

The two guest poets, Gordon Meade and Desmond Graham, gave the students four exercises, introducing them with short poems of their own:

Exercise 1: Choose an emotion and a color, and write a poem based on this pair ("Sadness is purple..."); use several senses ("Sadness smells like a withered rose").

Exercise 2: Using similes, compare your family to *animals* ("My mom is like a beaver...").

Exercise 3: Combining the first two exercises, associate emotion(s) and animal(s).

Exercise 4: Write a poetic postcard about a city, e.g. Siegen – if you want the reader to guess the city, you need not reveal the name!

Here are some of the student products!

Exercise 1: The Color of Emotions

Sadness is purple,
It sounds like a drop in the ocean,
It looks like a lonely tree in the winter,
It smells like a withered rose,
And when I am sad, I feel like I'm all alone.

*Sadness is grey.
It looks like a snowy winter-sky.
It sounds like raindrops on a roof.
It feels like being captured inside of me.
It tastes like peppermint-tea on a cold night.
It smells like fog early in the morning.
And when I'm sad I need to huddle myself in a large blanket.*

fear* tastes like bitter regret
and even worse is the feeling
of losing things – and having lost
the relation to the world as it is.
for fear smells anxious, like cold ashes.
it sounds like a shrill siren's call
and looks like a picture of misery.
and when I am fearful I must fight to find my way back.

* annotation by the student author: what does the choice of emotion tell about the author's personality?

*Hate is alarming red.
It smells foul and it looks like rotten apples.
It sounds like shouting, tastes like knives and fees like fresh scars.
And when I hate I'm not myself anymore.*

Happiness is yellow,
It feels like the sun upon the skin,
It smells like flowers,
It looks like a smile,
It sounds like the calm ocean,
It tastes like ice cream,
 And when I am happy I feel like this feeling will never stop.

*happiness is yellow
it sounds like the melody of a guitar
it tastes like strawberries
it feels like the heat of the sun
it looks like a beach full of palms
it smells like a sunflower.
 and when I am happy I could embrace the whole world.*

Happiness is pink.
It smells like fresh flowers.
It feels like a summer breeze.
It tastes like an orange.
It looks like the sun.
It sounds like singing birds.
 When I'm happy I too could embrace the whole world.

Exercise 2: Animal Families

My mom is like a beaver, because she is always very busy.
My sister is like an owl, because she is awfully clever.
My gran was like a kitten, because she was so cute.
And I'm like a turtle, because I'm all so calm.

*My granny is like a turtle – she's very old and slow.
My brother is like a bear – he loves the forest and lives there too.
My sister is like a flamingo – she loves everything that's pink!
And I am like a hedgehog – if I am angry, pay attention!*

My mum is like a dolphin, smiling the whole day
My dad is like an ant because he is really hard-working
My sister is like a bear because she is always hungry
And I am like a bird, enjoying my life

*My brother is like a prairie-dog, because he wants to know everything.
My cousin is like a cheetah, because he never sits down for a second.
My best friend is like an elephant, because nothing can turn her upside down.
But I am like Bambi's mom – in the end I sacrifice myself to rescue those I love best.*

my brother has the attitude of a young fox because he likes to take risks – usually stepping beyond security but without failure.

my father has the heart of a dog – very big and sweet-tempered he seeks harmony.

my grandpa is loaded like a snail – so many things can be found out when following the trail of his shell into the soft inner life (since grandma has become a squirrel – always searching for something she already has forgotten).

and I am like a 'cat puppy' – still hunting my tail to find a rest while refusing to grow up.

*My mom is a bat, she flutters around oh so excited,
my stepdad is a mole as his eyes are not too enlightened.
My sister is a little pony 'cause she hops around for applause,
my brother is a dog as he causes trouble with no pause.
I'm a parrot obviously, 'cause the one always babbling, that's me.*

My dad is like an owl because he's smart but can't sleep at night.

My mum is like a dog because she fights anyone who wants to hurt me.

My grandfather is like a pig because he's almost hairless and loves to eat.

I am like a bird because I left my family's nest, but come back from time to time.

