

story Of ISSue Bird On The Wire

Suzanne Partisan

Teachers

Master Song

Chelsea Hotel

sisters Of Mercy

Smokey late

Nancy

SO LONG Marianna

The Butler

PASSING Thru

Famous Blue Raincoat

Joan Of Arc Old Revolution

Antenna Last Years Man

Dress rehearsal Rag

Jazz Police Tower Of Song

Hallelujah

The Law DeoCruy

Everybody Knows

Alexandra Leavin's

1000 Kisses Deep

The Future

The Guests

CLOSING TIME  
antor

Lover Lover Lov

In Your Man

First We Take Manhattan

Dance Me

If It Be Your Will

Take This Waltz

Death Of A Ladies Man

Iodine

Fingerprints

Super-Tina Hotel

Take This Longing

Who by Fire

A Singer Must Die

Leonard  
Cohen

# song lyrics



# The Guests

One by one, the guests arrive  
The guests are coming through  
The open-hearted many  
The broken-hearted few

And no one knows where the night is going  
And no one knows why the wine is flowing  
Oh love I need you  
I need you  
I need you  
I need you  
Oh . . . I need you now

And those who dance, begin to dance  
Those who weep begin  
And "Welcome, welcome" cries a voice  
"Let all my guests come in."

And all go stumbling through that house  
in lonely secrecy  
Saying "Do reveal yourself"  
or "Why has thou forsaken me?"

All at once the torches flare  
The inner door flies open  
One by one they enter there  
In every style of passion

And no one knows where the night is going ...  
And here they take their sweet repast  
While house and grounds dissolve  
And one by one the guests are cast  
Beyond the garden wall

Those who dance, begin to dance  
Those who weep begin  
Those who earnestly are lost  
Are lost and lost again

One by the guests arrive  
The guests are coming through  
The broken-hearted many  
The open-hearted few.





## Humbled in Love

Do you remember all of those pledges  
That we pledged in the passionate night  
Ah they're soiled now, they're torn at the edges  
Like moths on a still yellow light  
No penance serves to renew them  
No massive transfusions of trust  
Why not even revenge can undo them  
So twisted these vows and so crushed

And you say you've been humbled in love  
Cut down in your love  
Forced to kneel in the mud next to me  
Ah but why so bitterly turn from the one  
Who kneels there as deeply as thee

Children have taken these pledges  
They have ferried them out of the past  
Oh beyond all the graves and the hedges  
Where love must go hiding at last  
And here where there is no description  
Oh here in the moment at hand  
No sinner need rise up forgiven  
No victim need limp to the stand

And look dear heart, look at the virgin  
Look how she welcomes him into her gown  
Yes, and mark how the stranger's cold armour  
Dissolves like a star falling down  
Why trade this vision for desire  
When you may have them both  
You will never see a man this naked  
I will never hold a woman this close.

## The Window

Why do you stand by the window  
Abandoned to beauty and pride  
The thorn of the night in your bosom  
The spear of the age in your side  
Lost in the rages of fragrance  
Lost in the rags of remorse  
Lost in the waves of a sickness  
That loosens the high silver nerves

Oh chosen love, Oh frozen love  
Oh tangle of matter and ghost  
Oh darling of angels, demons and saints  
And the whole broken-hearted host  
Gentle this soul

And come forth from the cloud of unknowing  
And kiss the cheek of the moon  
The New Jerusalem glowing  
Why tarry all night in the ruin  
And leave no word of discomfort  
And leave no observer to mourn  
But climb on your tears and be silent  
Like a rose on its ladder of thorns

Then lay your rose on the fire  
The fire give up to the sun  
The sun give over to splendour  
In the arms of the high holy one  
For the holy one dreams of a letter  
Dreams of a letter's death  
Oh bless thee continuous stutter  
Of the word being made into flesh

