

Melancholy I - II

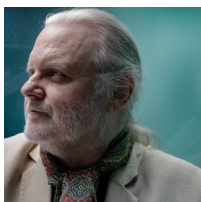
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Awards

Melsom Prize
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Jon Fosse

THE
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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 Winckelmanns' 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 Hertervig's death, and is told from the perspective of Hertervig's fictitious sister Oline. The book is the sequel *Melancholy I*.

Jon Fosse

Nobel Prize-winner Jon Fosse (b. 1959), is widely considered one of the most important writers of our time. For almost forty years, he has written novels, plays, poems, stories, essays, and children's books. His award-winning work has been translated into more than fifty languages and his plays have been staged over a thousand times all over the world.

Jon Fosse grew up in Strandebarm, a small village in the western part of Norway, he now in the Grotten, an honorary residence in Oslo, as well as in Hainburg, Austria, and Frekhaug, Norway.

Fosse was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2023 and has received numerous prizes, both in Norway and internationally through the years.

Photo: Agnete Brun