

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

Jamaica Kincaid – from *At the Bottom of the River*

“Girl”

Wash the white clothes on Monday and put them on the stone heap; wash the color clothes on Tuesday and put them on the clothesline to dry; don't walk barehead in the hot sun; cook pumpkin fritters in very hot sweet oil; soak your little clothes right after you take them off; when buying cotton to make yourself a nice blouse, be sure that it doesn't have gum on it, because that way it won't hold up well after a wash; soak salt fish overnight before you cook it; is it true that you sing benna in Sunday school?; always eat your food in such a way that it won't turn someone else's stomach; on Sundays try to walk like a lady and not like the slut you are so bent on becoming; don't sing benna in Sunday school; you mustn't speak to wharf-rat boys, not even to give directions; don't eat fruits on the street – flies will follow you; *but I don't sing benna on Sundays at all and never in Sunday school*; this is how to sew on a button; this is how to make a buttonhole for the button you have just sewed on; this is how to hem a dress when you see the hem coming down and so to prevent yourself from looking like the slut I know you are so bent on becoming; this is how you iron your father's khaki shirt so that it doesn't have a crease; this is how you iron your father's khaki pants so that they don't have a crease; this is how you grow okra – far from the house, because okra tree harbors red ants.

Rosemary Nixon – from *The Cock's Egg*

“From the Inside Out”

Freida counts off what happened the first five weeks.

One. Her tampons blew up. In this humidity their bodies mushroomed, spread, until they popped the confines of their pink plastic shells.

Two. The legal rep came to their house to say Freida's sewing class for village women would start within the week. He implied embroidery, handstitched blankets, knitted baby vests.

“I don't sew,” Freida said. “I don't know how to sew.”

Three. Linford translated recipes into Kikongo for their cook. So now Freida cannot recognize the language of her food.

All Kinds Vegetable

Nge tula manteke na nzungu

2 mbala kuzenga

1 kopo mosi de mbizi

Mbizi? Where would they get mbizi?

Four. She discovered rabbits copulating. That fighting, scrambling in the cage, the female's enraged eyes. When the male mounted, her head half turned in disbelief. He hung for an instant, held the light, and then his sharp squeal, his topple as if felled. It made Frieda look at Linford with new eyes.