



## Skylark (New York Review Books Classics)

By *Dezso Kosztolanyi*

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### Skylark (New York Review Books Classics) By Dezso Kosztolanyi

It is 1900, give or take a few years. The Vajkays—call them Mother and Father—live in Sárszeg, a dead-end burg in the provincial heart of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Father retired some years ago to devote his days to genealogical research and quaint questions of heraldry. Mother keeps house. Both are utterly enthralled with their daughter, Skylark. Unintelligent, unimaginative, unattractive, and unmarried, Skylark cooks and sews for her parents and anchors the unremitting tedium of their lives.

Now Skylark is going away, for one week only, it's true, but a week that yawns endlessly for her parents. What will they do? Before they know it, they are eating at restaurants, reconnecting with old friends, attending the theater. And this is just a prelude to Father's night out at the Panther Club, about which the less said the better. Drunk, in the light of dawn Father surprises himself and Mother with his true, buried, unspeakable feelings about Skylark.

Then, Skylark is back. Is there a world beyond the daily grind and life's creeping disappointments? Kosztolányi's crystalline prose, perfect comic timing, and profound human sympathy conjure up a tantalizing beauty that lies on the far side of the irredeemably ordinary. To that extent, *Skylark* is nothing less than a magical book.

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## Skylark (New York Review Books Classics) By Dezso Kosztolanyi Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This alternately hilarious and melancholy classic of Hungarian literature plumbs the psyches of a husband and wife burdened with a homely daughter. After Ákos Vajkay and his wife, Antónia, dispatch Skylark, their stifling, unattractive and overbearing daughter, to visit with relatives, they revitalize their lives in Szarszeg, their backwater village, and recapture their youth with the Panthers, a schnapps-swilling men's social club. During their daughterless week, Ákos and Antónia rekindle their joy in living, taking in a transformative production of *The Geisha* and engaging in a drinking binge and epic meals at the local tavern. With their health and happiness returned to them, the disquieting realization of Skylark's return sets in, leading to an inevitable confrontation. The author slyly depicts a smalltown life that remains curiously relevant today with his exploration of the tension between the politics of the left and the right, atheism and Christianity, and parents and their children. Though written 80 years ago, this remains a deftly executed, thoughtful meditation on mortality and the passage of time. (Mar.)

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## Review

"Dezso Kosztolányi belonged to a remarkable generation of Central European writers. This novel is a masterpiece. From the opening sentences, he is drawing on nuance and subtle detail; comedy and pathos. Every gesture speaks volumes.....for all the humour and the easy comedy this lively study of small life is as profound as a prayer, as subtle as a lament." –*The Irish Times*

"This short, perfect novel seems to encapsulate all the world's pain in a soap bubble. Its surface is as smooth as a fable, its setting and characters are unremarkable, its tone is blithe, and its effect is shattering." –Deborah Eisenberg, *The New York Review of Books*

"The risks of projects like the Central European Classics is that some of the books will proved to be worthy rather than interesting novels which one reads out of duty rather than pleasure. This is not at all the case with Dezso Kosztolanyi's *Skylark*; I cancelled a dinner engagement because it was too gripping to put down." –*The Guardian* (London)

"Kosztolanyi's precise description of his chosen microcosm has produced a gem of a book that is completely convincing in its depiction of characters and the society they move in...The language is invigorating and at times hilarious." –*The Independent* (London)

"Beneath this gentile satire, Kosztolanyi is steadily subverting the arrogant certainties of his times, from the vainglory of the Austrian hierarchy and its rural quislings to the loud but empty boasting of the oppressed intelligentsia." –*The Observer* (London)

"Examining the unaddressed tensions of the Vajkay family, *Skylark*...depicts the closed, debilitating atmosphere of provincial life in the dying days of the Austro-Hungarian empire...Richard Acze's line version of *Skylark* catches its author's irony and sharp, atmospheric nuance. This hidden masterpiece is now being presented to a wide audience, an event to be celebrated." –*The Irish Times*

"*Skylark*, published in Hungarian in 1924, is the most original, economical and painful novel I have read in a long time." –*The Times* (London)

“...a superb, deeply poignant short novel, but also of a gifted translator...I believe that anyone can enjoy, say, *Skylark* as literature in English, even if they have no special knowledge of, or interest in, Hungary and the lost world of the Habsburg monarchy...Kosztolanyi’s writing is good enough to transcend the cultural difference that does exist.” –Timothy Garton-Ash, *The Independent* (London)

“Kosztolanyi was a ringleader in the 20th-century flowering of Hungarian literature, a poet who reformed the language, and a fiction writer of world class.” –*The Guardian* (London)

“Deszo Kosztolanyi simultaneously sustains a line of complex political paradoxes alongside a strikingly convincing human narrative.” –*The Herald* (Glasgow)

"...[an] alternately hilarious and melancholy classic of Hungarian literature...The author slyly depicts a smalltown life that remains curiously relevant today with his exploration of the tension between the politics of the left and the right, atheism and Christianity, and parents and their children. Though written 80 years ago, this remains a deftly executed, thoughtful meditation on mortality and the passage of time." –*Publishers Weekly*

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Language Notes

Text: English (translation)

Original Language: Hungarian

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#### Allison Devore:

The publication with title *Skylark* (New York Review Books Classics) contains a lot of information that you can learn it. You can get a lot of gain after read this book. This particular book exist new information the

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**Kurt Bohnert:**

A lot of people always spent their free time to vacation or go to the outside with them family or their friend. Were you aware? Many a lot of people spent many people free time just watching TV, or playing video games all day long. If you would like try to find a new activity that's look different you can read any book. It is really fun for yourself. If you enjoy the book you read you can spent all day every day to reading a publication. The book Skylark (New York Review Books Classics) it doesn't matter what good to read. There are a lot of people that recommended this book. These people were enjoying reading this book. If you did not have enough space bringing this book you can buy the actual e-book. You can m0ore very easily to read this book from the smart phone. The price is not too costly but this book possesses high quality.

**David Baker:**

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