

Lucy Fricke is the author of the novel *Töchter*, titled *Daughters* in English. She was scheduled to be in Montreal for Blue Metropolis 2020, but unfortunately, due to Covid-19, both the Festival and her trip were cancelled. Even though she couldn't join us in person, she was kind enough to send us the following answers to a few questions regarding *Töchter*, the art of translation, and the current literary scene in Germany.

Blue Met: How has *Töchter* been received in Germany?

Lucy Fricke: *Töchter/Daughters* is my fourth novel and my breakthrough book. It's always a little bit embarrassing to talk about one's own success, but it seems that both critics and readers love this book. It's a road novel about two best friends with a terminally ill father in the backseat. They are on their way to Switzerland for the father's medically assisted suicide. But the three never arrive there and it becomes a long trip through southern Europe, ending up on a Greek island. *Töchter/Daughters* is a dramedy and reflection about women in their forties, about the losses in life, the relationships between fathers and daughters, and about a strong female friendship. The book was a bestseller in Germany, awarded the Bavarian Book Prize and is going to be made into a film this year.

BM: Were you involved in the English translation of *Töchter*, and if so, how? How do you feel about this process? Is this the first time a book of yours is being translated into English? Is *Töchter* being translated into any other languages?

LF: It's the first time that a novel of mine has been translated. Right now, there are on translations into seven languages (English, Spanish, French, Italian, Finnish, Czech and Lithuanian) in progress. They will all be published in the next few months, which is really exciting for me. I feel honoured and have been lucky to work with great translators. I have been particularly close with my English, Spanish and French translators. We were lucky enough to all meet in Berlin and discussed a lot of questions, talked about individual words and sentences, their meanings and intentions. The novel is not so easy to translate, there is lot of wordplay in it, also rhythm and slang. To work on these translations with Sinéad Crowe, María Tellechea and Isabelle Liber is one of the best experiences in my life as an author. Now I would say: My next novel should be translated first and then published in German. Translators see everything! Every mistake, every ambiguity, every wrong step. They are strict, brilliant and wonderful!

BM: Can you tell us about the literary landscape in Germany today? It seems like there are many different movements: feminist writers, migrant writers, Turkish writers, Jewish writers...Can you give us a brief portrait?

LF: The best thing about the literary landscape in Germany is the diversity, the variety of different voices, topics, genres. We've a lively scene with a lot of independent publishing houses and bookshops. Every night you can visit a reading in Berlin, most of them take place in clubs, bars, cafés, cultural centers. But this literary life is in serious danger now. Since the Corona-lockdown started there are no readings anymore, the bookshops are closed (except in Berlin), all the festivals are canceled and more alarming: the book market is collapsing. The sales collapse is around 70 percent, the publishing houses have to shift their programs, most of them are not able to buy new manuscripts at the moment. Even if the lockdown will be over in a few weeks, we'll have to live with these economic repercussions for a long time. I dread the situation becoming a survival of the fittest. That only the big publishing houses and bookshops will be able to survive this situation. In the long run we could end up with only a mainstream culture, without an independent and diverse literature scene. I'm really worried about this scenario at the moment.