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## [Episode 11: Lizzy Palmer](#)

Host: David Turner – DT

Guest: Lizzy Palmer – LP

Transcript edited by David turner – 17/01/17

### **Conversation:**

**DT:** Hello my name is David Turner and this is another episode of Lunar Poetry Shorts. And today I'm joined by the lovely Lizzy Palmer. And I say lovely because she is my girlfriend.

But she is a really good poet as well and I would have had on as a guest even if we weren't 'stepping out'. And to prove that we're going to start with a poem from Lizzy.

**LP:**            The Lost Man

Did you observe, within his eyes, the glint  
of spinning compass needles, those designs  
which looked, at first, like the established print  
of maps of roads well-trodden, or the lines

of heavenly assembly on the chart?  
To you, initially, did he appear  
as anything but lost, or set apart?  
When did you realise he wasn't here?

You might encounter him more frequently  
than you would guess; and when you saw him last,  
were you convinced that he would always be  
positioned firmly forward of the past?

But did you note the ease with which he'll leave  
and come into the room, and did his ease  
mislead you? Know that he will not deceive  
you purposely - his words are sincere. He's

unsure of where his true intentions lie,  
of where his tracks have been laid up to now,  
and who might think them permanent, and why,  
having himself made no such kind of vow.

His steps seemed so assured; did you detect  
the gravity - his bearing, and the draw  
of everything toward him? The effect  
which means he is pursued. What he hunts for

is unfixed, so his search is without close.  
And were you told of his adventures? Did  
his tales of leading all those lives compose  
both awe and hope within your heart, amid

belief that he might almost have resigned  
his voyage to completion? Did it seem  
that, in his own heart, all had been aligned?  
He tells his story as he goes, midstream,

not waiting for the end he cannot see,  
the resolution endlessly delayed.  
And did he sing? And did the melody

remind you of a songbird serenade,

content enough to please each passing ear?  
Or did the subtle cadences evoke the  
mourning of one caged year after year,  
forgetting the desire for which he spoke?

He will reveal the contents of his hand,  
though in that decorated way of hi;  
but you will read and feel you understand,  
and lay your own hand down; the lost man is

like everyone and no one. You will meet  
his echoes in the facets of the crowd,  
but no reflection will be quite complete,  
nor each reverberation quite as loud

as his presence diminishes thereby;  
and fade it will, more quickly than you think,  
though on your mind his force will multiply,  
as on your heart - the weight will make it sink.

So do try, if you will, to offer him  
some refuge. He may even find you soon,  
your warm lights full and steady in the dim  
dusk harbour, welcoming and opportune;

but knots and tethers loosen in his grip,  
and like a vessel fashioned for the chase,  
off he'll be carried on the nearest rip,  
and you or I can hazard at the place...

And you will stand there waving out to sea,  
and teeter, signalling through sheets of rain,  
into the wind, then find yourself to be  
as lost as he, and ever so remain.

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**DT:** Thank you very much. Hello Lizzy [**LP:** Hello]. How are you?

**LP:** Fine, thank you.

**DT:** I know. Of course we're pretending that we have start talking just now, but we've obviously, not. So, but hopefully this goes better than last time, because we tried this before and tried to pretend like we didn't know each other. And it was very awkward [**LP:** It was well awkward]. We're going to have a very formal conversation now we have a microphone in front of us.

**DT:** Why poetry Lizzy?

**LP:** Why oh why! I mean it's something that I've done. I mean, obviously, not since I can remember but certainly since I can remember starting to write creatively. I mean once I learned to read and write it became clear I think pretty quickly that English was the subject I was best at and the one that I enjoyed above all the others.

I think I was intrigued immediately by how language could be used creatively. I think I had that extra perception for it quite early on. Also, you know, you hear a lot of writers and artists talking about how their creative pursuits are more like an affliction than anything else and I think there's definitely that element to it for me as well. I'm quite taken by the stereotype of the tragic romantic artist.

**DT:** You are proper tragic!

**LP:** Proper Emo!

Overall though I think, my 'angsty' teenage years cemented my love of poetry in particular properly. The thing that still strikes me as being maybe my favourite thing about it is the human ability to be able to share affinities with each other across distances. So you know, distance in terms of space and time. For instance, you know I'd sit there reading a John Clare poem as a fourteen-year-old and thinking, this guy's been dead for however many hundreds of years and he's written exactly how I'm feeling right now. I think that's a really beautiful thing.

