

Howie Good

PILOTS CALLED THEM FLYING COFFINS

His heart started going like an antiaircraft gun, a spy caught leaving coded messages. Dusk seemed to fall by 2 p.m. Reporters interviewed mothers with dead children in their arms. The wind from the heights acquired a touch of red. Taxis ran on charcoal gas. Look out the window, the caller said, summer is over.

NOW THAT THE BUFFALO ARE GONE

We were fighting the Indians in Florida. You said a joke without a punchline isn't a real joke. Why I always carry an arrowhead in my pocket, I said. Children passed over the hill, a coffin covered with wildflowers, but Thoreau only came out when there was a fire downtown. The tall ships of the China trade returned empty. It was a sign of something, like a face shaded by a wide hat.

REMEMBER THE ALAMO

The farts of a hopped-up Mustang echo down the street. Sam Houston could use a shot of mescal right about now. His hand trembles like a courier with urgent news. He doesn't wish to discuss anymore the imposed simplicity of his early work. Agents in belted raincoats watch the border from nearby doorways. Although the sun is out, the nine-spotted ladybug crosses undetected.