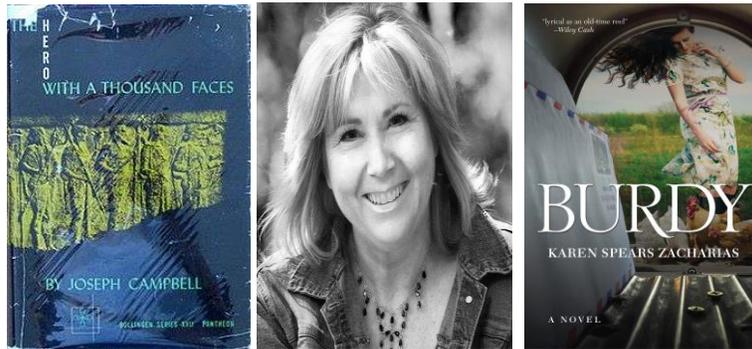


Karen Spears Zacharias's *Burdy*



Burdy is the second volume in the Christian Bend series, composed within a **narrative frame** of 1987, when the **Melungeon** character Burdy finds herself in the wrong place at the wrong time and is the only survivor of a shooting at the Bean Station Pharmacy. Burdy Luttrell, who has raised Wheedin, helped to raise with Leela and Doc both Maizee and her son Rain after Maizee's death, finds herself at death's door, with her daughter and Rain coming too her bedside. This frame will also be resurrected for the last book in the series, *Christian Bend*. Burdy's story, however, which is set within this frame and is the real narrative in volume two, takes us back to 1956, ten years after Maizee's suicide, and is sandwiched within the 1987 fame. The frame—that is, the 1987 shooting at the pharmacy—provides riveting beginning for the book and grabs the reader's attention. It also provides a clever device to bring all the characters back into Burdy's immediate circle in order to unfold the rest of Maizee and Zeb's story, which now becomes both Rain's and Burdy's stories. **As you read, watch for Zacharias's skillful unfolding of Zeb's story and Burdy's story and her "journey" to France.**

The tale set in 1956, a decade after Maizee's death, is also constructed as the archetypal "Journey." Explore the concept of the **Monomyth** or Journey of the Hero. Look at this short video clip that features **Joseph Campbell's** *Hero with a Thousand Faces* and the **characteristics of the hero and journey**: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8AG4rlGkCRU>. See Bill Moyers' interview with Campbell at <https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?p=Joseph+Campbell+and+the+Monomyth+on+You+tube%20-%20id=46&vid=e393296fb9e08df9173ec747a00c4f10&action=view&guccounter=1#id=3&vid=d76ec8a6cf27ad244808abc9154d9900&action=view>. **How is Burdy's journey to Bayeux, France, to find Zeb more than merely a literal journey across the Atlantic, but a spiritual and emotional journey? At what points in the story do you discern the Separation, the Journey, and the Return with Knowledge? How does Burdy discover that Zebulon Hurd has not been killed in the D-Day Invasion? Why did Zeb not return to Maizee and Rain after the War—that is, come back to Christian Bend?**

When Burdy, who is in her forties in 1956, discovers that Zeb was not killed in France, she climbs up to the spot where her husband Tibbis is buried and has a revelation (40-43). **What is the "sign" that she experiences that day to set her mind on going to journey to France?** Later, Burdy has a dream where Maizee comes to her and tells her to go to France to find Zeb (60-61). **Why does Burdy concoct a story about visiting relatives in Colorado rather than just tell folks she is leaving for Bayeux?** Burdy has not left Christian Bend in years, though her daughter Wheedin left to work in Columbia, SC, and Rain left for school when just a boy, both running from old wounds and only returning occasionally to Christian Bend. Burdy, on the other hand, tells Rain in the 1987 frame of volume two, foreshadowing the final volume, that

he will eventually have to come home to find the answers to the issues that have plagued his family's tragic story. **“That thing you are aching for, Rain,” [Burdy tells him,] “it can't be found anywhere else except right here. . . . These mountains cradle the bones of your ancestors. They'll cradle your bones one day, too. No matter how far off you go, no matter how many places you call home, you will never be able to replace the Bend”** (20).

Zacharias has Burdy travel by oceanliner, the SS United States out of New York, and the slow journey (a week) allows ample time for Burdy's transition away from Christian Bend and to turn this journey into something more than just the search for Zebulon Hurd, to discover whether he was hero or traitor. On the ship, Burdy meets Jack and Stacey Hoyt, who befriend her. The power of storytelling, as Burdy tells the Hoyts Maizee's story, forms a bond with the Hoyts who are making their way to Paris; and they arrange for their French friend Clint Dumas to accompany Burdy to Bayeux where Zeb's letter came from. **As the ship comes into port, what does Burdy see as another “sign” that she views as a good omen and foreshadows a relationship with Clint, who finds the beautiful [Melungeon](#) attractive. How does the “journey” become Burdy's own personal journey of self-discovery as well as her journey to find what happened to Zebulon Hurd?**



More than a decade after the end of WWII, how does Burdy find the condition of [Bayeux](#) and France in general? Zeb, or *Le Sammy* as the inhabitants of the town refer to the American soldier who participated in the D-day [Normandy landings](#) and never went home, becomes a kind of ward of Father Thom, the Cathedral priest. Why does Father Thom feel such a sense of gratitude and protectiveness toward Zeb? How has Zeb managed to live in a foreign city for a decade? How does he explain to Burdy why he never returned to Christian Bend? How does Zacharias connect the [PTSD](#) theme in this book with *Mother of Rain*? The denouement in the 1956 story occurs when Burdy and Zeb finally share their stories—his concerning why he never returned the “war hero” and hers the tragic end of Maizee and what happened to Rain, Zeb's son (146-157). It is clear that the power of storytelling is transformative and that the versions of our stories that others conjure can never suffice for Truth. When Zacharias takes us back to the 1987 frame, we find the “knowledge gained” by Burdy from her journey: what exactly does she learn about judging others and about living life?



[Bayeux Tapestry](#)



American Cemetery near [Omaha Beach](#), Normandy, France