

**Teaching Guide**  
*Look Look Look* by Callista Buchen

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### Writing Prompts Inspired by *Look Look Look*

- Write a prose poem about a transformational experience without actually naming the experience. Instead, make the poem about something surreal or magical, but that gets at the emotional truth of the literal transformation (see “Next, the Ears,” “Road Construction,” “Kinds of Trucks,” and “Quick Change” for examples).
- Consider the poem “Threshold,” in which the speaker describes her body in different ways, calling it a “fortress” and a “monument,” finally ending the poem with an image of the body as a door. Write a poem that begins with “My body is a \_\_\_\_\_ . / My body is a \_\_\_\_\_.” Then, continue on for at least eight lines or eight sentences. What does it mean for the body to be these things? What are the implications of these images? End the poem with the body described as something else, something surprising.
- In *The Grand Permission: New Writings on Poetics and Motherhood*, Patricia Dienstfrey writes about how, as a mother, she experienced “a sense of overlapping times,” the kind of blurring that meant it seemed as though she was both playing with her children and playing in her own childhood (112). In *Look Look Look*, the speaker also experiences this kind of double-time, exploring how the present relates to the past. Write a poem in which your speaker experiences or seems to experience two times once (like the past and the present or the present and the future). Use changes in diction, form, or voice to help demonstrate the speaker’s position(s) in time(s).
- Write a poem of single-line stanzas reminiscent of the “Flashes” poems in *Look Look Look*. Compose a poem of at least 10 lines that are self-contained with no enjambment or overt narrative connection (no words like “then” or “before”) between them. Make at least one-third of the lines related to a specific setting or place you remember from childhood.
- Working with the same basic idea, theme, and set of images, write a poem three ways. Use a different perspective each time, exploring what can be said with varying levels of distance. Use “I” in one version, “you” in another, and he, she, or they in the third.
- Think about a time you felt your sense of self shift, change, or even disappear. Tell the story of this change in a poem of a single scene, relying on specific detail and action verbs.

### Discussion Questions that Explore Craft and Argument (book as a whole)

- Most of the poems of *Look Look Look* are prose poems. What is the effect of this form for the collection? Why might the writer have selected this form?
- Though most of the poems (everything except the “Flashes”) are prose poems, they differ in that they rely on different strategies or approaches, with some being more narrative, others more lyrical, and still others more surreal. How do these different approaches seem to function individually and across the collection?
- What do you notice about the “Flashes” poems? What seems to be their function?
- How do the poems seem to be ordered in the collection? What kind of narrative arc might be present because of this arrangement? How are the poems divided into sections? What seems to be the purpose or unifying feature of each section? How do they work together?
- The poems of *Look Look Look* rely on different perspectives and levels of narrative distance, sometimes using “I” while at other times using “she” or “you.” What do you make of these shifts between poems throughout the text? What patterns do you notice?
- Who is the speaker in *Look Look Look*? What does the speaker want? What is at stake for this speaker? What poems, lines, and images are suggestive of these stakes?
- Describe the voice of the speaker in *Look Look Look*. How does this voice contribute to the collection’s themes and arguments?
- In *The Practice of Creative Writing*, Heather Sellers describes tension as “desire plus danger.” What are the tensions present in *Look Look Look*? What does the speaker desire? What are the dangers or obstacles in the speaker’s way? In what poems does this seem most apparent?
- The poems of *Look Look Look* overtly deal with motherhood, often literally and concretely. What does it mean to give poetic attention to this part of the human experience, according to the book? To you?
- What, if any, claims does *Look Look Look* seem to be making about the experience of motherhood? In which poems do such claims seem most overt? Which poems seem to complicate or contradict such claims? What should we make of these contradictions?
- The story of the father is not part of the narrative of *Look Look Look*. Why not? How might the speaker of *Look Look Look* answer this question? Which poems might offer some insight to this question?
- Who are the “characters” in *Look Look Look*? Who or what is the protagonist? Who or what is the antagonist?

### Discussion Questions that Explore Craft and Argument (particular poems):

“After” and “Release” are both birth story poems, with each recording the birth of one of the speaker’s children.

- Describe the speaker in “After.” What are the speaker’s attitudes, voice, and tone?
- Now, describe the speaker in “Release.” What are the speaker’s attitudes, voice, and tone?
- In what ways are the poems (and the version of the speaker in each) similar? How are they different?
- How (and by what) has the speaker changed by the time we get to “Birth Right?” How does the poet indicate such a change? What does this change suggest (about the speaker, about the act of giving birth, about motherhood)?

