



Melancholy I - II

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Awards

The book was awarded the Melsom Prize and the Sunnmøre Prize.[1] It was followed by a 1996 sequel, *Melancholy II*, which is set on the day of Hertervig's death. The first part of *Melancholy I* was the basis for Georg Friedrich Haas' 2008 opera *Melancholia*.[2]

Melancholy I - II

Nineteenth-century Norwegian artist Lars Hertervig painted luminous landscapes, suffered mental illness and died poor in 1902. In this wild stream-of-consciousness narrative, Fosse delves into Hertervig's mind as the events of one day precipitate his mental breakdown. A student of Hans Gude at the Academy of Art in Düsseldorf, Germany, Hertervig is paralyzed by anxieties about his talent and is overcome with love for Helene Winckelmann, his landlady's 15-year-old daughter. Marked by inspiring lyrical flights of passion ("I walked into her light") and enraged sexual delusions, Hertervig's fixation on Helene persuades her family that he must leave. Oppressed by hallucinations and with nowhere to go, Hertervig shuttles between a cafe, where he endures the mockery of his more sophisticated classmates, and the Winckelmann's apartment, which he desperately tries to re-enter. The novel's second section finds Hertervig lost in madness and planning an escape from Gaustad Asylum in Norway; a brief and less satisfying coda reveals the life-transforming consequences of Hertervig's art for a late-20th-century writer named Vidme.

Melancholy II is set in 1902, on the day of the Norwegian artist Lars Hertervig's death, and is told from the perspective of Hertervig's fictitious sister Oline. The book is the sequel to Fosse's 1995 novel *Melancholy*, which is about Hertervig's time as a student.

Jon Fosse

Jon Fosse is widely considered one of the world's most important living writers. Born in 1959 in Strandebarne, a small village in the western part of Norway, he lives today in the Grotten, an honorary residence, as well as in Hainburg, Austria, and Frekhaug, Norway.

Fosse has received numerous prizes, both in Norway and internationally, and he is mentioned increasingly often as a likely contender for the Nobel Prize. He has currently finishing a major seven-volume work of what he calls "slow prose". *Septology* consists of three volumes: *The Other Name: Septology I - II* was published in 2019 to international praise and longlisted for the *Booker International Prize*. *I Is Another: Septology III - V* was published autumn 2020 and *A New Name: Septology VI - VII* in September 2021.



Jon Fosse

Photo: Tom A. Kolstad