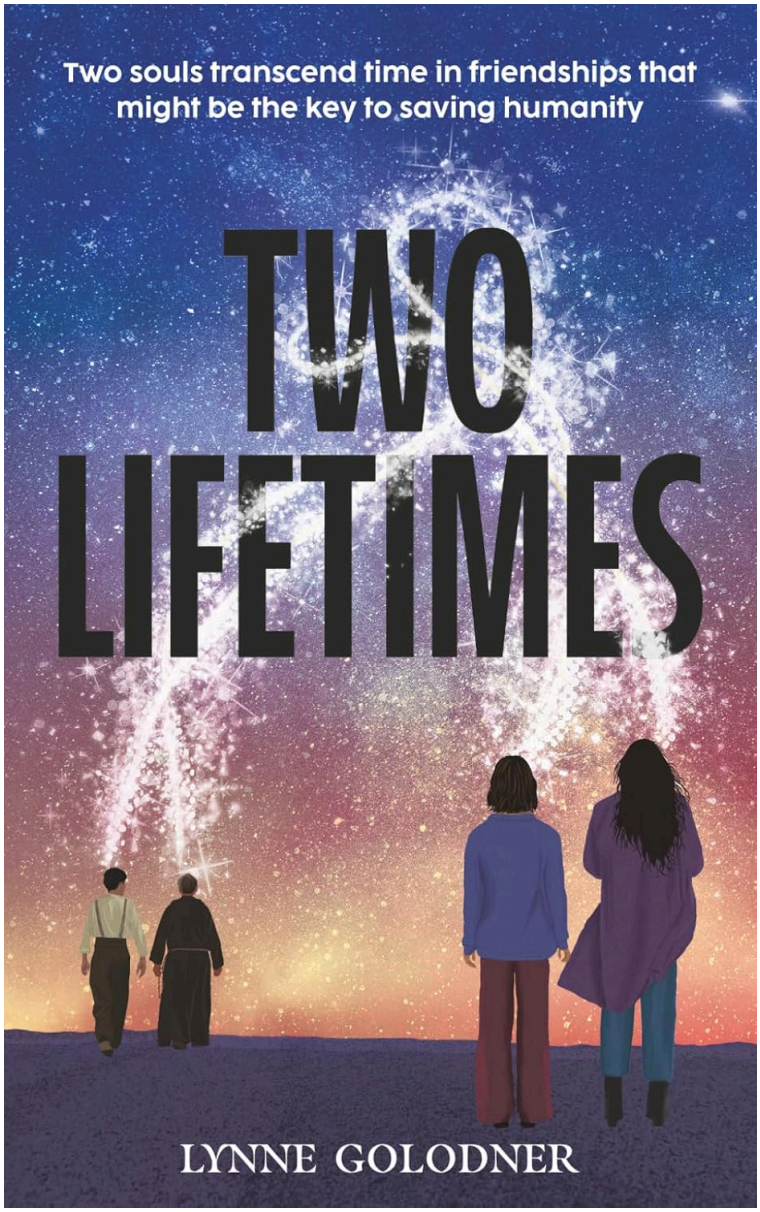
Lynne Golodner's new 'Two Lifetimes' is a transcendent celebration of the power of human connection across time and space



Click the cover to visit the book's Amazon page.

'Two Lifetimes' debuts this month!

Her 4th novel invites readers into a dual timeline, celebrating interfaith friendship even in the face of deadly peril

***EDITOR'S NOTE**: Longtime readers of our online magazine already know Lynne Golodner. More than a decade ago, we published one of her many books, Flavors of Faith: Holy Breads. In 2026, Lynne is nationally known as an author, writing coach and indie publisher through Scotia Road Books. Our publishing house—and the readers of ReadTheSpirit magazine—regard her as a part of our creative community. So, each year, when she releases a new book, we invite her to write a Cover Story framed like "a letter to friends telling us the latest news."*

By LYNNE GOLODNER

When I wrote my first three novels, I was eager to include passionate love scenes in meaningful stories of transformation. I was dedicated to thread strong, positive Jewish identity through stories with universal appeal. I wanted love to win, and my characters to evolve into confident, self-assured people who choose their lives deliberately. I wanted my novels to build bridges of understanding between the reading public and the Jewish community.

And yet, when I began writing my fourth novel, ***Two Lifetimes***, which launches October 20, 2026, all of those things fell away as I wrote a book about friendship overcoming antisemitism. (Please note; *If you click that title link, you'll jump to a website that has details of launch-related events on Oct. 20, Nov. 8 and Nov. 15.*)

Perhaps it's merely a sign of the times and what has been on my mind for the past few years.

The inspiration for this dual timeline, interfaith friendship, soul travel novel was simple: my best friend, Katie Scott. Katie and I met in our twenties at a writing class sponsored by the now-defunct YMCA Writers Voice. We were the youngest writers there, and we bonded immediately.

In the three decades since, she's become a soul sister to me. Catholic to my Jewish, I now call her "Rabbi Katie" because she is not only an ally, but also more knowledgeable about my ancestral religion than many born-Jews. I've joked over the years that in a former life, she was probably Jewish and I was likely Catholic.

