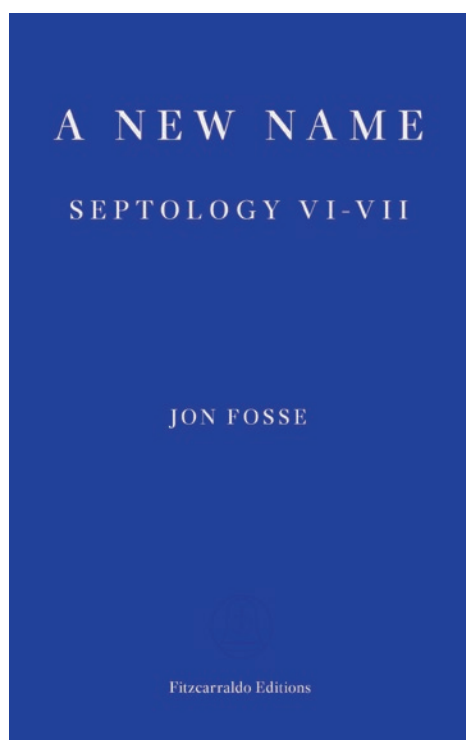




Reading Guide



A New Name Septology VI-VII

Jon Fosse

Translated by Damion Searls

Fitzcarraldo Editions

thebookerprizes.com

What the judges said

'A *New Name*, the final movement in Jon Fosse's monumental *Septology*, draws together art, death, and the idea of God with a vast, gentle grace. Damion Searls' translation unfurls Fosse's slow sentence with immense precision and beauty.'

About the book

Asle is an ageing painter and widower who lives alone on the southwest coast of Norway. His only friends are his neighbour, Åsleik, a traditional fisherman-farmer, and Beyer, a gallerist who lives in the city. There, in Bjørgvin, lives another Asle, also a painter but lonely and consumed by alcohol. Asle and Asle are doppelgängers – two versions of the same person, two versions of the same life, both grappling with existential questions.

This is the final instalment of Jon Fosse's *Septology*, the major prose work by 'the Beckett of the twenty-first century' (*Le Monde*). Written in melodious and hypnotic 'slow prose', *A New Name: Septology VI-VII* is a transcendent exploration of the human condition by Jon Fosse, and a radically other reading experience – incantatory, hypnotic, and utterly unique.

About the author

Jon Fosse was born in 1959 on the west coast of Norway and has written over thirty books and twenty-eight plays that have been translated into over forty languages. His first novel, *Red, Black*, was published in 1983, and was followed by such works as *Melancholia I & II*, *Aliss at the Fire*, and *Morning and Evening*. He is one of the world's most produced living playwrights. In 2007, Fosse became a chevalier of the Ordre national du Mérite of France, and he was awarded the International Ibsen Award in 2010. In 2011, he moved into Grotten, an honorary residence for artists on the grounds of the Royal Palace in Oslo. He was awarded the European Prize for Literature in 2014 and the Nordic Council Literature Prize in 2015. *The Other Name: Septology I-II* was longlisted for the International Booker Prize in 2020. Fosse currently has homes in Bergen, Oslo, and in Hainburg, Austria.

About the translator

Damion Searls was born in New York City in 1971 and lives in Minneapolis. He is a translator from German, French, Norwegian, and Dutch and a writer in English. He was longlisted for the 2020 International Booker Prize with Jon Fosse, for *The Other Name: Septology I-II*; he has received Guggenheim, Cullman Center, and two NEA fellowships, and the Schlegel-Tieck Translation Prize for Hans Keilson's

Comedy in a Minor Key, the PEN Center USA Translation Award for Jon Fosse's *Aliss at the Fire*, and the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize for Uwe Johnson's four-volume *Anniversaries*, among other awards. He has also edited a one-volume abridgement of Henry David Thoreau's *Journal*. His own books include *What We Were Doing and Where We Were Going* (stories), *The Inkblots* (a history of the Rorschach Test and biography of its creator, Hermann Rorschach, which has been translated into ten languages), and *The Philosophy of Translation*.



The author says...

'I started writing *Septology* living in Paul Claudel's castle in the south of France, during a couple of very hot summer weeks. The rest of it I wrote in a small Austrian town on the outskirts of Vienna. I started writing around four or five in the evening and

wrote until nine in the morning.'



The translator says...

'Fosse's *Septology* has one of the great dogs in literature: more than one reader has told me that little Bragi is their favourite character in the books. In Norwegian, the dog's name is Brage (pronounced BROG-eh), and that is how I kept it through all the drafts of the first book. Then Fosse reminded me that Brage is the Norse god of poetry—I hadn't recognised it because the spelling I had always seen in books of Norse myths was "Bragi," the Old Norse and Icelandic spelling. This made the name even better, like if you named your silly little shih-tzu "Apollo" or "Orpheus".'

Further reading

Jon Fosse *The Other Name (Septology I-II)*

Tarjei Vesaas *The Birds*

Dag Solstad *Armand V.*

Anonymous *Njal's Saga*

Knut Hamsun *Hunger*

Knut Hamsun *On Overgrown Paths*

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