Gentle this soul

## I came So Far For Beauty

I came so far for beauty  
I left so much behind  
My patience and my family  
My masterpiece unsigned  
I thought I'd be rewarded  
For such a lonely choice  
And surely she would answer  
To such a very hopeless voice  
I practiced all my sainthood  
I gave to one and all  
But the rumours of my virtue  
They moved her not at all  
I changed my style to silver  
I changed my clothed to black  
And where I would surrender  
Now I would attack  
I stormed the old casino  
For the money and the flesh  
And I myself decided  
What was rotten and what was fresh  
And men to do my bidding  
And broken bones to teach  
The value of my pardon  
The shadow of my reach  
But no, I could not touch her  
With such a heavy hand  
Her star beyond my order  
Her nakedness unmanned  
I came so far for beauty  
I left so much behind  
My patience and my family  
My masterpiece unsigned

# Un Canadien Errant (The lost canadian)

(by Antoine Gerin-Lajoie)

Un Canadien Errant  
Banni de ses foyers,  
Parcourait en pleurant  
Des pays etrangers.  
Parcourait en pleurant  
Des pays etrangers.

Un jour, triste et pensif,  
Assis au bord des flots,  
Au courant fugitif  
Il adressa ces mots:  
Au courant fugitif  
Il adressa ces mots:

"Si tu vois mon pays,  
Mon pays malheureux,  
Va dire a mes amis  
Que je me souviens d'eux.  
Va dire a mes amis  
Que je me souviens d'eux.

O jours si pleins d'appas,  
Vous etes disparus...  
Et ma patrie, hélas!  
Je ne la verrai plus.  
Et ma patrie, hélas!  
Je ne la verrai plus.

[A wandering Canadian,  
banned from his hearths,  
travelled while crying  
in foreign lands.  
travelled while crying  
in foreign lands.

One day, sad and pensive,  
sitting by the flowing waters,  
to the fleeing current  
he addressed these words:  
to the fleeing current  
he addressed these words:

If you see my country,  
my unhappy country,  
go tell my friends  
that I remember them.  
go tell my friends  
that I remember them.

O days so full of charms,  
you have vanished...  
And my native land, alas!  
I will see it no more.  
And my native land, alas!  
I will see it no more.]



## The Traitor

Now the Swan it floated on the English river  
Ah the Rose of High Romance it opened wide  
A sun tanned woman yearned me through the summer  
and the judges watched us from the other side

I told my mother "Mother I must leave you  
preserve my room but do not shed a tear  
Should rumour of a shabby ending reach you  
it was half my fault and half the atmosphere"

But the Rose I sickened with a scarlet fever  
and the Swan I tempted with a sense of shame  
She said at last I was her finest lover  
and if she withered I would be to blame

The judges said you missed it by a fraction  
rise up and brace your troops for the attack  
Ah the dreamers ride against the men of action  
Oh see the men of action falling back

But I lingered on her thighs a fatal moment  
I kissed her lips as though I thirsted still  
My falsity had stung me like a hornet  
The poison sank and it paralysed my will

I could not move to warn all the younger soldiers  
that they had been deserted from above  
So on battlefields from here to Barcelona  
I'm listed with the enemies of love

And long ago she said "I must be leaving,  
Ah but keep my body here to lie upon  
You can move it up and down and when I'm sleeping  
Run some wire through that Rose and wind the Swan"

So daily I renew my idle duty  
I touch her here and there -- I know my place  
I kiss her open mouth and I praise her beauty  
and people call me traitor to my face



## Our Lady of Solitude

All summer long she touched me  
She gathered in my soul  
From many a thorn, from many thickets  
Her fingers, like a weaver's  
Quick and cool

And the light came from her body  
And the night went through her grace  
All summer long she touched me  
And I knew her, I knew her  
Face to face

And her dress was blue and silver  
And her words were few and small  
She is the vessel of the whole wide world  
Mistress, oh mistress, of us all

Dearly dead; Queen of Solitude  
I thank you with my heart  
for keeping me so close to thee  
while so many, oh so many, stood apart

And the light came from her body  
And the night went through her grace  
All summer long she touched me  
I knew her, I knew her  
Face to face





## The Gypsy's Wife

And where, where, where is my Gypsy wife tonight  
I've heard all the wild reports, they can't be right  
But whose head is this she's dancing with on the threshing floor  
whose darkness deepens in her arms a little more

And where, where is my Gypsy wife tonight?  
Where, where is my Gypsy wife tonight?

