian version of Jimmy, short for James;

use "aa oo" joke by writing the actual dialogue on board before reading, filling in the vowelized version when I get to it in remarks after.

Hannah Tebbet—near palindrome, To be a Tebbet

Patrick St—importance of using what you hear; the Pa' Pa'erson joke, by god aren't those Glaswegians a sketch. BUT: hey, what was the name of that street leading to the dock in Greenock? Hey, what would it be like, for you as newcomer, trying to hear the strange local tongue?

Fife character says "hereabout" and "incomers"; only a time or two, but he does say them.
"You're not sugar nor salt nor nobody's honey, so the rain will never hurt you," she crooned to me. "Those two are as close as three in a bed with one kicked out," she confided...

"She goes around looking like she's been drawed through a knothole backwards," she huffed about our most disheveled neighbor.

Into my life had come that river of proverbs, my grandmother. I was ten years of age, but my ears were as old as sin. All of a sudden I knew (I was in new territory of life, something like honorary adulthood...) The family of language...

delta

That delta of language led, among other places, to this lake...

Another Montanan who was led to this lake, Norman Maclean, chose as the final words of... "I am haunted by waters." Those of us from the West, where water has been made to flow uphill toward money, (live by) that most literary of sentences.

(or: "the poetry under the prose", think and use "I am haunted..." later, as intro to final section)

Bucking the Sun takes place during the creation of an inland sea—Ft. P Dam and its lake—and...what chance and ambition do to a family on Fort Peck's tide of fate.
Oo?
Ay, oo.
A3 oo?
Ay, a' 66.
A' oe oo?
Ay, a3oe oo.
A' ae oe oo?
Ay, a' ae oe oo.
Wool?
Yes, wool.
All wool?
Yes, all wool.
All ewe wool?
Yes, all ewe wool.
All one ewe's wool?
Yes, all one ewe's wool.
Craft of writing
- not so much a citizen of America, as of American language
- trying to see a bear into language

slang: Ace, Bullet, C hook, D death, F flag

[Do: Pa's born
. Jimmy, lad? Ya was' ya goe don' to. hit o' Pa'nick.]

Bougainvillea All that summer long she was out in the bougainvillea,
kissing college boys.

"if you don't sit there every day, the day it would come well,
you won't be sitting there."
Riddley Walker, though, is quite another case. It takes place a couple of thousand years after a nuclear holocaust, when what life is left, is comprised of small, hunting tribes. People live in dismal stockade villages, there are packs of wild dogs everywhere outside. And the English language has changed. It has gone through this tribal transformation. I have trouble getting anyone to read Riddley Walker, because you open it up and it looks rather like those lines of Chaucer you slogged through, back in freshman English. The leader in that part of England—Inland, the people now call it—is the Pry Mincer. It's hard to render aloud all the magic Hoban does to the language in this book, but to give you some idea, here is the first sentence from Riddley Walker, the narrator:

There's a religious leader known vaguely as the Wes Mincer.
"On my naming day when I come 12 I gone front spear and kilt a wyld boar
he parbly ben the las wyld pig on the Downs any how there hadn't ben none for a long
time before him nor I aint looking to see none agan." "Parbly" for probably. "Las" for last, "ben" is spelled b-e-n instead of b-double e-n, "befor" has no "e" on the
end of it. A lot of common sense reform of English, actually.

What has happened to the language, that way, is part of Hoban's story. A kind of
magic, for he is imagining, from a couple of thousand years from now, what would happen,
in the unlikelihood that anybody survived a nuclear war, and the English language had passed through time
by mouth and ear only. So Riddley Walker's people know, by legend, by word of mouth,
this great catastrophe happened in the past: that something called the One Big One
grew off, and changed everything. They have a great longing for what those people--
us—had before the One Big One: boats in the air, and pictures on the wind—
airplanes, and television—and machines that eat numbers up.

There is a scene in this book, where the tribe gathers on a hill for the
funeral and cremation of Riddley Walker's father. They no longer call those by
our polite words—as Riddley Walker reports, "We done the berning that rise on the
bye by hump. Arnge flames upping in the dark. We all thinet hans”—join hands,
has come down to them as thine hans—"We all thinet hans. The fire blowing in
the wind and the sparks whup off in to the dark and gone."

Then Riddley says, "Before the wording"—the sermon—"we sung Sarvering Gallack /
Seas." This is a verse of tribal doggerel, full of odd words—sarvering seas,
s-a-r-v-e-r-ing, some kind of sound they must think the ocean makes, And Gallack,
g-a-l-l-a-c-k, maybe some kind of boat they have, a cross between a galley and a kayak, who knows. Anyway, the full verse they sing is this:

Past the sovereign galaxies and flaming nebulae,
Power us beyond the farthest reaches of the sky;
Thine, the hands that shaped the black;
Guide us there, and guide us back.

Past the serving gällack seas and flaming nebyul/eye
Power us beyond the farthest reaches of the sky
Thine the hands what shaped the black
Good us there and good us, back.

All very tribal, and kind of charming, and about half-baffling. Then the language begins to hit you. Riddley and his tribesmen are singing a hymn—one of our hymns:

Past the sovereign galaxies and flaming nebulae,
Power us beyond the farthest reaches of the sky;
Thine, the hands that shaped the black;
Guide us there, and guide us back.
pictures on the wind and boats in the air

Inland—England

Pry Mincer—Prime Minister

Trubba not—no trubba

doing it with Aunty—anti

p. 19—boats in air {f

p. 124—sent