One of the experiences that *Look Look Look* explores is miscarriage. Poems like “Loss” and “Remnants” address miscarriage directly, while poems like “Road Construction” and “Kind of Trucks” are more oblique. Later, “Taking Care” comes back to some of these (and other) concerns.

- What do you make of these different approaches to writing about miscarriage (why, for example, “Loss” is in first person, while “Remnants” is in third person)?
- Why does the collection seem to include multiple poems about the same event? What is the effect of this choice?

Poems like “Apparition,” “Quick Change,” and “Threshold,” like many others in *Look Look Look*, seem to explore selfhood and identity.

- How do the poems articulate a concern with a sense of self, particularly in terms of its fluidity or absence? Which images seem to emphasize this? How so?
- In “Apparition,” who does the speaker seem to address? How so? In addition to its interest in selfhood, the poem also seems concerned with time. In what ways? What connections does the poem draw between identity and time?
- What is the argument of “Quick Change”? To what extent is the speaker satisfied with “slipping into a fresh one?”

The speaker is conflicted in poems like “To Hide” and “Sadness,” while also dealing with those conflicting feelings alone.

- In “To Hide,” why does the speaker hide in the bathroom? From what is she hiding? How does her behavior in the second stanza relate to her daughter’s behavior in the first stanza?
- In “To Hide,” what does the speaker mean by “I put on the body?” What connections do you see between this moment and other poems in the collection that address the body?
- In “Sadness,” the speaker ends up outside watching her family through a window. Why, according to the poem? What is the speaker’s attitude in poems like this one? What images or word choices indicate this attitude?

### Discussion Questions that Explore Personal Connections

- In the “Flashes” poems, *Look Look Look* considers how memory can become fragmented, as well as influential. In what ways do your memories from childhood impact your behavior and feelings as an adult? Perhaps as a parent? As a child of or caregiver for a parent?
- What kinds of messages does the social order seem to send about motherhood and parenthood? How do you decide which values to internalize and which to resist? How does this work for the speaker of *Look Look Look*?
- To what extent is your story of coming into your family of origin important to you? To what extent does it play a role in how you think about yourself and your identity?
- The speaker of *Look Look Look* sometimes seems to isolate herself, as in poems like “To Hide” and “Sadness.” Why does she seem to do that? When have you felt this way?
- One of the things the speaker of *Look Look Look* acknowledges is a sense of community, as in poems like “Mantra” with the breast-feeding support group. When have you relied on or needed a community to help you with a particularly disorienting experience? Describe your relationship to these particular communities, especially communities that outsiders might not otherwise understand.

### Classroom Activities: Kick-starting Discussion

This discussion strategy is a low-stakes way to get everyone in the room thinking and talking about the text as a group and provides a way for students to relay their initial insights about *Look Look Look*.

To begin a discussion of *Look Look Look* (or excerpt), ask the students to distill their reaction to or understanding of the text into a single word, short phrase, or picture. Then, ask the students to come up to the board and write down their word, phrase, or picture (consider asking them to each try to use different words, being mindful of what their colleagues are writing, to avoid repetition).

After students have returned to their seats, look together at the spread of words and pictures on the board. You might start by acknowledging patterns (for example, something like “many of us seem to be thinking about loss when we are thinking about *Look Look Look*” or “a number of us are interested in the speaker’s voice”). Then, point to a particular word, phrase, or picture and ask for the writer of that word to tell the class about their choice (saying something like, “Who choose the word ‘loneliness?’ Tell us more about that”). As time allows, repeat this process with other words, phrases, and pictures.

## Classroom Activities: Journal Entries and Questions for Writing

To help with a discussion of *Look Look Look*, ask students to write in response to a prompt. Particularly if your class uses journaling or regular writing exercises, this kind of opening activity can help students work out their ideas as they write, better preparing them for discussion. Such prompts might also be effective for homework assignments like reading responses or reflections. Here are some potential journal entry prompts:

- What poem or moment in a poem seems like the heart of *Look Look Look*? Why? How so? Cite specific examples from the poem and from other parts of the book in your response.
- Describe a pattern or repetition of images you noticed throughout *Look Look Look*, like the use of water or the use of the word “woman.” Referencing particular moments in the text, explore the effect of this pattern or repetition. What should we make of it? How does it contribute to the book as a whole?
- Who is the speaker of *Look Look Look*? Describe her: what is she like? What does she value? What does she want? Refer to specific moments in the text in your response.
- To whom is *Look Look Look* addressed? That is, who seems to be the implied audience? What poems seem to offer insight into this? How so?
- Consider the narrative arc of *Look Look Look*. What is the conflict? The crisis? The resolution? Point to particular poems as you describe the parts of the narrative.