Ah the silver knives are flashing in the tired old cafe  
A ghost climbs on the table in a bridal negligee  
She says, "My body is the light, my body is the way"  
I raise my arm against it all and I catch the bride's bouquet

And where, where is my Gypsy wife tonight?...

Too early for the rainbow, too early for the dove  
These are the final days, this is the darkness, this is the flood  
And there is no man or woman who can't be touched  
But you who come between them will be judged

And where, where is my Gypsy wife tonight?...



## The Smokey Life

I've never seen your eyes so wide  
I've never seen your appetite quite this occupied  
Elsewhere is your feast of love  
I know ... where long ago we agreed to keep it light  
So lets be married one more night

It's light, light enough  
To let it go  
It's light enough to let it go

Remember when the scenery started fading  
I held you til you learned to walk on air  
So don't look down the ground is gone,  
there's no one waiting anyway  
The Smoky Life is practiced  
Everywhere

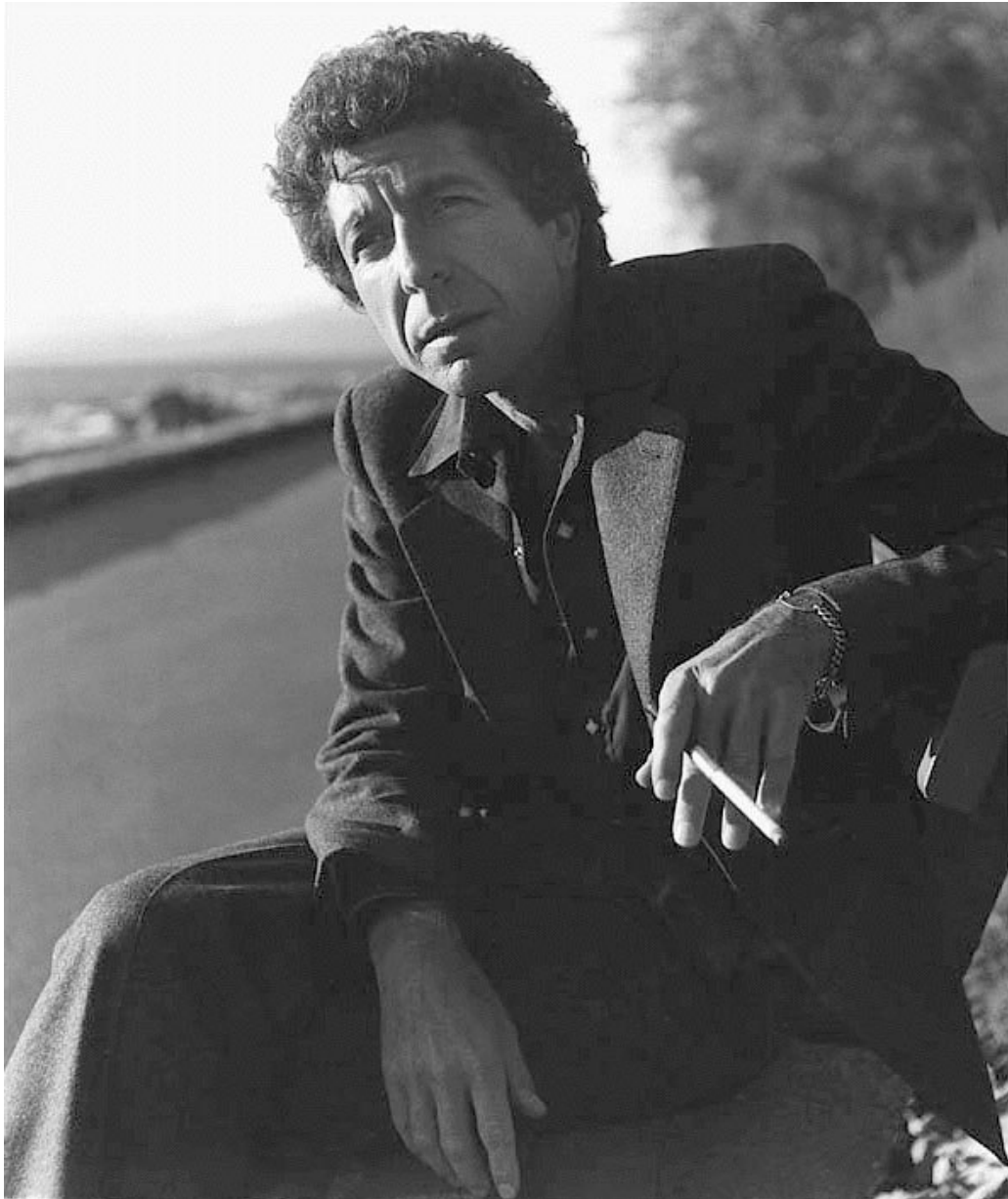
So set your restless heart at ease  
Take a lesson from these Autumn leaves  
They waste no time waiting for the snow  
Don't argue now you'll be late  
There is nothing to investigate

