

*Language is the Other Sun*

By S. Portico Bowman

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Lori Martin: Editor

*Would You Give Up Arms For Wings?* has become my narrative study of the human psyche's essential longing for freedom and the potential for natural fulfillment through a study of Paulus and his penchant for enchanted mystical experience. It's also become the opportunity for me to be my natural self and do my part to uphold the creative future of our Earth. I was not born ten years too late. And although *Would You Give Up Arms For Wings?* is first and foremost the non-fiction story about the man, writing a book about a person dedicated to creative discovery is also my pure permission to make up a lot of stuff. I didn't want to write a traditional biography.

The magical realism I've constructed around Paulus and the telling of his true "visionary" story is also rooted in my intention to validate my claim that the parallels of Berensohn's bodily malaise and cancer diagnosis — responsible as they are for the non-fiction elements of the book — are reflected in the eco-catastrophe of our time. Achievement and expansion are marketable, remunerative, stressful, and too often toxic. Paulus offers an alternative where awe and wonder are life sustaining. The marshalled tedium of the peer-review watchtower is rejected and ignored. For twenty years every pot he made was buried back in the earth after the pleasure of its creation. Paulus and his life tells a story of regenerative health through a creative practice that is slow and easy.

Bargello tapestries are not going to reverse climate change, but remembering the human capacity to relax and celebrate the intangible but real somatic rewards of the handmade might. And while Paulus healed himself through a full immersion in the craft art of Bargello tapestry,

emerging as he did, dedicated to deep ecology, and seeking a solution to the healing of Mother Earth, he had also healed from unintended, but well-placed psychic wounds of his own biological mother.

However, hurting people hurt things. And yet psychic healing on a global scale is the condition for freedom. Symbolic language through creative writing is a medium for such a restoration to take place.

The life-changing book project has filled stacks of notebooks and five years. I have dug deep to unearth the structure that would hold the non-fiction story and true re-telling of Berensohn's *Silver Sword* handwritten memoir buried in 8.6 linear feet of papers at the Archives of American Art.

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The complete essay is available through The Midwest Quarterly database, by subscription or on my website in the Fall of 2025.