



Nervous System: Or, Losing My Mind in Literature

Jan Lars Jensen

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Within the literature of madness, there has never been a memoir as wrenching and mordantly humorous as Jan Lars Jensen's *Nervous System*. A quiet librarian who struck publishing gold with his first novel, Jensen felt as if something had come unhinged in his mind. The rush of ideas and language felt like losing, willy-nilly, a chunk of his mental stability. But true madness didn't come until the countdown to his book's release into the world. A few months after selling his novel to a major American publisher, Jensen woke in a psych ward bed, only to find the ideas that had inspired him now roamed through waking nightmares that deranged him. Just as literature prompted Jensen's slide into paranoid obsession, so did it help him rebuild and recover. Whether he was groping to comprehend James Herriot's veterinarian stories through a haze of antipsychotic medication, deciphering his psychiatrist's references to Patrick O'Brian novels, or attempting to steer his recalcitrant mind toward sleep with a history of logging, books and writing defined Jensen's world. This memoir recounts Larsen's extraordinary experience. Terrifying yet tender, darkly humorous and deeply moving, *Nervous System* is a tale of literary madness like no other.

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