

# To a Skylark by Percy Bysshe Shelley: Critical Appreciation

## INTRODUCTION

Shelley being one of the greatest romantic poets of early nineteenth century was an uncompromising rebel. He continued his struggle for the cause of individual liberty, social justice and peace. He wished to bring social reforms by his inspiring and courageous works of literature. He dreamt of an ideal society in which there should be no slavery and no exploitation. In this poem 'To a Skylark' he has addressed a skylark (a little bird) that soars up at a great height and sings so sweetly that the world is enchanted and bewitched by its sweetness.

## Critical Appreciation

The Skylark symbolizes high imagination, eternal happiness and harbinger of peace and progress. It is a spirit. Though it is unseen, yet it pours forth profuse sweetness. It stands for idealism and newly built society – free from corruption, exploitation and economic slavery. The Skylark's sweet note and ideal message spread everywhere in the atmosphere. It is heard by the poet who is highly impressed. He boldly claims that the Skylark is a superior thing in the sky. The cloud, the stars, the moon, the sun – all are left behind and the Skylark dominates by its excellent tune and soothing voice.

The poet himself does not know what the Skylark actually is. The mystery of the Skylark is still unsolved to the poet. But he is sure of the fact that he can learn a message of welfare from it and can spread in the world for recreation of the society. The poet had drawn beautiful comparison. In such comparison, he has proved his imaginative quality and an extraordinary talent.

He has compared the beauty and sweetness of the Skylark to a highly born beautiful girl who lives in her tower like palatial building and sings sweet love songs. Similarly, its comparison with a golden glow-worm among the flowers and grass and with rose having soothing scent is excellent and befitting. The poet is so confident about the sweetness and joy of Skylark's song that he says that even the rainbow clouds do not spread as bright drops as the presence of the Skylark spreads a rain of melody. In short the music of the Skylark surpasses every pleasure of nature.

The poet wishes to get instruction and messages from the Skylark. So he asks it to teach him its sweet thoughts. The poet is confident that the skylark is pouring out a flood of rapture which is divine.

This poem is one of the best lyrics of P. B. Shelley. It has a tragic feeling in it. The line, "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought" is very meaningful. It tells the philosophy of Shelley's life. Though the songs of Skylark are the sweetest yet they express saddest and most tragic thought.

The Skylark scorns the nasty habits of the earth and stands for bliss, joy and prosperity of the world. The poet is of cosmopolitan outlook. He is restless to preach his idealism in the world. Therefore he earnestly requests the Skylark to teach him the message.

Some critics say that P.B Shelley was not a practical man. He was far away from realism. So his Skylark always flew higher and higher and did not come to the earth, like the Skylark of Wordsworth. On the whole, this poem is Shelley's one of the finest creations. The flow of art, the similes, the flight of imagination and lyrical quality make this poem unparalleled in romantic literature.

***Reference:***

Sharma, K.N. "To a Skylark by Percy Bysshe Shelley: Summary and Critical Analysis." BachelorandMaster, 28 Nov. 2013, [bachelorandmaster.com/britishandamericanpoetry/to-a-skylark.html](http://bachelorandmaster.com/britishandamericanpoetry/to-a-skylark.html).