Exercise 3: Animals and Emotions

I wish my mum was a butterfly.

light, delighted, not worrying about the next day. or what the future might be like.

to be confident in herself and the future – to be satisfied with what she has got.

to be grateful for life – again.

and not to care too much about her outward appearance – the butterfly can tell:

personal qualities have to be judged (beauty is only skin-deep).

to let her uncage herself from her claustrophobic cocoon.

because there is more to it than being born and dying.

*It's beautiful and strong.
Shall I carry on?
It blows its breath into my ear, believe me, no sign of fear.
I need it when I get lost.
It carries me on its back, over obstacles, fields and track.
It can be naughty – when I see it,
It doesn't want to take the bit,
I love it from deep within my heart,
Just like a bullseye hit by a dart.
I always care for it as it cares for me,
OH, my beloved pony!*

I'm jealous when I see a bird.

It is free and it can fly, it can touch the sky.

And if the weather is bad, it can fly elsewhere instead.

A bird can see the world without paying for petrol,
And if a bird gets furious, it can still shit on other people's heads.

*A bird which flies high in the sky,
Watches down upon the earth,
Looks at all the people in a hurry,
No time for themselves or for each other.
The bird just enjoys its freedom
And surely feels superior to us wingless folk*

A dog is your best friend.
He is angry if you get hurt.
He is happy if you give him food and play with him.
He is lazy if you give him time to rest.
He is full of energy if you throw him a ball.
He is stupid if he destroys your best shoes.
But he's always sad when you leave, hoping for you to come back.

Jealous of a Cat

*Long soft fur patted every day.
A comfortable purr shows your easy way.
You went straight to my heart,
but if you feel like it, you just part.
Strolling through the neighbourhood;
begging for milk and food.
It seems you are always sleeping,
really a lazy thing.
How I wish to change my place with yours
and try to walk, one day, in your shoes.*

I could never be lonely
as long as he is there for me
I feel joy and happiness,
power, love and no less.

As he is always there,
unlike wimpy friends a manly hare
I say this and I'm not bluffin'
I'm overhappy 'cause I have my Muffin!

My cuddly companion every day,
or as long as he exists, if I may,
I wouldn't forget the rabbit I had
even if I get another pet.

Exercise 4: Postcards

This city feels like a big family,
Although I don't know anybody,
I know that he could become a friend of mine.
Let's go for a walk through the small streets
Or enjoy a coffee at Angelo's.
Having some ice-cream with gladiators,
Or meeting with Michel Angelo,
In the Sistine Chapel.
And if the moon rises,
We turn around,
We throw a coin,
And kiss and part in front of Poseidon.
"I promise
to come back again."

Postcard from Cologne

*I am a place crowded with people from all over the world
I can be really busy and loud but at the same time calm and relaxing
I am proud of a big event that takes place once a year for a couple of days, called "the fifth season"
My famous cathedral is next to a beautiful river where you can enjoy your day
Trust me - I am worth visiting*

Postcards from Siegen

Always happy when I'm gone,
To this place I don't belong.
Long gray motorway takes me there every day,
I'd rather be far, far away.
Sunset takes me home quite late,
After learning, listening and debate.
Will be glad when my time there is over,
Having back my green, green clover.

*A city caught between the hills, longing to breathe easy.
Everything is made of concrete, nothing seems alive.
CityGalerie, the Schlosspark, Krönchen, those are places you can go.
But be wise, stay where you are, or if you're here, be smart and take the next train to Cologne.*

If you want to go to BarCelona,
visit the house of Meyer,
find a Shamrock,
or if you need a Plan B,
this town has a lot to see!

Contemporary Writers' Workshop
Student Poems

You can also sit on a Chaiselounge,
Vor-what it-tex through the night,
take a trip to Lousiana,
search for Uncle Tom's hut,
or at Verano shake your butt.

These poems were written by Janine Arend, Katharina Franziska Camp, Nina Debus, Jasmin Großmann, Carina-Elisabeth Heitmann, Sarah Lierz, Elisabeth Röttgen, Lisa-Marie Schmidt