Once students have journaled in response to a prompt, there are some different ways to transition into discussion. Some options here:

- Open the floor for discussion: “Tell us what you wrote about—how did you respond to this prompt?”
- Ask students to turn to a neighbor, partner, or small group, and discuss an insight from their journal entry, preparing to share their conversation with the class. Once students have discussed their journal entries in pairs or small groups, ask each group to share an interesting point from their conversations with the whole class. In beginning level sections or in classes less likely to talk, you might also encourage follow-up questions. Have the group that will speak next ask a follow-up question of the group that is sharing.
- Instead of immediately turning from writing about the prompt to discussing the text verbally, continue the discussion in writing. Ask students to pass their journals to a peer (perhaps sending journals three people to the left, for example). Then, have students read their peer’s journal entry and make a follow-up comment, writing in their peer’s journal. To what extent do they agree with their peer? To what extent do they read the text differently? How might they extend their peer’s discussion of the text? Have the students end their response with a follow-up question for their peer. Then, ask students to return the journals to their owners. Students should write a response to the question which has been posed in their journals.

## Classroom Activities: Form Analysis

For this small group activity, students will explore the nature of prose and lineated forms. They'll explore the function of the line and line breaks (of different kinds), as well as the role of the sentence and punctuation in the prose poem. This activity can be scaled up in terms of difficulty for more advanced students, as well as simplified for beginning students.

Students should re-read "To Hide" (or another poem of your choosing) from *Look Look Look* together, and answer questions on the analysis sheet.

- Describe the structure and organization of "To Hide." What seems to govern the poem's arrangement?
- Describe the pace of "To Hide." What tools or strategies does the poem use that contribute to its pacing?
- Describe the tone of "To Hide." What tools or strategies does the poem use that contribute to its current tone?
- Describe the theme or argument of "To Hide." How does the poem go about conveying these ideas? What elements of the poem work together to suggest them?

Then, on a large piece of butcher-block paper or Google doc, students should try to re-write the poem using line breaks (see the activity sheet for full instructions for students). Once students have re-written the poem, they should answer the questions on the re-write analysis sheet.

- Describe the poem's new structure. How is the poem now organized? What is the effect of this organization?
- Describe the poem's pacing. How do the current line breaks influence the poem's pace?
- Describe the poem's tone. How do the current line breaks influence the poem's tone?
- Describe the theme or argument of the new version of "To Hide." To what extent does the poem's new form impact this argument? What is emphasized or deemphasized in this version?

Sample de-briefing questions for class discussion:

- What is something surprising that happens when we alter the poem's form?
- How are form and content (theme, argument) related?
- How do different forms focus our attention differently on different ideas?

Variation: Ask students to do multiple rewrites, each deploying specific forms (what happens when the poem becomes a rhyming Shakespearean sonnet? A villanelle? A haiku?).

[student assignment sheet follows]

Course Code XXX: Course Title XXX

### ***Look Look Look* and Prose Poem Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Context:** As working writers, we know that one of the tools we have to convey meaning is form, the particular arrangement we choose for our work. Most of the poems of *Look Look Look* are prose poems, poems that use many of the tools of the poetry but do not use line breaks. During this activity, we will endeavor to find out more about why and to what end. As we work, we'll be thinking about these questions:

- What is the function of a line break or last of line break?
- What is the function of sentences and punctuation in poems without line breaks?
- In what ways can a poem's form contribute to its pacing, tone, and meaning?
- What can we learn from this particular poem and its approach to form? How might we apply or modify these strategies in our own writing?

**Instructions:** This activity has two parts. In part one, you will closely read "To Hide" with specific attention to form. As you and your group members discuss the poem, answer the questions in Part One, citing specific examples from the text to support your responses. Next, rewrite the poem, this time making it a lineated piece. Be thoughtful about these line breaks—what line breaks will contribute to the poem in meaningful ways? Where does the poem call for end-stops? What about enjambment? Finally, discuss and answer the questions in Part Three, which ask you and your group members to consider how these changes in form impact the poem. Be sure to cite specific examples from the text to demonstrate your analysis.

