Lo que dicen los síntomas
Author:
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Lo que dicen los síntomas (What the Symptoms Say)

Dicen los síntomas is a first-person narrative from a woman who sits in a hospital room with her father, lying in a coma, as she waits for him to die. Much of the book takes place within the four walls of the hospital room, with her mother and sister visiting, and through memories and the narrator's reflections on the past and present. The story is the development of a dialogue between the narrator and the reader, as she reveals the relationship she has with her family, her history and her life, and gradually the reader pieces together an interpretation of the character herself and of her story. The text flows between the narrator's thoughts, literary and scientific references, and insights into her past, to deal with profound themes including illness, life and death, family, motherhood and loneliness, and what does or might make happiness. But from the narrator's bitter reflections come sympathy and understanding, and then hope as she meets a new man on the ward and discovers an unexpected connection with him.

The narrative reads as a sort of stream of consciousness, and is both engaging as it makes the reader feel complicit, and challenging for its unreliability. Blasco writes with intelligence and a dry humour, approaching her themes with a great deal of irony and frankness that has been described as acidic by more than one reviewer.

The universal themes of the book also suggest that this would be as accessible to an English-speaking readership as to a Spanish-speaking one, and would be successful in a foreign market. It deals with very contemporary issues, and would fit the demand for contemplative, self-explorative but not self-indulgent literature that is popular in today's climate, and which promotes a non-judgmental, open-minded approach to personal relationships.

… As an extra point to note, its publication in Spain has generated a more-than-usual amount of (mostly positive) discussion from readers.

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