

Pedra de tartera (Mountain Scree), Ed. Laia 1985

“A compact, rhythmic, complete work that ends just at the right moment, without dragging on more than is necessary (...) *Pedra de tartera* can be recommended on many accounts, the most important of which may be its style. It is one of the few books published in Catalan in quite some time that reminds us of what literature is really about, what an intelligent, thoughtful and beautiful exercise the act of writing can be.”

Pilar Rahola, *El món*, April 26, 1986

“This book is one of tranquility, of a moving force and beauty. It has been a long time since I have read something like it. It teaches us how short life is and what is truly most important—basically to love, to be loved, to stay upright and to retain a sense of beauty. This book has something that only a few books have. You read it and it gives you strength. It is sad, but never sorrowful. Yes, any other book after this one has a hard act to follow.”

Elke Heidenreich, *Lesen!*

“The great, great achievement of this novel is that it dynamites the cement of forgetting and frees the clear memories of life.”

Martin Zähringer, *Frankfurter Rundschau*

“It has been a long time since I have read a book that throws such a long shadow over so many other fascinating books. A tender love story, a social portrait, a political novel and still so much more: despite the scarcely 100 pages of simple language, the book is a piece of universal literature!”

Christine Hunziker, *Comedia-Magazin*

La mort de Teresa (The Death of Teresa), Ed. Empúries 1986

“The stories as a whole produce an effect superior to the isolated value of some of them, because the accumulation of perspectives achieves that complexity we mentioned earlier. In the collection of stories, there are some that are worthy of an anthology and this I would seek to affirm even from a very demanding level and given the quality of the fiction produced in this country. “La mort de Teresa,” “Excursió als estanys” (Hike to the Lakes), “Ninou,” “Un dia diferent” (A Different Day), “Carta des de l’internat” (Letter from Boarding School), and “Minyoneta” (Little Maid) are small masterworks. Maria Barbal’s style is exceptional and exceptionally recurrent in regards to her humane and sensible narrative tone.”

Ramon Pla i Arxé, *Avui*, July 30, 1986

Les ales esteses (The Spread Wings), Ed. La Magrana 1993

“There is a poetic force underneath the apparent simplicity of these stories.”

Carles Duarte, *Lletra de Canvi* no. 37, 1994

Mel i metzines (Honey and Poisons), Ed. La Magrana, 1990

“The art of Maria Barbal is the elegant artifice of bas-relief.”

El País, March 29, 1990

“Maria Barbal reconciles the reader to reading.”

Anna Ma Gil, *Diari de Barcelona*, March 31, 1990

“Maria Barbal has produced a winner: *Mel i metzines* is a good book, filled with inner drama and yet pleasing tender; tense with rash actions and suddenly softened by a dash of melancholy. As the title indicates, *Mel i metzines* is a blend of tenderness and tragedy, honey and poison, moments of sadness and joy, and that, quite simply, is life.

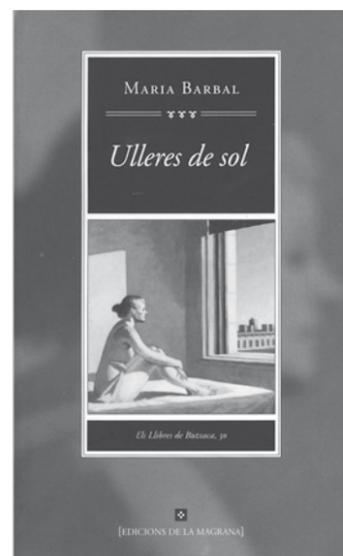
Isidor Cònsol, *Catalan Writing* no. 6, 1991

Càmfora (Camphor), Ed. La Magrana 1992

“Like the author’s previous books, *Càmfora* is a story of losers, of rootless characters, of resignation and nostalgia, submission and small, never successful, revolts by characters bowed under the weight of the unwritten laws of traditions.”

J.J. Isern, *Catalan Writing* no. 9, 1992

“Exile, solitude, nostalgia, love and indifference, incomprehension: all are faced by the characters in



Càmfora as experiences not—or not only—conditioned by their biographic wanderings but rather by the fact of existence. Here is where Maria Barbal’s talent becomes dazzlingly apparent; in the restraint with which she expresses the emotional universe of her characters, in her apparently simple style of narrating the dramatic depths of some ostensibly obscure lives, in the small pain that startles us upon closing the book.”

