



Dad Was Alive, and Then He Was Dead: On Tractor Mechanics, Accordion Music, Moonshine, and Unpainted Pine

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Bjørn Hatterud

Photo: Agnete Bruun

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“You’re gonna write about me. And you’re gonna write about all the bad shit, too!”

Agricultural mechanic Tor Hatterud comes from generations of practical men: farmers, forestry workers, and tenant farmers in rural Norway. He was always tinkering with something, his hands covered in cuts and scars. He could ski for miles, spoke an old-fashioned dialect, and demonstrated his love by washing the car. His son Bjørn couldn’t be more different. He is a gay, disabled academic who works in the cultural sector in the capital.

Who was Bjørn’s father? And what happened when he died? Tor first started by losing control of his left foot. For the first time, father walked as slowly as son – who walks with a limp – and a different kind of conversation began between them.

One of the last things Tor did was take on a major building project. He enclosed the veranda in glass, creating a bright, airy room filled with sunlight and joy.

This is the story of a father who was a perfectly ordinary man – and a story about life and death.

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Bjørn Hatterud

Bjørn Hatterud is an Oslo-based writer, musician, and art curator who grew up gay and disabled in a working-class family in a rural Norwegian community. He has experienced national success with his first two critically acclaimed books, *Against Normality* (2018) and *Me, Mum and Mjøsa* (2020). In his books, Hatterud writes about his life’s extraordinary trajectory, and about how growing up as an outsider led him to forge a pathway into art, literature and non-mainstream culture – the spaces where he discovered identity and freedom. His third book, *Bjerke Tower Block*, confirmed his position as one of Norway’s leading narrative non-fiction writers. He has been awarded Fritt

Ords Pris (Free Speech Award) and Kritikerprisen (The National Book Critics' Award) for his writing. His newest novel, *Dad Was Alive, and Then He Was Dead*, comes out in September 2026.