

ALMUDENA SÁNCHEZ

PHARMAKON

Translated from Spanish by Katie Whittemore

A delicate, beautifully written testimony to depression from one of Spain's most exciting new voices.

Pulling no punches in its 150 pages, *Pharmakon* is the story of an explosion, of the moment depression blew up the life the author thought she knew and settled in her body. But *Pharmakon* isn't a sad book; it is testimony, written with humour and intimacy by one of Spain's most singular voices, one that deftly combines wit, eccentricity, and warmth. Far from shrinking from taboos, Sánchez grabs hold of her depression and dredges it for the whys and hows, excavating her memory, behaviour, and craters of the mind: here there is infancy and the family home, youth at school in Mallorca and in the fields of Castile; psychiatrists who save and pills that bring her back to life; there are dreams, nightmares, and desires. And books, lots of books—some that serve to escape and others to understand what was happening in her head—because for Sánchez, literature is comfort, quest, and salvation. *Pharmakon* is an insight, from one of Spain's most singular voices, into the experience of depression and recovery.

'Her prose shines with images of surprising originality, novel comparisons and poetic glimmers [...] an exciting and compelling literary chronicle of pain and unease which, happily, does not become a simplified, sorry tale of suffering.' —SANTOS SANZ VILLANUEVA.

'The reader is left with the feeling of having had access to some of the most intimate and vulnerable thoughts of a person, shared through reflections full of humility and empathy.' —PALOMA ABAD, *VOGUE*.

ALMUDENA SÁNCHEZ (Mallorca, 1985) is a writer and journalist, with a Master's in Creative Writing. With her first book shortlisted for the Setenil Prize, in 2019 she was selected as one of the best thirtysomething authors working in Spain. *Fármaco* is her latest novel.

KATIE WHITTEMORE is a translator from Spanish, her full-length translations include works by Sara Mesa, Aroa Moreno Durán, Nuria Labari and Javier Serena.

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Essay

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