**DT:** Do you aim for your poetry to be an act of communication, ultimately?

**LP:** Oh I guess so. I mean I've just always, just wanted to write how I feel really I think... You know, I'm sure you understand this as well, the sort of compulsive or almost compulsive need to do it and to express your feelings and ideas. Even if it's not a particularly pleasant thing to do all the time. I'd say that's probably at the bottom of everything for me that idea, yeah.

**DT:** How often do you read your angst ridden, painful outpourings in public?

**LP:** I mean, the last year or two I've been doing it a lot, although that's kind of tapered off in recent months. But I think we all, once we start out performing, try and go to everything as much as possible. Every single night we can find, but I think I've realised that doing that has meant that I haven't had as much time for writing which is obviously the most important thing.

So, I mean, you know once you've established yourself and your presence a bit you know, and found the nights that you really like to go to where you fit in the most. I think it's probably okay to sort of step back and have a bit of a break from it. So, recently I've not been doing very much. I've done a few features at certain nights but concentrating more on writing again now I think rather than performing.

**DT:** The route of all the problems.

**LP:** Yeah, the writing.

**DT:** Shall we have another poem, please?

**LP:** This, like many of my poems doesn't have a title.

Never enough to fill my heart,  
this plugless bath with an eternal tap,  
thirsty for overflowing, but,  
with every influx of the wishful deep,  
is drained, retaining in the trap  
mere residue of what I could not keep.

As with a gluttons will to eat  
the urgent appetite is never spent,  
for having tasted what is sweet –  
and this in gulping excess past its fill -  
my heart could never be content,  
despite over abundance, overkill.

Far from unthankful, I feel such  
that I give thanks with full receipt, and crave  
more love because I love so much,  
and I rage, knowing only how to burn,  
reach on for things I cannot save,  
and love, and take, and drink, and fill, and yearn.

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**DT:** Thank you. I've heard that poem a lot and I read it myself and I'm still surprised when it ends. Doesn't feel too short but at the same time it definitely feels too short.

Anyway, that's not what we're here to discuss. How do you critique your own work? Do you have people you share your writing with?

**LP:** I've never been very good at seeking critique and I don't know if that is down to my, you know, compulsive writing for myself or whether I'm scared of it, which probably is more likely. I think since I've been performing I've... I mean like we all do at the start I probably did rely too much on audiences for, you know, to gauge how well received I was.

But you know, aside from that it's always just been certain friends and family members who I've given everything to read and they've given me feedback. Although obviously they're always going to be really nice about it. So, yeah that's definitely something that I am looking to do more of. I've been in workshop kind of environments before and I found that really useful and quite enjoyable actually.

**DT:** Yeah, because when you studied you attended some poetry classes?

**LP:** I did a poetry writing course, yeah. And that actually, that was probably the first time that I was really inspired and had this huge rush of creativity. And like, sharing ideas with each other and you know bouncing off other people. Doing writing exercises and trying different things.

**DT:** Did the inspiration come from the critiquing? Or at least the process of discussing?

**LP:** I think it was the process of doing it.

**DT:** It's just that I find it interesting that a lot of artists and poets are scared about having their work critiqued. And I think it's just a shame because you're denying yourself the inspiration of hearing those ideas out loud.

**LP:** Yeah I definitely agree with you in theory but I think it's when it comes down to being, you know. Under the spotlight and having people pick it apart it's a bit frightening but I think once that's done it is very healthy and it does feel better and obviously starts you thinking more about what you're doing which is important.

**DT:** In the last feature length podcast when I was speaking to [Liv Wynter](#) we discussed how there's a difference between critiquing and criticising someone's work. She studied art and so did I for a bit and the critiquing there is not as terrifying because you're not you're not being picked apart or... You know, in the same way. How would you like to see your writing progress?

**LP:** I think everyone who knows me in this capacity at the moment knows that I'm feeling in a bit of a creative crisis at the moment. So I'm thinking a lot about progression and what I'm doing and why I'm doing it. Although I haven't actually made any progress in that yet. But I think the main thing is just writing more again, not forgetting to take my notebook out with me which I've been doing all the time. Naughty poet!

