

Sequel to the Newbery Medal winner *Sarah, Plain and Tall*

**PATRICIA MACLACHLAN**

# Skylark



# 1

"Stand on that stump, Caleb. Anna, you next to him. That will be a good family picture."

Joshua, the photographer, looked through his big camera at us as we stood on the porch squinting in the sunlight. Caleb wore a white shirt, his hair combed slick to his head, Sarah in a white dress, Papa looking hot and uneasy in his suit. The lace at my neck itched in the summer heat. We had to be still for so long that Caleb began to whistle softly, making Sarah smile.

Far off in the distance the dogs, Nick and Lottie, walked slowly through the dry prairie grass. They walked past the cow pond nearly empty of water, past the wagon, past the chickens in the yard. Nick saw us first, then Lottie, and they began to run. Caleb looked sideways at me as they jumped the fence and ran to us, running up to stand between Sarah and Papa as if they wanted to be in the picture, too. We tried not to laugh, but Sarah couldn't help it. She looked up at Papa and he smiled down at her. And Joshua took the picture of us all laughing, Papa smiling at Sarah.

Joshua laughed, too.

"Your aunts will like that picture," he said to Sarah.

Sarah fanned herself.

"They hardly know what I look like anymore," she said softly. "I hardly know what *they* look like anymore."

I looked at Caleb. I knew Caleb didn't like to think about Sarah and her aunts and her brother and the sea she had left behind.

"It's Maine you came from, isn't it?" said Joshua.

"Yes," said Sarah.

"She lives *here* now," said Caleb loudly.

Papa put his hand on Caleb's head.

"That she does," said Joshua, smiling.

He turned and looked out over the cornfield, the plants so dry they rattled in the wind.

"But I bet Maine is green," Joshua said in a low voice. He looked out over the land with a faraway look, as if he were somewhere else. "We sure could use rain. I remember a long time ago, you remember it, Jacob. The water dried up, the fields so dry that the leaves fell like dust. And then the winds came. My grandfather packed up his family and left."

"Did he come back?" asked Caleb.

*My mother, Sarah,  
doesn't love the prairie.  
She tries, but she can't help  
remembering what she knew first.*



**S**arah came to the prairie from Maine to marry Papa. But that summer, a drought turned the land dry and brown. Fires swept across the fields and coyotes came to the well in search of water. So Sarah took Anna and Caleb back east, where they would be safe. Papa stayed behind. He would not leave his land.

Maine was beautiful, but Anna missed home, and Papa. And as the weeks went by, she began to wonder what would happen if the rains never came. Would she and Caleb and Sarah and Papa ever be a family again?

*"MacLachlan's prose is as lyrical and graceful as ever.*

*Packed with meaning and portent,  
each sentence shows the careful touch of a master."*

*—School Library Journal*

*"Skylark is one sequel that is as  
successful as the original."*

*—The Horn Book*


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