#### **Part One: Close Reading**

1. Describe the structure and organization of "To Hide." What seems to govern the poem's arrangement?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Describe the pace of "To Hide." What tools or strategies does the poem use that contribute to its pacing?

3. Describe the tone of “To Hide.” What tools or strategies does the poem use that contribute to its current tone?
4. Describe the theme or argument of “To Hide.” How does the poem go about conveying these ideas? What elements of the poem work together to suggest them?

### **Part Two: Poem Rewrite (put revised poem in class Google doc)**

### **Part Three: Analysis of New Poem**

1. Describe the poem’s new structure. How is the poem now organized? What is the effect of this organization?
2. Describe the poem’s pacing. How do the current line breaks influence the poem’s pace?
3. Describe the poem’s tone. How do the current line breaks influence the poem’s tone?
4. Describe the theme or argument of the new version of “To Hide.” To what extent does the poem’s new form impact this argument? What is emphasized or deemphasized in this version?

## Classroom Activities: Lexicon Analysis

In this activity, students will explore how language and patterns of words contribute to *Look Look Look*.

Individually, in partners, or in small groups, ask students to brainstorm the lexicons, or word families, found in *Look Look Look*. You can brainstorm lexicons as a large group before splitting into small groups to find examples, or small groups can brainstorm lexicons and then look for examples. For instance, students might look for the use of water and water-related terms. Likewise, students might look for language related to exploration or discovery. The language of clothing and dressing might be another, or the words related to architecture. All groups can brainstorm the lexicon usage throughout the complete book, or each group might be responsible for breaking down the lexicons of one section.

As students make their lists of lexicons, invite students to write down examples (and page numbers) of the examples they find.

Once students have thoroughly explored the lexicons in the text, ask students to make notes on the board or on a class Google doc, documenting their findings (this is particularly helpful if different groups have been studying different parts of the text).

Then, ask students to discuss or write down answers to questions that will help them investigate the significance of these findings.

- What patterns do you see in the text when it comes to lexicons?
- What lexicons seem to be emphasized in particular sections? What is the effect of this emphasis?
- How does *Look Look Look* seem to repeat images or ideas? How does this repetition of particular lexicons influence your reading of the text?
- How does the use of particular lexicons seem to change over the course of *Look Look Look*? What seems to motivate this change?

Finally, consider concluding this activity with a writing prompt related to lexicons. After students write on this prompt, ask volunteers to share their work. Then, ask students about the process of writing with lexicons in mind: how do the lexicons seem to work in the poem? What is the effect of choosing related language? Of working with multiple lexicons in one piece?

- Choose three of the lexicons deployed in *Look Look Look*. Write a list of five words or phrases that belong in each lexicon, making sure that at least two of the words for each lexicon are verbs. Draft a poem that uses the language of these lexicons (with at least three words from each).

[student assignment sheet follows]

***Look Look Look and Lexicons***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Context:** Writers often use groups of related words. By analyzing these groups of words in a text, we can better understand that piece or body of work and are better equipped to recognize and understand meaningful patterns. These groups of related words are called “lexicons.” A lexicon is a language used by a particular group or in a particular field, like rock climbing terms or the language of plumbing. We’ll work on recognizing and analyzing the lexicons deployed in *Look Look Look*, helping us better understand how the text works, and how we might think about how lexicons function in our own writing.

**Instructions:** With your partner, investigate your particular section of *Look Look Look*. Brainstorm at least five different lexicons that you notice, making lists of moments in the text from your particular section that connect to those lexicons. Post your lists to the class Google .doc. Then, discuss and answer the questions here.

1. What patterns do you see in your section of the text when it comes to lexicons?
2. What lexicons seem to be emphasized in your particular sections? What is the effect of this emphasis?
3. How does *Look Look Look* seem to repeat images or ideas? How does this repetition of particular lexicons influence your reading of your section of the text?
4. Now, think about the text as a whole. How do the lexicons you notice in your section relate to the book as a whole?
5. How does the use of particular lexicons seem to change over the course of *Look Look Look*? What seems to motivate this change?

## Classroom Activities: The Imagined Interview

For this out-of-class project or in-class activity, students will work in partners.

