

**Ilse Lehiste (1922-2010)**  
**In memoriam**  
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It is already two years since the death of an extraordinary linguistic scholar, Professor Ilse Lehiste from the Ohio State University. We, at FUSAC, were honored by her membership, knowing well about her two academic doctorates and numerous honorary doctorates; her publications of nearly twenty books and over 300 articles and reviews on her work in acoustic phonetics and phonology, prosody and language contacts; her presidency of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies and the Linguistic Society of America. She was also honored in her land of birth, by being bestowed in 2001 the Order of the White Star by the President of Estonia and becoming in 2008 the Foreign Member of the Estonian Academy of Sciences.

But many of us may not have known that Ilse's first love was music, and that she studied the piano at the Conservatorium of Tallinn. Her second passion was literature, especially poetry, as evidenced by the collection of her youthful poems published in 1989. Her studies at the University of Tartu began in 1942 at the Faculty of Philosophy, which she had to abandon when she and her mother had to flee in 1944 from the Soviet occupation of Estonia. She resumed her studies as a refugee in a displaced persons' camp and eventually received her initial doctorate from the University of Hamburg for work in Nordic literature. After arriving as a migrant in USA in 1949, Ilse first supported herself and her mother by playing the piano in a dance studio. Her interest in linguistics must have been awakened at the University of Michigan, where she earned her second doctorate. From then on linguistics dominated and, as we know, success crowned her efforts.

I was lucky enough to win her friendship in 1979, before I myself became involved in linguistics. I was visiting Columbus, Ohio, on a Fellowship from the Australian Government, to study the way vocational education is provided in America. As an Estonian, I knew of this famous Estonian linguist living in Columbus, and I telephoned her to arrange a meeting. We were members of the same sorority, the Association of Estonian University Women, and we discovered several other common friends. In her warm and welcoming way, she immediately invited me to

visit her. When we found that we both loved music and poetry, we bonded even more. She introduced me to the local Estonians and their folk-dancing group, and there was not one lonely night I spent in Columbus. Thereafter we corresponded and met at every opportunity. When we happened to be both in Estonia, she came to visit, and we attended concerts and plays together. Our friendship became even stronger after sharing several startling experiences at the X International Congress of Finno-Ugric Studies at Yoshkar-Ola, Russia, in 2005. Already then I was worried by her unsteadiness, which had grown by the time I saw her last in August 2010 at the XI International Congress of Finno-Ugric Studies at Piliscsaba, Hungary. But it was mind over matter with her, and she survived for a little while longer, until Christmas 2010, when we were all overcome by great loss.

Rest in peace, dear friend, scholar and a remarkable person! We miss you dearly.

## RÕÕMUS VAIKIMINE

Poem by Ilse Lehiste

Nüüd kevad on käes, ja veenired  
need jooksevad, jooksevad puha,  
päev ärkab täis lindude vilet,  
ja talv on maas põrmus ja tuhas.

Tuul haarab meid kätest ja viib meid  
kesk kevade uhkavat küllust  
viib hommiku sillerdav tiib meid,  
ja tulvab kaua varjatud hellust

mu silmist ja suule - seda pead siis  
kui tuult jooma janusel sõõmul.  
Miks vaikin, Sa küsid. Ja tead siis:  
pean vaikima hingetust rõõmust.

Nüüd kevad on käes, ja veenired,  
need jooksevad, jooksevad puha;  
õnn puhkeb täis helkivat imet,  
ja lein on maas põrmus ja tuhas.

Rõõm loitma lööb silmade leegi,  
nii raske on laugusid seada  
neid sootumaks katma - kuid keegi,  
kuid keegi ei tohi sest teada.

1941-44

## A HAPPY SILENCE

Translation by Tiiu Salasoo

Spring is here, and streams of water  
are running, all running,  
the day awakens filled with songs of  
birds  
and winter is buried in dust and ash.

Wind seizes our hands and takes us  
to the flowing plenty of spring  
takes us the morning's warbling wing  
and brims over with tenderness hidden  
so long

from my eyes and to lips - this you  
must  
drink with thirsty sips like the wind.  
Why am I silent, you ask. And you  
know then:  
my silence is due to breathless joy.

Spring is here, and streams of water  
are running, all running;  
happiness opens to reveal a shining  
miracle  
and sorrow is buried in dust and ash.

Joy lights up the flame in the eyes,  
it is so hard to lower the lids  
to cover them fully - but no one,  
but no one may know of this.

1941-44