

Karen. She is a writer from Canada who is writing a book about a Burmese political prisoner." He spoke in a hushed, serious tone. "So tell her everything you know, because it is very important for us that her book becomes a big bestseller."

So that is where I am: produce a good book or reckon with the revolutionary forces on the Thai-Burmese border. Like my editor, they are beginning to wonder just where the book is, when it will be finished. And what can I say?

The Lizard Cage has become its own territory now: dark, sad, hopeful: hopeful because Tey Za, living in an isolation designed to physically and spiritually crush him, continues to believe in the rightness of human connection and human love. What can I say? The book is coming. It is coming slowly and with great labour out of the prison of my own mind and spirit.

A version of this article was presented at York University's Millennial Wisdom Symposium, sponsored by the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies and the Royal Ontario Museum. The Symposium, which ran from October 4, 1999 to April 14, 2000, featured nine public events on the York University campus and at the Royal Ontario Museum. Lectures are available online at www.robarts.yorku.ca.

Karen Connelly's most recent book is a collection of poetry entitled, The Border that Surrounds Us, published this spring by McClelland and Stewart. She is working on a book of essays about the Thai-Burmese border as well as the novel discussed here. She won a Governor General's Award in 1994 for a non-fiction work about Thailand.

JOAN BOND

Dandelions

Our neighbourhood edict
flapped against the screen door:
*Dandelions are to be extirpated
from the property lawns of Spruce View Estates
by June 21.*

I watch you from the front window
you wearing a red cap
(price tag \$2.98 still stapled
bought in the Arctic)
holding a two-tongued tool
in your spring-soft palm.
You start wreckage
you dig deep
my love digs deeper.

But they are so pretty
so yellow. I can make
some dandelion wine
and we can eat the leaves.

Mosquitoes halo your cap
sweat glistens in dusk's blue shadow.
Cozy in my favourite chair
I glance up from knitting
your frown unfurrows
you show me a proud box
(stamped Krotochi's Fruit Stand
found at the dump)
full of limp wounded weeds:
321 Spruce View Estates Drive, excavation executed.

In the starwhite darkness we love
on plain snow fields. Your fingers,
toughened, press my unkempt heart.
I whisper to you
release my green.

Joan Bond's poetry appears earlier in this volume.