The purpose of this activity is for students to explore why a writer might make particular choices or who the speaker of *Look Look Look* is, based on the evidence already available in the text. Students might each take on a particular role (that of the interviewer or the interviewee), or students might work together to both ask and answer the questions. In any event, students will need to ask questions (as the interviewer) and answer them (as either the author of *Look Look Look* or the speaker of *Look Look Look*).

Ask students to write ten interview questions, gearing those questions toward either the author or speaker of *Look Look Look* (this is a good time to remind students that these are not the same thing). If students are asking questions of the author, these might be craft questions (ie, “Why did you choose the prose poem form for most of the poems of *Look Look Look*?” or “What was your approach to developing the speaker’s persona?”). Likewise, if the students are asking questions of the speaker, they might ask character and value questions (ie, “What is your relationship with the husband?” or “What do you feel like changed after your children were born?”).

Once students have their questions, they’ll need to answer them, imagining how the author or speaker might respond to the questions based on the evidence available in *Look Look Look*. Students should write paragraph or multi-paragraph responses to the questions, drawing on textual evidence and citing specific moments from the text to support their response.

Variation on the assignment: ask students to perform these interviews live in front of the class or record them (in the style of a podcast) and submit audio files, rather than submitting the interview in written form.

[student assignment sheet follows]

**The Imagined Interview: *Look Look Look***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Context:** For this activity, you explore the character of the speaker of *Look Look Look* by imagining an interview with her. You'll think carefully about how the text goes about creating this character, using the information provided in the text to imagine how she might answer particular questions.

**Instructions:** Working with your partner, you will write ten interview questions that will help you get to know the speaker of *Look Look Look*. For example, you might ask her about her relationship with her husband or what she learned from the birth of the son. Then, using what you know about the speaker, answer these interview questions in the speaker's voice, drawing on specific moments from the text to support your responses. How would the speaker answer each question? How do you know? Point to moments in the text in your answers that provide insight into the speaker's character and help you know how she might respond to each question.

Question 1:

Answer 1:

Question 2:

Answer 2:

Question 3:

Answer 3:

Question 4:

Answer 4:

Question 5:

Answer 5:

Question 6:

Answer 6:

Question 7:

Answer 7:

Question 8:

Answer 8:

Question 9:

Answer 9:

Question 10:

Answer 10:

## More Projects and Writing Assignments

### **Playlist as Analysis:**

For this assignment, students will consider the narrative arc of *Look Look Look*. Students will create a playlist of ten songs, two for each section of *Look Look Look*. Each song should speak to the ideas and tone of the section, not necessarily repeating the concepts described in *Look Look Look*, but complementing the section in terms of its vibe and project. Students should purposefully arrange the playlist in a particular order, matching the narrative and emotional arc of *Look Look Look*. Once students have created their playlists, they will write a reflection that explains the rationale behind their playlist, explaining, through detailed analysis, how the playlist relates to the narrative arc of *Look Look Look*. Variation on Playlist as Analysis Project: Rather than asking students to write a formal essay, invite students to give an in-class presentation where they play clips of song while explaining how these songs in this order complement the original text.

### **Vision Board as Analysis:**

For this project, students will create a vision board that explores the project of *Look Look Look*. Using a variety of materials, from fabric, craft supplies, and 3-D objects to other pieces of writing and poems by other authors, students will create a visual representation of the ideas at work in *Look Look Look*. To accompany this vision board, students will write an essay explicating the materials and their arrangement on the vision board, explaining how the objects relate to the project and concepts of *Look Look Look*. Variation on Vision Board as Analysis Project: Rather than asking students to write a formal essay, invite students to give in-class presentations explicating their boards.

### **Imitative Analysis:**

In this writing assignment, students will craft an imitative poem, drawing on the strategies and techniques deployed in *Look Look Look*. In an accompanying essay, the student will analyze both the original and imitative poem, explaining how these specific approaches create particular effects in both poems.

### **Extension Project:**

Students will be charged with crafting another section of or companion piece to *Look Look Look*, thinking about what narrative threads might be ripe for further investigation, as well as how the collection suggests such threads might be followed. For example, students might write a section in the voice of the husband or in the voice of the speaker's own mother, or write a section of flashbacks or flashforwards (what is the speaker like in ten years? Or as a grandparent? Or how might the speaker think about her own childhood more deeply?). Perhaps the student will investigate a thread introduced in the current text, like a more thorough investigation of miscarriage or balancing having more than one child, or students will write a set of poems about their own set of transformations. In addition to crafting the poems of this new section, students should also include explanatory footnotes that explain the writing choices the student makes, citing and analyzing evidence from the text of *Look Look Look* to support those choices.

