List Poem of Prepositional Phrases

To write a list poem, start with a still life or another work of art that depicts many people or objects. Describe what you see in a list of prepositional phrases, such as

under the ____ / next to the ____ / in a ____ / beyond the ____.

Don’t be afraid to repeat words—repetition will give the poem rhythm. Add a line that will surprise a reader, for example, by revealing what you would do if you were in the work of art (e.g., over the bread / my hand hovers).

Jean-Étienne Liotard
Swiss, Geneva, about 1781–1783
Still Life: Tea Set
Oil on canvas mounted on board
14 7⁄8 x 20 5⁄16 in.
84.PA.57