

## Crafting at the End of the World

The story of me gluing macaroni to paper as a child and calling it art is just that: a story my mother tells to laugh. How she let me waste the whole box, the good pasta, the kind meant for guests. How she watched my fingers assemble nonsense and let it dry on the windowsill anyway. I trace it back, this compulsion to make, to fix the world by rearranging its debris. I return to the glue, thick as spit, a pale semen in the light, and the strange throb of wanting it to become something. There are machines that draw better than I do, that write with a speed my body can't mimic. But they don't know the fever of finding a word, the shape of trying to paint your mother's absence, the prayer in your fingertips while tracing the same line again and again, hoping one time it will feel like truth. What is art in a world that no longer asks for the artist? Who can find the human among its infinite replicas? I am the eyelash stuck under varnish in an oil painting that no one noticed until the gallery lights hit. I am the paper cut on the lip of a word that came out too sharp. I am the comma that split a marriage, the silence between stanzas where no one came home. Eraser dust, backspace, snapped pencil tip, blinking cursor, blank page. I am the glitch in the algorithm's eye. I am the mistake someone falls in love with. I am pressing dry noodles into paper and calling it a gift. I am the mother watching from the doorframe, letting it matter.