



On the Golden Porch

By Tatyana Tolstaya

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Thirteen stories--by the first woman in years to rank among Russia's most important writers--celebrate courage and the will to endure among the people who live on the periphery of society but who dream with a redeeming passion.

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On the Golden Porch By Tatyana Tolstaya Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

"The author's range is deliberately narrow, centering around the domestic crises of 'ordinary,' if eccentric individuals, whom she views with a sardonic eye," wrote PW , noting that "this collection marks Tolstaya as a natural storyteller who sheds fresh light on the contemporary Moscow scene."

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From Library Journal

These 13 short stories, all published in the USSR during the last four years, have more in common with the magic realism of Latin America than the Soviet Socialist variety. They are set in and about Leningrad and Moscow, but Tolstaya's protagonists--children, romantics, fantasists, losers, fools--inhabit the subjective world of dreams and fears. The imagery is extravagant and the point of view shifting and elusive, but somehow Tolstaya manages to invest even her most grotesque characters and their most trivial aspirations with dignity and a claim to our sympathy. This talented writer's rainbow prose will be a tonic to readers ready for a change from the gray tonality of American "minimalist" fiction.

- Mary F. Zirin, *Altadena, Cal.*

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Review

Some writers can make mud sing - Tatyana Tolstaya is one of these. *On the Golden Porch* takes moments in life that age us and through words gives their very sadness, pain, or release something beautiful. Here are stories of young children, single women, old men; each piece has a distinct voice, richly and fully explored. At times these stories become surreal - a man undergoes an operation to remove Life so he can be brash and successful. At other times they are painfully real and depressing - as in the story of the man set apart from society by his soft belly and restrictive upbringing. But the sheer beauty of the writing sustains readers until we learn the lesson or experience the moment of revelation waiting at the end. Tatyana Tolstaya takes this mud that is life and shows us that is it more than dirt and water; it can be soft and warm and used to build things like dreams: "Old Peters pushed the window frame - the blue glass rang, a thousand yellow birds flew up, and the naked golden spring cried, laughing: catch me, catch me!...And wanting nothing, regretting nothing, Peters smiled gratefully at life - running past, indifferent, ungrateful, treacherous, mocking, meaningless, alien - marvelous, marvelous, marvelous." -- *For great reviews of books for girls, check out Let's Hear It for the Girls: 375 Great Books for Readers 2-14.* -- *From 500 Great Books by Women; review by Erica Bauermeister*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Roy Brown:

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for everything if you read some books.

Victoria Williams:

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Eddie McCoy:

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Maryann Warren:

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