

Independent.co.uk

MACLEHOSE, £7.99, 151PP £7.59 FROM THE INDEPENDENT BOOKSHOP: 08430 600 030

The Sickness, By Alberto Barrera Tyszka

Reviewed by Boyd Tonkin

Friday, 2 September 2011

Shortlisted for the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize, this lapidary novel comes from a Venezuelan writer-journalist who has also co-authored a sceptical life of Hugo Chávez.

Conscientious Dr Miranda has to tell his own father the fateful results of medical tests. Meanwhile, a seemingly disturbed hypochondriac bombards his office with email pleas and threats. How do well the countries of the sick and the well get on, and what happens when we pass from one to another?

As father and son go on holiday, the doctor's secretary has stories of her own to tell – as medicine, memory and fantasy join in a combustible mixture. In this coolly assured translation by Margaret Jull Costa, Tyszka's fable achieves an almost Coetzee-like level of resonant exactitude.

©independent.co.uk [Terms & Policies](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Email newsletter](#) | [RSS](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Syndication](#) | [Advertising Guide](#) | [Subscriptions](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Evening Standard](#) | [Homes & Property](#) | [London Careers](#) | [Novaya Gazeta \(English\)](#)