

## Lidija Šimkutė is representing Lithuania at the European Literature Festival in Japan

On November 26, 2020 the bilingual poet Lidija Šimkutė who lives in Australia, will represent Lithuania at the European Literature Festival in Japan (<https://eulitfest.jp>). Six of her poetry collections have been translated into Japanese by Koichi Yakushigawa.

There will be eighteen authors from various European countries including Nobel poet laureate Olga Tokarczuk from Poland (who shared the prize with the Austrian writer Peter Henke in 2019). Šimkutė is the only poet among other prose writers this year.

On account of Covid19 the Festival will use an internet Zoom platform. The discussion with the Lithuanian poet is scheduled for November 26, 18:00 -18:45 local Japanese time. Šimkutė will talk about her unique experience of writing in Lithuanian and English and living in two cultures. Her translator Koichi Yakushigawa will participate in the discussion which will be translated and presented in Japanese language.

Šimkutė will also participate in the short story event, according to the set theme *A New World, New Beginnings* which will appear on the Festival Website as „Nothing stays the same“ in Lithuanian, English and Japanese.

Lidija Šimkutė has published three poetry books in Lithuanian, twelve bilingual poetry collections. Her poetry has been published in literary journals, anthologies and online in Lithuania, Australia, Ireland, Argentina, Austria, Estonia, Bulgaria, Chile, Georgia, Crimea, Japan, Latvia, Poland, Holland, Macedonia, France (in esperanto), Romania, Russia, Singapore, Scotland, Spain, Italy, Slovenia, Ukraine and the United States. Her poetry has been translated into sixteen languages. Šimkutė has also translated Australian poetry and prose into Lithuanian and Lithuanian poetry into English. Choreographers and composers and performers have used her poetry in modern dance and theatre performances as well as in music concerts and recitals. She has also attended and participated in many international Poetry Festivals.

Many admirers of Lidija Šimkutė's poetry mention her minimalist verse and have been enchanted with her visual images. They have compared her work to Haiku, although Koichi Yakushigawa notes that she has created her own individual poetry style. According to Tomas Venclova („Kažkas pasakyta / Something is said foreword) “ In Šimkutė's poetry, simplicity merges with elegance, solemnity with playfulness ... where words are nearly “washed away“ and merge with a gesture, a dance movement, a momentary ritual . The poems transform into a Kyoto garden surrounded by stones and sand circles that allude to silence and refer to something quintessential which cannot be completely comprehended and fully expressed in words.“

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NB. \* <https://eulitfest.jp/2020/windows-to-europe/lidija-simkute/>