“Las riendas de la vida.” Ana María Moix, *ABC Cultural*, May 13, 1999

Ulleres de sol (Sunglasses), Ed. La Magrana 1994

“Maria Barbal’s second collection of short fiction is completely unlike its predecessor. Only her style remains the same: clean and concise, simultaneously sensitive and strong, emotionally contained but expressive. The five novellas that make up the book share yet another common feature: though the main characters in all five works are very different they are all women and each story is presented from a very particular point of view. Like the works of Chekov, Barbal’s novellas capture the profound drama of human lives.

Joan Triadó, *Catalan Writing* no. 12, 1994

Escrivia cartes al cel (Writing Letters to the Sky), Ed. La Magrana 1996

“Despite the apparent simplicity of its reading, *Escrivia cartes al cel* is a book of rich complexity, each piece fitting perfectly, and nothing written in it could be considered superfluous. The reader will enjoy discovering the threads plotted by Maria Barbal. And the he or she will be thankful for having access to one of the few books where each new reading reveals details that had previously passed by unnoticed.”

“Un complex artifici literari.” Joan Josep Isern, *Avui*, 1996

“She could have overplayed the event, accumulating notes of drama padded with sentimentality, or could have let herself be carried away by suspense, overloading it with shades of intrigue. But that is not what she did; she knew how to play with settings and characters in a personal way, adding features and circumstances to give the facts a vision, with many poetic elements and knowledge of the human heart.”

Cristóbal Sàrrias, *Catalunya Cristiana, Cultura*, March 28, 1996

Carrer Bolívia (Bolivia Street), Ed.62 1999

“*Carrer Bolívia* is at once a complex novel, by subject and structure, and of a vitality (...) that follows the characters’ paths through surroundings that, while clarifying in one place, obscure in another, like dawn and dusk. From them comes the beginning and end of their struggles, up to the last chapter, titled “Great Expectations,” but from Maria Barbal comes the inimitable embroidery of each sentence and adjective, and the inimitable poetic vision that penetrates us via the novel.”

Joan Triadó, *Avui*, 1999

“The very complexity and richness of the resulting style: each sentence seems to have been achieved after a rigorous task of purification and the elimination of anything that

could be superfluous; a perfect narrative economy, then, that does not seek to explain everything (...) A narrative discourse, furthermore, that the completely feminine sensibility of the author impregnates with images, comparisons and metaphors, in which is accomplished the miracle of true literature and true poetry: to make us feel as inherent and necessary that which never ceases to be purely arbitrary. *Carrer Bolívia* is one of the best contemporary novels.”

Jordi Malé, *Revista de Catalunya*

Bella Edat (Beautiful Age), Ed. 62 2003

“There are vital attitudes that must be achieved: the doubtful (the project of failed love), the search for one’s own past (and painful discovery). Or reflections about people’s charm, beauty and loyalty, as well as the very incarnation of these considerations in a main character who is slave to her own image. To conclude, one must mention..., Barbal’s beautiful, beautiful prose.”

Estanislau Vidal-Folch, *El Periódico*, April 11, 2003

“*Bella edat* is a book of many characters, both present and absent. But it is, more than anything, a book that asks a great question, one we all ask, whatever the time given for us to live in: to what extent are we free? Liberty is one of the great subjects I was referring to, maybe the most important, of which there is much to be said.”

Neus Canyelles, *Última hora*, May 4, 2003

País Íntim (Intimate Country), Ed. Columna 2005

“This is a beautiful story, a denunciation of shame, a recuperation and recreation of historical memory (...) Despite being called a novel it is clearly based on true events, which shape the climaxes of the narrative and nourish a plot that moves as if throbbing, like a flowing river.”

“Mater dolorosa.” Estanislau Vidal-Folch, *El Periódico*, January 19, 2006

“We are faced with, then, one of Maria Barbal’s great novels and, doubtless, with one that demonstrates the peak of her maturity as a writer. We find in the novel a narrative choice—dialogue in one voice—(...) which, furthermore, comes to a point in the final, emotional and memorable section, and which brings us, by way of a further element, the delight of a language and vocabulary of great expressive beauty. I am running out of space, but pay attention: go buy a ticket for a trip to this magnificent *País íntim*.”

“Mapa d’un país íntim.” Joan Josep Isern, *Avui*, November 16, 2005

Emma, Ed. Columna 2008

“Emma is my favorite Maria Barbal novel to date. The story and her way of expressing it are cum laude. The ending, unexpected and open, is extraordinary. And modern, daring, different. But the entire course of the book, with all its meanderings, is an approach, and an approach through a story, or a character, that truly gets under your skin.”

Josep Maria Benet i Jornet (playwright)