

*The Microcosm within the Macrocosm: How the Literature of a Small Diaspora  
Fits Within the Context of Global Literature*

Laima Vincė Sruoginis, Vilnius University, Lithuania

The Asian Conference on Arts & Humanities 2018  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

The twentieth century was a century of global powers: the Soviet Union, the United States. Now China is on the rise. Where do these superpowers and major language groups leave small countries and their identities? Whether we are ready for it or not, humanity is shifting away from tribal identities towards a global identity that is yet to be defined. This process began with massive shifts of refugees during World War II and continues today with refugees internationally displaced by economic deprivation, environmental disasters, and war. As population shifts continue, humanity has no other option but to adapt. These processes are reflected in contemporary global literature. A life straddling two or more cultures and languages becomes second nature to those born into an ethnic diaspora. The children and grandchildren of refugees learn from a young age to hold two or three cultural perspectives and languages in balance. Writers who emerge from these diasporas have a unique perspective. Since the postwar era Lithuanian diasporas have existed in North America, South America, Australia, Europe, and now Asia. In American literature several generations of descendants of Lithuanian war refugees have emerged who write in English about their nation's experience. Most notable is Ruta Sepetys, whose novel, *Between Shades of Gray*, has been published in 41 countries and translated into 23 languages, including Japanese and Chinese. This paper will examine how the literature of one nation's diaspora fits within the context of global literature. How is the microcosm in the macrocosm?

Keywords: Global Literature, Lithuania, Diasporas

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## **Introduction**

Is literature about Lithuania's painful twentieth century history and the experience of Lithuanian émigrés in North America only of interest as the collective memory of one ethnic community? Is this nothing more than one ethnic group's form of navel gazing? Or is the macrocosm to be found in the microcosm? Can the literature of one ethnic diaspora shed some light on the growing pains all of humanity inevitably faces as more people globally are uprooted from their homes as refugees?

How does the immigrant experience engender themes in global literature? How does the literature of one nation's diaspora fit within the context of global literature? What is the value of preserving the cultural and historical memory of a small nation in a global world? What issues of identity are worth holding onto? How is cross-cultural identity expressed in the literature of a diaspora? I will focus on these questions and the literary experience of the Lithuanian diaspora as a means to open up discussion on the relationship between refugee/immigrant literatures and global literature.

A life straddling two or more cultures and languages is second nature to those born into an ethnic diaspora. The children and grandchildren of refugees learn from a young age to hold two or three cultural perspectives and languages in balance. They are also the keepers of their parents' lost nations' historical memory, and traumas as well. They become the older generation's cultural translators, carrying the burden of explaining to majority cultures where their people came from and what they have suffered. Writers who emerge from these diasporas have a unique perspective, at the very least a dual perspective, but more likely a global perspective.

I interviewed eighteen American and Canadian writers and poets of Lithuanian descent. Included are one poet and one writer not of Lithuanian descent, but who have made Lithuania their home. Litvak writers and writers with mixed backgrounds were also included. Criteria included:

- 1) Published one or more books on Lithuanian topics.
- 2) Have earned a MFA in Writing or have had considerable training in Creative Writing through workshops or training seminars.
- 3) Have consciously made the decision to write about their Lithuanian identity and Lithuanian heritage and/or Lithuanian history.

Each writer was given a written survey with 35 questions to complete. Most, but not all, of the interviews were followed up with a Skype interview or live interview. I also interviewed two of the last surviving World II era refugees from Lithuania. Both are in their nineties. I read the group's novels, memoirs, and collections of poetry as a body of work, categorizing them according to theme. Two categories prevailed. The first consists of work written about the refugee or immigrant experience in the Lithuanian diasporas. The second is concerned with preserving historical memory, especially the traumas of the Soviet occupation and the Stalin era deportations to Siberia.

## **Globalization both embraces diversity and neutralizes diversity**

As human societies shift away from tribal identities towards a global one, this process

is reflected through contemporary literature. The shift towards a global human society began with the massive relocation of refugees during World War II, and continues today with millions more refugees displaced by wars, famines, economic disasters, and the ravages of extreme climate events brought about by global warming. As a result, societies, systems of governance, cultures, languages, merge and intertwine, producing a global culture. The twenty-first century's countless conflicts, wars, and displacement, coupled with technologies that create instant global communication, has shaped the themes of global literature. If global literature reflects the experience of today's global culture, then the literature of ethnic diasporas is a part of global literature.