Yeah, I think that's it really. Just you know, maybe seeking more critique and writing more and trying new things and seeing where that goes.

**DT:** How about another poem? One last poem.

**LP:** Again, no title.

**DT:** [Under breath] Twat! [**LP:** Shut up!] I say that as someone that has one poem with a title. But then I have only written three poems.

**LP:** Yes, so be quiet!

I want to make portraits of you from the feet up  
and sculpt your hands from alabaster,  
I want to tell you that your neck is so beautiful it reminds me of Russian  
ballet dancers,  
and that your face is the one I pictured when, as a child, I read the Saki story  
about the strange, hungry exotic boy in the woods

I want to list your parts solely in terms of artistic movements, writing  
peaceful manifestos for each one,  
I want to write you innumerable list poems, each of them more than a third  
too long, then flesh them out in permanent marker over every bit of  
unclaimed wall space in London,  
over every bit of you directly,  
I want you to wear my badges of dishonour

I want to speak of how the immense weight of your sadness would surely lie  
like feathers on the plinth of my regard,  
of how I've been listening to the glittering chaotic turbulence of the workings  
of your inner universe  
with cupped hands pressed up against your poems,  
of how I've been dreaming darkly

I want to get all these ideas out urgently before I find time to confine them to  
meter,  
I want to tell you all the things I think before I sabotage myself once again,  
I want to seize every one of your generously offered opportunities

I want to catch up to you,  
to overtake you,  
and like Joni Mitchell said, *I wanna knit you a sweater, wanna write you a  
love letter, I wanna make you feel better*

I want to stop reading from the page,  
I want to stop raging silently,  
I want to be half as brave as you are,  
I want to give you everything you deserve,  
I want to give you everything

I want to tell you,  
to tell you it feels *like everything* I've ever lost come back to me,  
and I want to make you believe me

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**DT:** Thank you very much. Just a couple of last questions. What have been the main influences over your development as a writer and performer?

**LP:** Well most recently, has definitely been the people that I've met since I've been reading and performing in the last couple of years. 'You lot', basically.

I think it's been obviously the sort of group of friends that I've become a part of. We're all clearly having an influence on each other and that is constantly changing. And it's... you can see each time every one of us performs, we're sort of developing and getting better and having an influence on each other. And I think that's a really... it's funny but it's a really beautiful thing as well. That's definitely inspired me the most. Recently anyway.

But before that going back to when I really seriously got into writing poetry it was mainly older traditional poets particularly the romantics. That's it really. You know, love and that!

**DT:** Yeah, people sitting alone with pens rather than talking to people.

**LP:** Yeah, love it!

**DT:** What would you recommend listeners to go out and see, read or watch apart from sitting in a corner staring at the wall, crying into your face?

**LP:** This is the question I was really worried about because I've been so terrible I haven't read or watched or done anything recently, so...

**DT:** I tell you what, it's a complete fucking myth that poets read anything, because every time I ask anyone, about 5% of people have read any books!

**LP:** I don't know, I mean, I think maybe I'll just reiterate what [Rachael Black](#) said in her pod cast. Just try and see and do as much as you can and widen your horizons and try and capture inspiration from whatever you see and hear and read. I think that's a good piece of advice. So, I will underline that as my answer!

**DT:** We can't... It's an audio recording.

If any of you out there like what Lizzy read today you can... We host Silence Found a Tongue together which is a monthly poetry night or spoken word night with featured acts and open mics. It's down in Waterloo. You can follow us on Twitter at [@Silent Tongue](#). And I'm sort of in charge of the Twitter account but I will post if Lizzy's featuring or doing anything [**LP:** If you can be bothered!]. Yeah, if I can be bothered. No I will be bothered, I'm always bothered.

**LP:** No I mean if I can be bothered to write or read anything soon.

**DT:** And on Facebook as well on our Facebook page. We don't, either of us, have individual Twitter accounts or poetry pages. But check out Lunar Poetry as well on their website because that will have stuff about myself and Lizzy because we host that night.

**LP:** As a unit.

**DT:** It's going to trail off into nonsense now if we don't stop it so thank you so much Lizzy.

**LP:** Thank you David.

**DT:** We're going to go for dinner and you lot [can go away].

**End of transcript.**