It's light enough, light enough  
To let it go  
Light enough to let it go

Remember when the scenery started fading  
I held you til you learned to walk on air  
So don't look down the ground is gone,  
there's no one waiting anyway  
The Smoky Life is practiced everywhere

Come on back if the moment lends  
You can look up all my very closest friends

Light, light enough  
To let it go  
It's light enough to let it go



## Ballad of the Absent Mare

Say a prayer for the cowboy  
His mare's run away  
And he'll walk til he finds her  
His darling, his stray  
but the river's in flood  
and the roads are awash  
and the bridges break up  
in the panic of loss.

And there's nothing to follow  
There's nowhere to go  
She's gone like the summer  
gone like the snow  
And the crickets are breaking  
his heart with their song  
as the day caves in  
and the night is all wrong

Did he dream, was it she  
who went galloping past  
and bent down the fern  
broke open the grass  
and printed the mud with  
the iron and the gold  
that he nailed to her feet  
when he was the lord

And although she goes grazing  
a minute away  
he tracks her all night  
he tracks her all day  
Oh blind to her presence  
except to compare  
his injury here  
with her punishment there

Then at home on a branch  
in the highest tree  
a songbird sings out  
so suddenly  
Ah the sun is warm  
and the soft winds ride  
on the willow trees  
by the river side

Oh the world is sweet  
the world is wide  
and she's there where  
the light and the darkness divide  
and the steam's coming off her  
she's huge and she's shy  
and she steps on the moon  
when she paws at the sky

And she comes to his hand  
but she's not really tame  
She longs to be lost  
he longs for the same  
and she'll bolt and she'll plunge  
through the first open pass  
to roll and to feed  
in the sweet mountain grass

Or she'll make a break  
for the high plateau  
where there's nothing above  
and there's nothing below  
and it's time for the burden  
it's time for the whip  
Will she walk through the flame  
Can he shoot from the hip

So he binds himself  
to the galloping mare  
and she binds herself  
to the rider there  
and there is no space  
but there's left and right  
and there is no time  
but there's day and night

And he leans on her neck  
and he whispers low  
"Whither thou goest  
I will go"  
And they turn as one  
and they head for the plain  
No need for the whip  
Ah, no need for the rein

Now the clasp of this union  
who fastens it tight?  
Who snaps it asunder  
the very next night  
Some say the rider  
Some say the mare  
Or that love's like the smoke  
beyond all repair

