

“Ars Poetica” is from a manuscript-in-progress. It imagines the life and world of my mother’s mother, a dress designer and seamstress in Paris in the late eighteen and early nineteen hundreds, and then in Boston where she and my grandfather (a tailor) set up business together. Those facts are basically all I know about her. So I started by researching the history of the fashion industry and the art of that time, particularly paintings of women in fashionable dress. I pictured my grandmother looking at, or at least reading about, those same pieces of art. I pictured her copying those designs or creating new ones for her customers. Of course, in writing about my grandmother, I was also writing about my mother, my mother who died suddenly just after I got out of high school. My mother graduated from what became Mass College of Art and was a painter of portraits and still lifes as well as a designer for Bernat Yarns. When I was growing up, she sewed most of my clothes as well as her own. “Ars Poetica” is a way of connecting my work to theirs. I thank *Notre Dame Review* for publishing it.