[student assignment sheets follow]

### **Analysis of *Look Look Look* through a Playlist**

**Context:** Many writers talk about the “meta poem” that is a poetry collection, how the poems of a book add up to make a larger poem. For this activity, we’ll explore how *Look Look Look* works a whole—what connects these pieces? Why are they arranged this particular order? What is the effect of their arrangement?

**The Assignment:** As you explore how the poems of *Look Look Look* work together, you’ll create a companion playlist of songs that matches the collection’s emotional and narrative arcs. Your job is to choose ten songs, two for each of the sections of *Look Look Look*, selecting songs that resonate in some way with those moments in the text. Importantly, these songs don’t need to overtly address the most obvious themes in the collection (ie, not every song needs or even should reference motherhood or parenthood). Rather, choose songs based on how they might complement the project of the books, perhaps through lyrics, but also through instrumentation, mixing, tone, pace, etc. Submit your playlist as a link to a Spotify playlist

You will also write an essay of at least 1200 words explaining the choices you made in creating and ordering your playlist. Your essay should contain all the features of a formal composition, including a clear introduction, specific and focused thesis statement, unified and cohesive paragraphs, and a conclusion. Your discussion of the playlist and its relationship to the narrative arc of *Look Look Look* should rely on specific examples from the text and analysis of those examples.

#### **Grading criteria:**

Your playlist and analysis will be evaluated for the extent to which

- The playlist is complete
- The playlist is thoughtfully arranged
- The essay is fully developed, meeting all requirements of the assignment
- The playlist and essay demonstrate meaningful insight that goes beyond repetition of themes or action
- The essay makes a compelling case, supporting claims with detailed textual analysis, for the playlist choices
- The essay is effectively organized and structured
- Uses MLA formatting appropriately and is free from error

**Analysis Playlist Prewriting**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** For five of the songs that you've gathered for your playlist, explain how the song seems to complement the narrative of *Look Look Look*, showing how it relates to the poems. Remember, the songs on the playlist should complement (rather than repeat) the text, so consider selecting songs that go beyond repeating the themes of the text. This prewriting will help you start to draft your essay, in which you'll explain how your playlist matches the narrative and emotional arcs of *Look Look Look*.

**Song title:**

Summary of song (describe its genre, theme, and project. What details are helpful to know about this song?):

Relationship of song to text (what connections do you see between this song and *Look Look Look*? How does this song relate to the text? What moments in the text might you analyze to demonstrate this connection?):

**Song title:**

Summary of song (describe its genre, theme, and project. What details are helpful to know about this song?):

Relationship of song to text (what connections do you see between this song and *Look Look Look*? How does this song relate to the text? What moments in the text might you analyze to demonstrate this connection?):

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Relationship of song to text (what connections do you see between this song and *Look Look Look*? How does this song relate to the text? What moments in the text might you analyze to demonstrate this connection?):

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**Song title:**

Summary of song (describe its genre, theme, and project. What details are helpful to know about this song?):

Relationship of song to text (what connections do you see between this song and *Look Look Look*? How does this song relate to the text? What moments in the text might you analyze to demonstrate this connection?):

### **Vision Board as Analysis of *Look Look Look***

**Context:** How might we continue to investigate and conceptualize *Look Look Look* and its project? For this activity, as we continue to study *Look Look Look*, we'll use the tools of visual art and collage to better understand the text.

**The Assignment:** For this project, you will create a well-developed and interesting vision board for *Look Look Look*, using a mix of conventional and unconventional materials. You'll use this gathering of materials to make new and interesting observations about the collection and how it works. Your vision board should be at least 24" by 24" (but may be larger), and should make use of at least three different types of materials (texts, letters, words, fabrics, feathers, stones, toys, wrapping paper, photos, visual art, etc.), with at least one 3-D element. It should be visually arresting and interesting, some kind of pattern or arrangement (for example, you might use color, numbers, string, and other strategies to instruct the reader on how to view your board). In the end, your vision board should be a display that speaks to the kinds of questions with which *Look Look Look* is concerned and helps you think more about them.

