

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.