Globalization is messy. Globalization unleashes creative forces born of necessity. Globalization both embraces diversity and neutralizes diversity. Globalization has its roots in the many diasporas worldwide that were created as a result of war, colonialism, economic deprivation, natural disasters and global warming. In one city block in New York or Toronto one can taste the ethnic cooking of Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Southern Europe, etc. One can walk the length of a street in any of the major cities of North America and encounter at least a handful of languages and world views. We now live in a world where it may take less than six hours to fly from one continent to another, but two or three hours to drive on the highway during rush hour traffic a distance that could be covered in less than an hour on foot. We live in a world where it is not uncommon that a person may feel more connected with strangers on the other side of the globe via social media than with the person living next door. Thus, globalization is not born from the top down with every new communications gadget multinational corporations put out on the international market; rather, globalization emerges from the bottom up as the world's populations shift, seeking normalcy, safety, and a means to live a productive life.

The leaders of two nuclear superpowers have been given too much credit for the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Ronald Reagan cried out, "Mr. Gorbachev, take down that wall!" But it was the ordinary people who actually dismantled the walls. They tore down the walls that blocked borders and shut out the peoples behind the Iron Curtain, preventing them from joining the rest of humanity. The dissolution of the Soviet Union took humanity on a major step into the global age. When the people of Eastern Europe and Russia joined the people of the West everything changed. Rules needed to be rewritten. Democracies emerged where before there had been totalitarianism. Scholarship was exchanged. Stories swapped. Families were united. Diasporas were able to return home.

In the mid-forties, after the second Soviet occupation of the Baltic States, a third of the populations of the Baltic States fled for safety in the democracies of the West. Lithuanian diasporas have existed in North America, South America, Australia, Europe, and now Asia since the early twentieth century. Since World War II, including the wave of economic migration since Lithuania became independent in 1991, the Lithuanian diaspora has managed for the most part to nurture and pass on the Lithuanian language and culture through an international network of schools, summer camps, churches, and other social organizations. The Lithuanian diaspora has maintained an unbroken literary tradition since World War II, when Stalin's massive deportations and the decimation of the Lithuanian Jewish community left a once vibrant nation in ruins.

Several generations of descendants of the Lithuanian World War II refugees write in English about Lithuania and the experiences of Lithuanian refugees abroad. Most notable is Ruta Sepetys, whose novel *Between Shades of Gray*, has been published in 41 countries and translated into 23 languages, including Japanese and Chinese.

The Lithuanian diasporas of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries may serve as a microcosm for understanding how a flood of refugees escaping Soviet totalitarianism engendered a second and third generation of educated global citizens who embrace a variety of cultures and languages. The experiences of the Lithuanian diaspora not only reflect the experiences of countries once lost behind the Iron Curtain, but also that of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and China. All these countries have suffered massive population displacement and loss of life as a result of war.

Lithuanian refugee poets, playwrights, and writers began publishing their work already in the displaced persons camps in the Allied territories of Germany as early as 1944. They held literary evenings, poetry readings, and performed plays and dance recitals. These publications and cultural events were a source of spiritual sustenance to those displaced by war, refugees who not only lost their country, but everything they owned.

Angelė Raulinaitis (born January 11, 1925), a former war refugee and displaced person, describes the first literary evening that took place in a displaced persons camp in Germany.

*I attended the very first literary evening. The poets who read that night were Bernardas Braždžionis, Stasys Santaras, Antanas Guštaitis, Pijus Andriušis, and Petronėlė Orentaitė. All the poems they read that night we already knew very well because they had been published in Lithuania. But it was interesting to hear their comments and to see them in person. After that there were many such literary evenings. The literary evenings were very important events for us. We would create songs out of the poems and we would sing them. We would stage plays.*  
(Sruoginis, 2017)

In an interview in Sparkill, New York with 92-year-old Nijolė Bražėnaitė-Lukšienė-Paronetto (born July 16, 1925), the widow of Juozas Lukša, one of the leaders of the Lithuanian resistance against the Soviet occupation, Nijolė spoke about the importance to the émigré community of Lukša's memoir *Partizanai už geležinės uždangos* (*Partisans Behind the Iron Curtain*).

