

For this assignment, you need to somehow “translate” the poem, though without focusing on content. Instead, think about the structure, the format, the rhythm, the imagery, and other literary gestures the poem presents, and think how you might approximate/imitate/challenge/follow/diverge/or otherwise interpret the original poem. Sticking to approximately the same poem-length, challenge, emulate, negotiate, take off from, pattern your own text after, play with the form, or otherwise experiment with this poem. So: inhabit by taking the original poem, engaging with its literary premises, and yet making the resulting text your own.

bpNichol – from *Organ Music*

“The Tonsils”

1.

They said ‘you don’t need them’ but they were keen to cut them out. They said ‘if they swell up they’ll choke you to death’ so you learned they cut things off if they might swell up. There were two of them in their sacs & they hung there in your throat. They cut them off.

2.

I didn’t have them long enough to grow attached to them but they were attached to me. It was my first real lesson in having no choice. It was my only time ever in a hospital as a kid & I wasn’t even sick. I wasn’t even sick but I had the operation. I had the operation that I didn’t want & I didn’t say ‘no’ because there was no choice really. I had everybody who was bigger than me telling me this thing was going to happen & me crying a lot & them telling me it was good for me. It was my first real lesson in having no attachment.

3.

Almost everyone I knew had their tonsils out. Almost everyone I knew was told ‘it’s good for you’. Even tho none of us who had our tonsils out ever knew any kid who choked to death from having them in, almost everyone we knew had their tonsils out.

Kate Hargreaves – from *Leak*

“Heap”

She heaps.
She heaps dirty clothes and dishrags on the stairs.
She heaps her plate with Brussel sprouts.
She heaps her teaspoon with brown sugar, stirs it into oats.
She heaps the compost.
She composts heaps.
She mounds.
She piles.
She piles old newspapers on the bedroom floor.
She plies.
She plies with wool.
She pulls wool over thighs.
She plies.
She pleas.
She only buys two-ply.
Her nose runs in her sleep.
She rubs the sleep from her eyes.
She thighs in her sleep.
Hives cover her thighs.
She smears calamine on her skin.
Washes ink from her hair.
She lather rise repeats. She dries.
Piles towels in the tub.
Heaps dress and tights in the sink.
She scrapes her leg.
Scratches. Loses sleep.
Heaps blankets on the floor.
Hives warm.
Nails out.
She seeps.