

THE DANGER IN LOOKING FOR GOOD GRASS

If I sit in the cane chair
next to our case
that displays the Sharps Rifle,
and if I read from journals
next to an old family Bible,
and then if I close my eyes
I can see buffalo
running beard after shaggy beard
through tall grass
like horizontal oak trunks with legs.
And if I cause my mind's eye to squint
I can see sun reflecting
off scores of Sharps Rifles pointed
over the walls of Fort Griffin.

If you drive east from Anson,
on Highway 180,
you approach Albany
by driving down a hill
you think better suited
for a different place.
Who would expect a descent
like this east of Abilene,
west of Fort Worth?
But you drive down
and you wonder why buffalo
came this way, moving in herds
that numbered thousands,
thundering plains,
navigating occasional hills,
looking for more prairie grass
and full stomachs
so they would have strength
to reach Fort Griffin
and murdering buffalo rifles.

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