



Now Silence: A Novel of World War II

Tori Warner Shepard

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In this superbly researched WWII novel, award-winning writer, Tori Warner Shepard, captures the mood of remote Santa Fe, New Mexico as it waits out WWII for the return of her men held in Japanese prison camps. POW Melo Garcia has survived the Bataan Death March in the Philippines but his brother and father have not. Along with 1,500 other American prisoners, he is diseased, tortured, starved, and used as slave labor in a condemned coal mine outside of Nagasaki, Japan. Melo is the last living hope to continue his family's centuries old line for his war-widowed mother, Nicasia, who prays for his return alongside his sweetheart, LaBelle. They have received no reliable news since the surrender to the enemy in 1942. The novel is as much a story of the men's heroism as it is of their Hispanic community which after Pearl Harbor was a distant and a safe refuge from the war, sought out by the US Government as an internment camp for 2,000 Japanese "Isseii" barely a mile from the office of the top-secret Manhattan Project that was developing the atomic bomb to be dropped 20 miles from Melo's prison camp. Add to the mix FBI and counter-intelligence agents, Gringo fanatics opposed to Roosevelt, Melo's "novia" LaBelle and Phyllis, the redheaded bombshell, who challenges her. And Melo himself with his mother who embodies "gracia," a word that does not translate. This gripping exposition of the Japanese atrocities is even-handed and the characters and personalities on the home front will haunt your memory. TORI WARNER SHEPARD grew up in post-war Japan and since moving to Santa Fe over thirty-five years ago has been absorbed by the story of the POWs, their welcome home, and the effects of the war on a tight isolated community. She has an M.A. in Creative Writing which she has taught, and has published poetry, articles and short stories. Winner of the Mountainland Award for Contemporary Fiction, she has three grown children and lives with her husband in an old adobe.

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