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[Episode 19 - Elisa Pieper](#) (April 2015)

Transcript by Christabel Smith

Host: David Turner – **DT**

Guest: Elisa Pieper – **EP**

Conversation:

DT: Hello, my name is David Turner, this is another episode of Lunar Poetry Shorts. I'm still in Istanbul, although this is sadly, and in some way thankfully, my last podcast of my trip. Today, I am again at MauMau Works, joined by Elisa Pieper.

EP: Hello, David, nice to meet you.

DT: We're going to start, as always, with a reading.

EP: Strange Candy Feet

[We are unable to reproduce this reading at this time.]

DT: Thank you, Elisa. Thank you for coming along.

EP: I'm happy to be here.

DT: We're going to start with the same question as usual. Why poetry? You can take that in whichever direction you want.

EP: Why poetry? You have to know that I am totally unfocused. Perhaps I can focus 10 minutes or something, so I have to bury my big dream to write a novel. I started to write this junk-food text that can perhaps be called poetry, if you refer to some post-internet approaches. It's cheap and easy to chew.

DT: What the listeners won't be able to see is the wry smile on your face. It's not as devalued in your mind as you're perhaps making it out to be. Does the smile mean it's not as throwaway as you're making out?

EP: Perhaps. I think it's always a perspective, a definition of something.

DT: So you're from Bavaria. Say the town.

EP: I was born in Bavaria. I am German, I was living in Berlin, I came to Istanbul and came back to Istanbul. I am here now for 10 months.

DT: How has your time in Istanbul affected the way you write?

EP: The first thing is I was starting to write in English in Istanbul two years ago. I wanted to use the language I use every day because my boyfriend lives here, we're talking in English, it's my active language at the moment. I started to write in English, even if I can't use it as good as I can use the German words. I try to get out the best of it.

DT: I was talking to Naz [Cuguoglu], the programme leader here at MauMau, in another podcast and she chooses to write in English rather than her native Turkish because it in some ways frees her up to write and she can explore the language more, even though it's restricted because English isn't her first language. Do you find yourself freer in some ways?

EP: I don't find myself free, I find myself jailed. From another perspective, it's also a good feeling because writing is suffering for me, so perhaps it's good to be jailed in this kind of frame.

DT: It suits the mood?

EP: Yeah.

DT: I think a lot of people will understand that. You find the writing process is one of suffering?

EP: Yeah, in some way. For me, it was never easy to write, it was always hard. I was always changing. I could never write with a typewriter. I am always deleting everything and changing everything. I need a computer, something that forgets.

DT: Never forget, you can find everything.

EP: Don't say this! Google never forgets.

DT: We're going to have a second reading, please.

EP: What Osman Said

[We are unable to reproduce this reading at this time.]

DT: The next question focuses on how you critique your own work. Do you share it with other writers?

EP: I have one really good friend I trust. She is perhaps one of the best writers I know and I share the work with her. We have a private blog, where we share our works. I think she is criticising me in a good way and she is really precise. I'm not.

DT: You like the fact you have differing styles?

EP: Exactly. But I'm not sharing it in public, on a blog or something.

DT: People that listen to this, all four or five, often what they wonder is how writers get to a point where they're comfortable with what they've written. The idea is we all sit in a room and write, but how do you improve your work, even in your own mind?

EP: As I told you before, deleting and a lot of copy/paste.

DT: You don't share your work in public, so I assume you haven't had anything published?

EP: No, I'm really proud this is my only publication. I had one short story published, I was really happy when that happened.

DT: Who was that through?

EP: It was a university publisher, a small collection of texts about living spaces.

DT: Do you write predominantly poetry or short stories?

EP: Since I am in Istanbul, my text has got shorter and shorter. I am working and my mind is occupied by daily things so much. I am writing really short things because I cannot focus longer than 10 minutes. I would say I am writing something every day.

DT: How would you wish your writing to progress? Would you like to be published more?

EP: I am still dreaming of that novel. It will chase me to my grave. I am not so sure about it. I will always write a novel, but if it must be published, I don't know. Also, there is the internet. I can publish every day if I want to.

DT: Perhaps what you're looking at is more to develop your discipline and get more body out of individual stories.

EP: And content. I want to have content. I want to be in the top three of the Google search-engine.

DT: You could just take to a few towers and start picking people off with a rifle, that would get you to the top of the Google search as well. We'll go for a third and final reading.

EP: I chose a German one as the last one.

[We are unable to reproduce this reading at this time.]

DT: Thank you. I really like listening to the German. I don't understand any of it, but it's nice. I really like the sound. I speak Norwegian and there are a lot of similar words, so I can pick out bits, but it makes no sense because the grammar is the other way around, so I don't get the context, I can just hear some words. What have been the main influences over your development as a writer?

EP: I think one of my first influences was a German pop band called Tocotronic. I think they are the greatest German-speaking poets of our time. Writer, of course Thomas Bernhard, the Austrian writer. The autobiography I adore and I have read at least 20 times. These are my main influences.

DT: I've never been able to reread to that extent. I don't think I've even read the same book twice. I really admire people who can go over things.

EP: In the last half year, I was reading just one book. Haruki Murakami, I don't know the title in English. In German, it's 'Wilde Schafsjagd' ['A Wild Sheep Chase']. It has like 300 pages. I always carry it with me and I am reading one, two pages again, all the time. It's wonderful, you should try this. It's so boring, again it's wonderful.

DT: What would you recommend to our listeners to see or read or watch?

EP: I could recommend Instagram. Second thing, Google search. Third, read the Bible.

DT: That just about wraps it up. Thank you for talking to me, us, we, all of us, everyone that exists on the internet.

EP: Thank you very much.

DT: Thank you, listeners, and again to MauMau. It's the last time for this trip that I'm going to be recording something at MauMau, it's sad, but that's life.

End of transcript.