*When the memoir was first published the print run was only around 500. When excerpts from the memoir were read at readings in the DP camps, it made a huge impression. Most people found out for the first time that there was an organized resistance in Lithuania. There were many readings after that. There were three print runs of the book and all of them sold out. In the fifties and sixties every literary event ended with everyone gathered together singing the songs of resistance that Juozas had brought to the West from Lithuania.*  
(Sruoginis, 2017)

As the displaced persons camps emptied in the late forties and early fifties, and the refugees set sail on ships bound for Australia, South America, North America—while those whose lungs showed evidence of tuberculosis remained behind in Europe—through their literary work poets and writers became a link to the lost homeland for the émigré community. When asked if the spirit of those DP Camp poetry readings

carried over into their lives in the United States, Canada, Australia, and South America, Angelė Raulinaitis responded:

*The spirit became even stronger when we came to America. The poets began to write new work. We would collect their books. I have quite a large library. The poets gave us strength and hope. They were refugees too and they had to work to survive. Bernardas Braždžionis learned the printing trade in Germany and that enabled him to earn a living in America. My husband helped start an organization that made it possible to publish a collected works of Bradžionis's poems. He helped edit and publish the book.  
(Sruoginis, 2017)*

Whereas in the DP camps the displaced poets were still writing poetry primarily inspired by nature and the agricultural lifestyle they had left behind in Lithuania, in the diaspora they began to compose poetry about the loss of homeland that embodied the collective emotion of all the displaced persons. The poetry of Bernardas Braždžionis (1907 – 2002) in particular became a symbol of longing for the lost homeland.

The poems of Bernardas Braždžionis were integrated into the program of the Lithuanian émigré dance festival that took place in Baltimore in 2016. At key emotional points in the performance, his poems were recited with reverence over loud speakers. Pagan stylized dances were performed to their words and rhythms. In the opening procession of the final act, as hundreds of dancers dressed in the Lithuanian national ethnic costume solemnly streamed into the area for the program's grand finale, the audience listened to a dramatic reader of Braždžionis's iconic poem, “Aš čia gyva” (I am here, alive). For the displaced persons and their descendants this poem carries immense emotional weight. As the actor's voice boomed across the silent arena to a teary-eyed audience, dancers entered the arena in a solemn procession.

I am here, alive

I searched for my homeland in the night, dark as the grave.  
Where are you, my home, where are you, Lithuania?  
Does your suffering heart beat still,  
Are you alive? Or are you not?

I raised my arms towards the black sky:  
Where are you, my home, where are you, Lithuania?  
And when I stumbled, running through the furrows,  
You answered me: I am here, alive!

I am here—alive, the earth beneath my feet spoke.  
I am here—alive, my son, don't you see me?  
I am here—alive, hunching in the darkness,  
Heaven's cloak answered.

The stars glittered tears of pain...  
Are you there? Is it you? Lithuania?  
And out of the darkness, the night, the shadows  
She answered: I am here—alive!

(Braždžionis, 1989)

This poem was iconic for the refugees and their descendants because it expressed their trauma over being separated from their homeland for half a century by the Iron Curtain as well as their fears that they would never return home. Lithuanians in the diaspora feared that the Lithuanian language and culture would die under the Soviet occupation.

### **A Shift Towards Integration**

A multilingual, multicultural life became second nature for the émigré writers as the decades passed. This is expressed in the work of Lithuanian émigré writer, playwright, and political activist, Algirdas Landsbergis (1924 – 2004). Landsbergis fled Lithuania in 1944 at the age of twenty and lived in a German displaced person (DP) camp while in his early twenties. He completed his undergraduate studies in English and Romance languages in Mainz, Germany and at Brooklyn College in New York, and then earned a Masters degree in Comparative Literature at Columbia University in New York. Landsbergis dedicated his life to advocating for peoples left behind the Iron Curtain. He worked with The Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, PEN International, and other human rights organizations. In his personal essay, “Adventures in Storyland,” published in an anthology of contemporary Lithuanian prose, *The Earth Remains* (Sruoginis, 2002), he writes:

*As frustrations mounted, I was often tempted to lament my fate, one of the exiles' favorite self-indulgences. Ultimately, I decided that this would be a waste of time. I gradually accepted displacement, bilingualism, and multicultural perspectives, not only as hard inescapable facts, but also as valuable gifts. On my morning walks to the university alongside the Hackensack River, still clinging to its Native American name (as I cling to my pagan first name), I would be greeted by a procession of lissom willows. In the plethora of professors I was the only one to converse with the willows (was this Lithuanian atavism?). Their gracefulness would make me think of royal courtesans in Chinese poetry (cosmopolitanism?). And so I realized that, among other things, I was a cosmopolitan nationalist.*  
(p. 214)

Algirdas Landsbergis's son, Paul Landsbergis, describes his experience as the child of a refugee growing up in New York in the fifties. He too felt the effects of growing up in a cosmopolitan household with two languages through which to view the world.

