



Ekaterinoslav: One Family's Passage to America: A Memoir in Verse

Jane Yolen

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In *Ekaterinoslav*, award-winning author Jane Yolen writes about her father's family journey from a small shtetl in the Ukraine in the early part of the twentieth century, through the Ellis Island portal, to a home in New Haven, Connecticut. Her father, only seven at the time, grew up wholly American and never spoke to her of the family's passage. Here, through these brilliant poems, she pieces together a history of her family.

Her poems are a celebration of passage, of ritual lost and then found, of a family who left a land of custom and arrived at a place of opportunity. As she says in the poem "Round Frame":

*All those years Ekaterinoslav
was lost to me, when I could have celebrated
Ukrainian winters, learned words of love,
fashion, passion, paternity;*

*how to season the fish with pepper, not sugar;
how to cut the farfl from flat sheets of dough.
All I had was New Haven.*

Until she comes to understand with the words of the final poem, "Rebirth"

*I have written these
poems as resurrection.
I have molded these words
to reinvent moment and memory.
I have crafted these short lines
for the ones who come after,
my children's children.
For them I've created,
recreated really,
a lifetime,
a country,
a shtetl,
a home.*

I can do no more.

Jane Yolen, often called the Hans Christian Andersen of America, is the author of over three hundred books, including *Owl Moon* and *The Devil's Arithmetic*, many of them prize-winners, including the Jewish Library Association's top honor.

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