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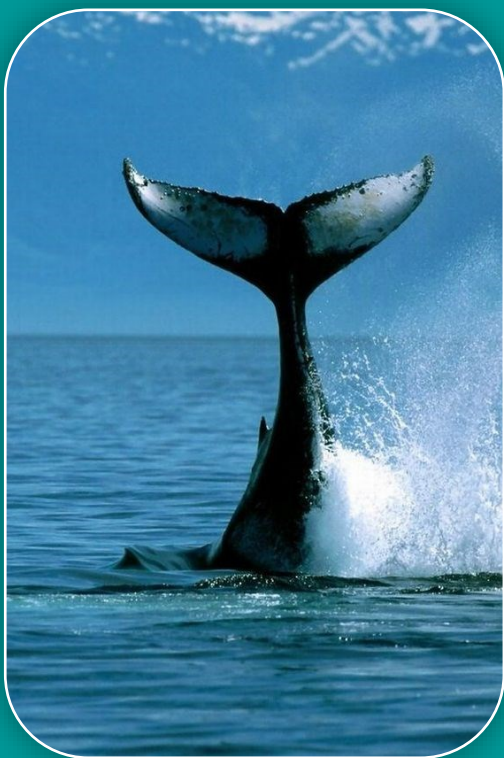
Alive in the Depths: Transgender Identity and Religious Tradition

Joy Ladin

David and Ruth Gottesman Professor of English

Director, The Beren Writing Center

Yeshiva University



Joy Ladin is often asked how she reconciles being religious with being transgender. In this talk, she will explain how her childhood experience of hiding both her trans identity and her relationship with God has led her to see transgender experience as enriching rather than challenging, opposing or "queering" religious tradition, a perspective she will illustrate by reading the story of Jonah (a man who preferred to die than live as who he was) from a trans perspective. Building on the work of feminist theologians, she will argue that expanding our understanding of humanity to be more gender-inclusive enables us to expand our understanding of God.

Joy Ladin's return to Yeshiva University as a woman after receiving tenure as a man made her the first openly transgender employee of an Orthodox Jewish institution and made page-3 news in the *New York Post*. Her memoir of gender transition, *Through the Door of Life: A Jewish Journey Between Genders*, was a finalist for a 2012 National Jewish Book Award, and she is also the author of seven books of poetry, including Lambda Literary Award finalists *Impersonation* and *Transmigration*. She holds the David and Ruth Gottesman Chair in English at Yeshiva University, and her work has been recognized with a 2016 National Endowment for the Arts Writing Fellowship, a Fulbright Scholarship, and an American Council of Learned Societies research fellowship. She has spoken about gender identity issues around the country, and is currently writing a book of trans Jewish theology entitled, *I Am What I Will Be: Meeting God at the Burning Bush of Becoming*.



Wednesday, October 19 | 7 p.m. | Free non-ticketed event
Roemmele Global Commons | Williams Hall | Lehigh University

Paid parking available at Zoellner Arts Center or on street meter parking
<https://zoellner.cas2.lehigh.edu/directions-parking>

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