*I learned English from the beginning because my mom was born in the USA. We were a mixed family, not a family of two émigré parents. My mom learned the basics of Lithuanian to communicate with the extended family, but she spoke English with us kids. My father's story “Words Beautiful Words” was very special to me. It was about a boy, Peter, who was growing up in a Lithuanian house and had two words for everything. It was a story about my experience, and it was wonderfully written. Because my father wasn't here as a voluntary economic refugee (that is, searching for a better job), that loss was ever present. They were taken from their country. They always talked about going back, but it didn't seem likely. That loss was communicated clearly. That was a bonding experience in the family and in the community. It was a reason to stay in school and continue to learn the language.*  
(Sruoginis, 2017)

Algirdas Landsbergis's younger son, Jon, remembers his father's passion for politics

and how that experience shaped him as a political activist.

*We demonstrated in front of the Soviet Mission. My earliest memory of my father is always with papers. He was always battling the Soviet Union. He took me to his workplace, the ACEN (Assembly of Captive European Nations). He took me to meet all these scruffy intellectual European dissident writers. He battled Soviet propaganda. He dissected the Orwellian nature of Soviet propaganda. He was head of PEN Writers in Exile. (Sruoginis, 2017)*

Although the émigrés sought to preserve the Lithuanian language by maintaining Lithuanian language schools and other organizations, writers still feared they were losing hold of their native tongue. Algirdas Landsbergis expressed those fears in his personal essay “Vita Longa Breviter” (1973).

*You'll keep writing, not only in Lithuanian but also in English. Wouldn't it be wiser to embrace one literary language and nurture it? This thought will cross your mind, but you won't be able to resist playing an additional linguistic instrument, without forgetting your native one. It won't be easy. Your Lithuanian language will begin to unravel at the edges, while literary English keeps seeming unreachable like grapes for the fox. And so the process of writing will become a race with time, words, and memory. You'll keep writing in both languages and thank God for able editors.*

Landsbergis's distress at the disintegration of his native language, at his literary tool slipping away, while at the same time finding himself unable to attain the deeper levels of fluency in English, is iconic of his generation of émigrés.

### **The Next Generation Writes in English**

As the decades of Soviet occupation slipped past, and new generations grew up in America, Canada, South America, Australia and elsewhere, those who'd lived their lives steeped in the language of literary Lithuanian passed away. The younger generations, though able to converse, read and write at a basic level, could no longer fully delve into the more sophisticated literary Lithuanian necessary to fully immerse themselves in the work of the Lithuanian émigré writers. At the same time, these writers' and poets' work was banned in Soviet Lithuania.

As constraints loosened and Lithuanians were able to return to Lithuania on tourist visas in the seventies and eighties (though tightly controlled and under constant surveillance) most of the Lithuanian writers and poets in the diaspora continued to be *persona non grata* in their homeland. When they finally were able to return to Lithuania in the early nineties after independence, their homecomings were spectacular public events. Their books were finally published in their homeland. The poet Bernardas Braždžionis returned to Lithuania in 1989 to a hero's welcome. Crowds flooded the Vilnius airport as his plane landed. Algirdas Landsbergis describes his homecoming in his essay “Adventures in Storyland” (Sruoginis, 2002):

*Lithuania's resurrection also opened my homeland's doors for my banned stories and plays. I followed them in a gloomy Baltic December for my first visit after forty-seven years. One day, suddenly, the sun dispelled the mists and the spires of Kaunas Old City and outlined their never forgotten contours in the luminous space. Mūša and Dubysa, the Rhein and the Hudson, flowed into the Nemunas and the Neris, embracing my city. On the stage of the Kaunas Drama Theater (my former beloved “Metropolitenas” movie house), the characters of my play joined hands with Laurel*

*and Hardy, the Marx Brothers, and the other companions of my childhood movie-going days. The pious women of Kaunas, ignoring their death, erupted in tears and laughter. The sky became my mother's eyes, a reflection of her love, joy, and verbal magic—an indescribable beauty, a torment beyond words, the beloved, imperfect words.*  
(p. 215)

Those émigré writers who lived long enough to see independence, did eventually see their work return home, where it was integrated into the Lithuanian literary canon. However, the children and grandchildren of the émigrés wrote and published in English within an American and Canadian literary context. The Lithuanian émigré literary tradition began with the Lithuanian language as the predominant language, and the Lithuanian émigré writers established publishing houses that published collections of poetry, prose, literary criticism; maintained journals, newspapers, radio programs, literary conferences and seminars. Today, although a few of the original Lithuanian language periodicals are still published, Lithuanian-American magazines, such as “Heritage” or “Bridges” or “Lituanus” take center stage.

