

They went on pilgrimage once to her father's
(The house one story high in front, three stories
On the side it presented to the road)
To see if there was not some special tree
She might have overlooked. They could find none,
Not so much as a single tree for shade,
Let alone grove of trees for sugar orchard.
She told him of the bookmark maple leaf
In the big Bible, and all she remembered
Of the place marked with it - "Wave offering*,
Something about wave offering*, it said."

"You've never asked your father outright, have you?"

"I have, and been Put off sometime, I think."
(This was her faded memory of the way
Once long ago her father had put himself off.)
"Because no telling but it may have been
Something between your father and your mother
Not meant for us at all."

"Not meant for me?"

Where would the fairness be in giving me
A name to carry for life and never know
The secret of?"

"And then it may have been
Something a father couldn't tell a daughter
As well as could a mother. And again
It may have been their one lapse into fancy
'Twould be too bad to make him sorry for
By bringing it up to him when he was too old.
Your father feels us round him with our questing,
And holds us off unnecessarily,
As if he didn't know what little thing
Might lead us on to a discovery.
It was as personal as he could be
About the way he saw it was with you
To say your mother, had she lived, would be
As far again as from being born to bearing."