Another Gray Afternoon in Guernica

KENNETH SALZMANN

Not even the startling red of anguish pooling in the streets of the ancient market town, and not even the raw green silent screams of the women, and not the cerulean certainty of April skies capping the afternoon can ever pierce the gray reality.

Gray is the color of death dropping from the sky in early spring, and the last color left on the artist’s palette after the bombs have drained the world of warmer hues.

I can’t remember how many gray afternoons I spent in the very heart of Guernica on a bench in the museum on 53rd Street, not daring to breathe while wondering when the red would begin to flow from those wounds and wondering when it would finally stop.

KENNETH SALZMANN is the author of The Last Jazz and Other Poems. He lives in the mountains of central Mexico.