American and Canadian writers of Lithuanian descent tend to write about Lithuania's traumatic historical experience. Or they write about growing up in the Lithuanian diasporas in the major cities of the United States and Canada. Canadian writers Irene Guilford and Anatanas Sileika, and American writers Gint Aras, Daiva Markelis and Birutė Putrius, have written both autobiographical fiction and memoirs about the Lithuanian diasporas where thousands of refugee children grew up.

Antanas Sileika was one of the first descendants of Lithuanian refugees to publish a book in English about the experiences of first generation Canadians. His autobiographical novel, *Buying on Time*, tells the story of a Lithuanian family who dreams of living the “good life” in the suburbs of Toronto. However, they don't have any money. So, they buy a subdivision, put up an outhouse, dig a pit, throw a roof over it, and live underground among the lawns and driveways of their neighbors as they build their house themselves.

According to Sileika, “East European writing sometimes shows more absurdity, more irony, more surrealism, as befitting a region where no good deed went unpunished and life sometimes echoed dark fairy tales like those of Hoffman or the Arabian Nights stories, in which vengeful genies might kill you for their sport whereas North American writing is more generally uplifting, or moral, or has a happy ending (less so in Canada).” (Sruoginis, 2017)

These writers write about Lithuanian themes, despite the fact that most of them have only visited Lithuania a few times since independence, and have not had the experience of living or working in Lithuania. Many of them lived most of their lives during the Cold War period, when travel to Lithuania was severely limited. Some, like Ruta Sepetys, do not speak Lithuanian. Nonetheless, Sepetys dedicated her career as a writer to speaking out for Lithuania's Siberian exiles.

The post-émigré writers craft fiction from the stories they've heard from their elders or describe their experiences growing up sandwiched between two languages and cultures. By writing about the émigré community, they risk the displeasure of the community. At the same time, they narrow their opportunities to publish with



commercial publishers by writing about a culture that is seemingly too small and insignificant to be marketable. Ruta Sepetys's young adult novel, *Between Shades of Gray*, about a sixteen-year-old girl exiled by Stalin to the Arctic region of Siberia, became a *New York Times* bestseller, and yet even she admitted that her book had a hard time getting published.

*I think every major U.S. publisher passed on Between Shades of Gray. They thought historical fiction was a hard sell and that Lithuania was too obscure a country to market successfully. Even a Lithuanian editor at major publisher rejected the novel. She wrote a letter explaining that she did want/like the book because of the main character. Now she says that she was forced by her boss to reject the book.*  
(Sruoginis, 2016)

To complicate matters even more, the identities of these North American writers of Lithuanian descent are not just dual, but triple, identities: 1) Lithuanian—raised in the émigré community; 2) Canadian or American; 3) A hybrid identity that is Lithuanian-American or Lithuanian-Canadian.

Why have these writers not taken an easier route by writing about American and Canadian topics? When asked why they write about Lithuanian themes, many of the writers responded that they felt compelled to explore their Lithuanian roots through their writing as a means of searching for identity. In fact, the search for identity was the one unifying theme for all eighteen writers and poets interviewed. James Joseph Brown responded:

*They are the themes that keep bubbling forth in the work because they have been obsessing me the longest. From the somewhat spooky church I grew up in, to the cast of characters that made up the Lithuanian community in my small, New England town, to the treasure trove of experience I gained from living in Lithuania right after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and then more recently, when it has become decidedly Western and European. Being able to truly recognize the differences between then and now and understand that I lived through them is something that will always inspire me to want to write more about Lithuania.*  
(Sruoginis, 2016)

And this begs the question: How can one feel firmly rooted in one's culture to the point that one is able to devote one's career to writing about it, even at the expense of being able to publish, while at the same time feeling confused about identity? And yet, perhaps this paradox is indicative of our global era? We feel as though we belong to some greater whole, but at the same time we sense that we are alone with our shattered identities. We boast a strong cultural identity while at the same time we are continually searching for identity. Such are the long-term emotional and psychological affects of displacement. Such are the symptoms of our global age.