That idea inspired this novel. I wanted to write a story about two friends connected over time—in a former life, inhabiting the other's world.

But as novels tend to do, at least when I write them, *Two Lifetimes* became a love letter to interfaith friendship and the characters took charge. There's Lily and Adara in present-day Grand Rapids, Michigan. When a brick with a sinister hateful message is hurled through Adara's living room window on the first night of Chanukah, Lily springs to attention, determined to stamp out hate in their community.

And in 1940 Lwow, Poland, the lives of teenage David and young priest Piotr are intertwined in poignant ways. When Piotr gets wind of the coming Nazi invasion, driven by love and belonging, Piotr whisks David on a journey to safety and their friendship deepens over time.

That's all I'll say because there are some magical-realism moments that bring these worlds together late in the book, and I hope you'll read the book to find out how the stories unfold and connect.

As I wrote TWO LIFETIMES, I worried that I was departing from the romantic suspense-women's fiction genre I'd inhabited with my first three award-winning titles—*Woman of Valor* (2023), *Cave of Secrets* (2024), and *I Love you, Charlie Tanner* (2025). This new book would be an anomaly, I reasoned, and soon I'd return to the world of romance.

Which I have. I just finished revisions on my fifth novel, due out next year, and it is a tennis-hockey romance set in the 1980s.

But along the way, something shifted as I wrote and developed *Two Lifetimes*. It is women's fiction, yes, and there is suspense and a bit of married romance. But it's a very different book—a friendship story, an interfaith friendship story at that, about what might happen if/when we stand up for our brethren.

As I prepared to launch *Two Lifetimes,* the urge to rush through and return to romance dissipated and I grew increasingly proud of this new novel. I didn't miss the steamy sex scenes or the yo-yo back-and-forth of romantic relationships that have inevitable stops and starts to build tension on the pages of a novel.

I loved the slow-pulse of a smart, deep, thoughtful story, and how it offers hope for real life.

I hope readers will find in *Two Lifetimes* a smart, prescient, glaringly relatable story of how friendship just might be the key to turning humanity away from derisive division and back toward a path of peace and connection. As it prepares to go out into the world, I can honestly say I love this story—not only because it resonates so deeply with my own heart, but because it gives readers hope that there might be another way than our current siloed and scared existence.

Although I wrote eight books between 1996 and 2013 (poetry and nonfiction, traditionally published), I doubled-down on book-writing just before the pandemic to realize my lifelong dream of prioritizing my author identity.

I love writing novels. I love every aspect of conceiving an idea, planning it out, sketching characters, and then the ever-present challenge of writing a cohesive, compelling book that I can be proud of.

When I embraced a deliberately Jewish author brand, I opted to create my own press—Scotia Road Books—to produce my books instead of taking my chances in a publishing landscape that is increasingly closed to Jews and Jewish topics in recent years. I also applaud efforts like High Line Publishing Studio in the UK, Canary Publishing and Meg Keene Books for creating imprints expressly for presenting strong Jewish voices and the Jewish Joy effort by novelist Jean Meltzer for embracing and expanding Jewish joy in these times. (Editor's Note: *For more on this issue in publishing, see this Front Edge Publishing column*.)

In the process, I learned that I love every step of bringing a book to life—not only the ideation and creation phases, but the production process, too.

Now, Scotia Road Books is publishing other authors. In November, we'll release Judi Shink's book, *Speaking through Silence*: a memoir by the granddaughter of four Holocaust Survivors. And in December, we will publish an anthology of food writing, *When We Gather to Eat*, a collection of 52 delicious voices.

I've even embraced the marketing process. A veteran marketing entrepreneur, I know that book marketing is a marathon, something I must commit to again and again, and I've enjoyed speaking to reader audiences, connecting with book clubs, presenting at book festivals and getting creative with advertising. This past summer, I drove from Michigan to the East Coast to New England to the Adirondacks and back through Canada on a two-week book tour where I spoke to many and sold lots of books. The connection with a reading public was powerful and makes every stressful step worth it.

Now, even though I have the next book ready, I'm not so sure I want to return to romantic suspense. Writing *Two Lifetimes* was exhilarating, creating a smart, thoughtful story that challenges us to be the change we want to see.

I hope readers walk away wondering, What would I do? What would be important enough for me to stand up, to say something, to confront hate? What will I do today?

This book offers people a close look at what our lives are made of, what matters most, what relationships build us up, and where we can make the most difference.

I've always lived in those thoughtful spaces. My life has been focused on finding meaning and purpose, and I think in my fourth novel, I might be hitting my groove.

Learn more about my books here.

Preorder *Two Lifetimes* here. If you read it and love it (available in audio, e-book and paperback versions), please leave a review on Goodreads or Amazon!

And if you're looking for a vibrant author to speak to your group, please let me know! I'd love to come, virtually or in person, to talk about how books can move us forward in magnificent ways.

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Care to see more?

Lynne gave us permission to share several photographs of herself and her friend Katie through the years, starting in their 20s, and another photo from when they went to see the Jewish comedian Modi together, and finally a photo of Katie at Lynne's Passover Seder, "which she always helps me lead," Lynne writes.