You will also write an essay of at least 1200 words explaining the choices you made in creating your vision board for *Look Look Look*. Your essay should contain all the features of a formal composition, including a clear introduction, specific and focused thesis statement, unified and cohesive paragraphs, and a conclusion. Your discussion of the vision board and its relationship to the narrative arc of *Look Look Look* should rely on specific examples from the text and analysis of those examples.

#### **Grading criteria:**

Your vision board and essay will be evaluated for the extent to which

- The vision board explores your ideas about *Look Look Look* in a coherent visual form
- The vision board makes use of a range of interesting materials that meet minimum requirements
- The vision board is recognizably organized
- The essay is fully developed, meeting all requirements of the assignment
- The essay demonstrates meaningful insight driven by the vision board
- The essay makes a compelling case, supporting claims with detailed textual analysis
- The essay is effectively organized and structured
- Uses MLA formatting appropriately and is free from error

### **Imitative Analysis of *Look Look Look***

**Context:** One way to learn more about an artist's approach is to imitate that artist, trying out the techniques favored by that artist to better understand how they might be used and to what end. For this assignment, we will learn more about how the poems of *Look Look Look* work by imitating them in our own work.

**The Assignment:** You will write an imitative poem modeled on the strategies deployed in *Look Look Look*, and craft a reflection essay of at least 1,000 words that explains the strategies deployed in your piece, their relationship to the original poem, and how the nuances of the original work influenced your writing. Your poem should be well developed and polished, including the strategies appropriate to the original, including attention to image, concrete detail, line, rhythm, sound, perspective, and theme. Your essay should contain all the features of a formal composition, including a clear introduction, specific and focused thesis statement, unified and cohesive paragraphs, and a conclusion. Your discussion of your poem and the original should rely on specific examples from the texts and analysis of those examples.

Your essay might answer the questions like these: What are the formal moves and craft strategies of the original poem? How do these moves and strategies impact what the poem means? How do these approaches work in my poem? To what effect? How do the original poem and my poem compare?

**Important Note:** As we will talk about in-depth in class, this imitative poem is part of your learning journey as a writer and reader. It is not an appropriate or ethical choice for you to submit for publication.

#### **Grading criteria:**

Your Imitative Analysis will be grade for the extent to which it

- Is fully developed, meeting all requirements of the assignment
- Provides meaningful insight into the new and original poems, going beyond surface-level observations
- Makes a compelling case for how each poem makes its argument
- Closely reads the text(s), analyzing specific examples in-depth
- Supports claims with reasons and evidence
- Is effectively organized and structured
- Uses MLA formatting appropriately and is free from error

### **Extension Project for *Look Look Look***

**Context:** Much like the writers of fanfiction, you will delve deeper into the world of *Look Look Look* by extending it and writing new content. You will demonstrate your in-depth understanding of the text by writing more of it. This will help you think carefully about the book works, as well as what strategies you might find useful and meaningful in your own work.

#### **The Assignment:**

As the culmination of your study of *Look Look Look*, you will write a creative extension of the original text. Your piece, which might be an additional section or prologue (see Buchen’s essay “Belly Sea” at *DIAGRAM* for an example: [http://thediagram.com/13\\_2/buchen.html](http://thediagram.com/13_2/buchen.html)) or epilogue that takes the original work as its subject matter or inspiration. This might mean exploring a new voice not currently included in the collection (like the husband or one of the children), for example, or perhaps investigating what happens after the collection’s current end. Likewise, you might write a section of flashbacks or flashforwards (what is the speaker like in ten years? Or as a grandparent? Or how might the speaker think about her own childhood more deeply?).

For at least six poems or vignettes, you’ll write frequent, detailed footnotes that account for the research and rationale you use to make choices as a writer. In this way, you will analyze and explore the text by extending it, and then support your creative work with footnotes. Your footnotes should position your writing choices as part of a larger conversation with the text.

#### **Grading Criteria:**

Your piece will be evaluated for the extent to which it

- Effectively utilizes the techniques and craft strategies of the original text
- Maintains reasonable characterizations and character affects based the original text
- Demonstrates strategic use of poetic conventions, including conflict, tension, character, image, form, setting, dialogue
- Supports choices with extensive and detailed footnotes that provide evidence and reasons
- Demonstrates thoughtful analysis and understanding of the original text in the creative portion, as well as in the footnotes, which should refer to specific examples in the original text
- Relies on appropriate research and its effective incorporation in the argument
- Accurately uses MLA formatting and citations, and is free from error