Some Lithuanian-American writers, like James Joseph Brown, question the traditional understanding of what it means to be Lithuanian—heterosexual, Catholic (with a good dose of paganism), family oriented. Brown advocates for acceptance of *all* Lithuanians into the community. In his essay, “Stebuklas” (Miracle) (Brown, 2016), Brown describes how after being shoved out of a taxi when he requests to be driven to a gay club in Vilnius, he walks across the Cathedral Square, searching for the marble tile called, *Stebuklas* (Miracle). The legend goes that if you stand on this tile, your wishes will come true.

*This was not the country my grandfather would want me to come back to. When he*

*left for America, he had the intention of going back when Lithuania was free. But he wouldn't have wanted to go back to this. And he wouldn't have wanted me to go back to this, for anyone in his family to go back and to be treated like this, like they didn't belong.*

*Maybe I was only half-Lithuanian. Maybe I didn't speak the language perfectly. Maybe I wasn't the most conventional Lithuanian you'd ever meet. But I was not going to let someone make me feel like I didn't belong in this society because I was gay.*

*I swore then that I wouldn't be silent. That I would speak up and not deny it if the issue came up, even if it made some squeamish Lithuanians uncomfortable when they asked where my wife and kids were and I told them the truth. I would make sure I stood up for what was right until the day when this nation treated us all equally.*

*I walked past the bell tower, to the Stebuklas, and made one last wish. This time I broke with tradition and told everyone I could about it afterward. I wished for Lithuania to be a more tolerant society for gays and lesbians and anyone else who felt different and misunderstood. It was too important a wish to keep to myself.*

*(p. 14 – 18)*

Brown's experience, transitioning from the United States, where gender and racial diversity is protected by law, to a more traditional Lithuanian society, inspired him to use the tool of writing to advocate for more tolerance in Lithuania. This type of cross-pollination between cultures is a staple of global literature, and evolves through the balance of cultural perspectives.

## **Conclusions**

The experience of Lithuanian-American and Canadian writers may help us understand the identity crisis that all global citizens face, or will face in the future. These writers balance three cultures and at least two languages in one lifetime. These writers have written about what it means to be a foreigner, an immigrant, a refugee in Canada and America. They have written about the toll it takes psychologically and emotionally to balance dual identities. They have carried the responsibility of telling the untold stories of those left behind. Their work shows us what it means to live as a global citizen, straddling cultures, multilingual, moving back and forth in historical memory. By taking a close look at the evolution of one ethnic literary diaspora, we can begin to see how the myriad diverse voices of the many different diasporas worldwide come together to form a global whole.

## References

Braždžionis, Bernardas. (1989) *Poezijos pilnatis*. Vilnius: Vaga.

Brown, James Joseph. (2016) "Stebuklas" Bridges. Pg. 14 – 18.

Guilford, Irene. (1999) *The Embrace*. Toronto-Buffalo-Lancaster (U.K.): Guernica..

Vince, Laima. (2002) *The Earth Remains*. Landsbergis, Algirdas. (2002) "Adventures in Storyland" New York: Columbia University Press.

Landsbergis, Algirdas. (1973) Manuscript. "Vita Longa Breviter."

Landsbergis, Algirdas. (1962) "Words, Beautiful Words." Lithuanian Quartet. New York: Manyland Books.

Sepetys, Ruta. (2011) *between shades of gray*. New York: Speak: An Imprint of Penguin Group.

Sileika, Antanas. (1997) *Buying on Time*. Toronto: Porcupine's Quill.

Sruoginis, Laima Vince (Interviewer) & Bartkevičius, Jocelyn (Interviewee). (23 May 2017).

Sruoginis, Laima Vince (Interviewer) & Brown, James Joseph (Interviewee). (1 November 2016).

Sruoginis, Laima Vince (Interviewer) & Landsbergis, Jon (Interviewee). (1 August 2017).

Sruoginis, Laima Vince (Interviewer) & Landsbergis, Paul (Interviewee). (2 August 2017).

Sruoginis, Laima Vince (Interviewer) & Paronetto, Nijolė (Interviewee). (6 July 2016).

Sruoginis, Laima Vince (Interviewer) & Raulinaitis, Angelė (Interviewee). (21 May 2017).

Sruoginis, Laima Vince (Interviewer) & Sepetys, Ruta (Interviewee). (9 March 2017).

Sruoginis, Laima (Interviewer) & Sileika, Antanas (Interviewee). (30 December 2016).

Sruoginis, Laima Vince (Interviewer) & Užgiris, Rimas (Interviewee). (17 October 2016).

**Contact email:** Laimavince.writer@gmail.com