

## Book Event

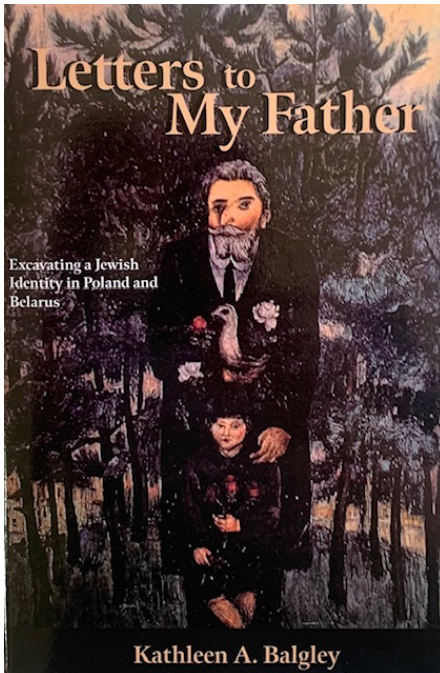
# Letters to My Father

Excavating a Jewish Identity in Poland and Belarus



**The Irish Jewish Museum invites you to an exclusive evening to hear the author read and discuss her work**

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 7:00 p.m.



Kathleen A. Balgley's memoir, *Letters to My Father: Excavating a Jewish Identity in Poland and Belarus*, begins with her childhood discovery of her father's hidden Jewish identity and the prohibition of speaking of it in or outside the family. Disturbed by this uncharacteristic attitude of her otherwise unprejudiced parents, the author seeks to learn more about her own Jewish identity. Immersing herself in the historically terrorized heart of wartime Europe and the epicenter of Jewish suffering, she accepts a Fulbright to communist Poland just after the fall of the Berlin Wall (1987-1989). There she witnesses the ongoing controversy about Polish anti-Semitism, Poland's collusion and heroism during WWII, and the history of its treatment of its Jews pre and post-war. In the state archives of Poland and Belarus, Balgley uncovers the lives (and deaths) of her relatives in her father's birthplace in Brześć, Poland (also formerly known as Brest-Litovsk or Brisk), now Brest, Belarus. Throughout the journey, *bashert*, (the Yiddish term variously translated but construed by Balgley as "destiny") uncannily guides the author to uncover deeply hidden stories. Her

father, who had said he would not travel to Poland to visit her, changes his mind after reading letters from his daughter about her discoveries. Touring the country together, father and daughter find a way to heal the rift between them. For more information see [kathleenbalgley.com](http://kathleenbalgley.com)



Kathleen Balgley earned her Ph.D. in Literature from University of California, San Diego. During her academic career she was at different times Lecturer at UCLA Writing Programs, Associate Director of Writing at UCSD's Sixth College, and tenured Associate Professor of English at California State University, San Luis Obispo. Kathleen is especially thrilled to be presenting at the Jewish Irish Museum as her own heritage combines Irish and Jewish backgrounds. A frequent visitor to Ireland, she and her husband, the painter, John David Ratajkowski, have kept a home in Bantry, Ireland for the past four decades.

Dr. Balgley's book will be available for purchase and personal signing at the event.

**R.S.V.P. [info@jewishmuseum.ie](mailto:info@jewishmuseum.ie)**

**The Irish Jewish Museum,  
3 Walworth Road, Dublin 8, D08 TD29**

**[www.jewishmuseum.ie](http://www.jewishmuseum.ie)**

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