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#### AWARDS

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

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Jon Fosse

## *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 café, 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 the 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.

*Melancholia 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 *Melancholia*, which is about Hertervig's time as a student.

## Jon Fosse

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Jon Fosse is widely considered one of the world's most important living writers, with an ability to touch readers across time and place. Born in 1959 in Strandebarm, a small village in the western part of Norway, he lives today in the Grotten, an honorary residence in Oslo bestowed for life by the King of Norway, as well as in Hainburg, Austria, and Frekhaug, Norway. Fosse is an unusually prolific writer. He debuted in 1983, and has since published novels, volumes of poetry, essay collections, and children's books. His work has now been translated into more than 40 languages and his plays performed more than a thousand times around the world. In whatever genre he is writing in, Fosse's language is poetic and existential, rhythmic and lyrical.



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