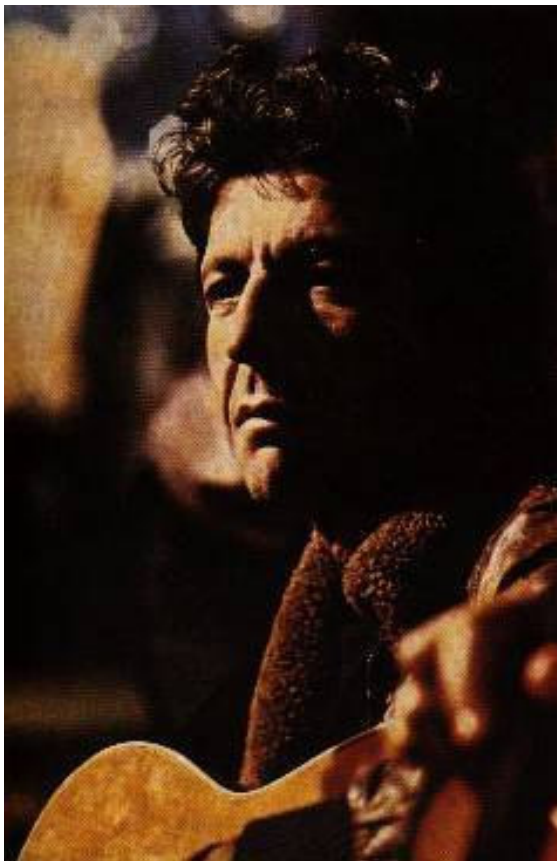
But my darling says  
"Leonard, just let it go by  
That old silhouette  
on the great western sky"  
So I pick out a tune  
and they move right along  
and they're gone like the smoke  
and they're gone like this song

## Suzanne

Suzanne takes you down to her place near the river  
You can hear the boats go by  
You can spend the night beside her  
And you know that she's half crazy  
But that's why you want to be there  
And she feeds you tea and oranges  
That come all the way from China  
And just when you mean to tell her  
That you have no love to give her  
Then she gets you on her wavelength  
And she lets the river answer  
That you've always been her lover  
And you want to travel with her  
And you want to travel blind  
And you know that she will trust you  
For you've touched her perfect body with your mind.

And Jesus was a sailor  
When he walked upon the water  
And he spent a long time watching  
From his lonely wooden tower  
And when he knew for certain  
Only drowning men could see him  
He said "All men will be sailors then  
Until the sea shall free them"  
But he himself was broken  
Long before the sky would open  
Forsaken, almost human  
He sank beneath your wisdom like a stone  
And you want to travel with him  
And you want to travel blind  
And you think maybe you'll trust him  
For he's touched your perfect body with his mind.

Now Suzanne takes your hand  
And she leads you to the river  
She is wearing rags and feathers  
From Salvation Army counters  
And the sun pours down like honey  
On our lady of the harbour  
And she shows you where to look  
Among the garbage and the flowers  
There are heroes in the seaweed  
There are children in the morning  
They are leaning out for love  
And they will lean that way forever  
While Suzanne holds the mirror  
And you want to travel with her  
And you want to travel blind  
And you know that you can trust her  
For she's touched your perfect body with her mind.





## Master Song

I believe that you heard your master sing  
when I was sick in bed.  
I suppose that he told you everything  
that I keep locked away in my head.  
Your master took you travelling,  
well at least that's what you said.  
And now do you come back to bring  
your prisoner wine and bread?  
You met him at some temple, where  
they take your clothes at the door.  
He was just a numberless man in a chair  
who'd just come back from the war.  
And you wrap up his tired face in your hair  
and he hands you the apple core.  
Then he touches your lips now so suddenly bare  
of all the kisses we put on some time before.

And he gave you a German Shepherd to walk  
with a collar of leather and nails,  
and he never once made you explain or talk  
about all of the little details,  
such as who had a word and who had a rock,  
and who had you through the mails.  
Now your love is a secret all over the block,  
and it never stops not even when your master fails.

And he took you up in his aeroplane,  
which he flew without any hands,  
and you cruised above the ribbons of rain  
that drove the crowd from the stands.  
Then he killed the lights in a lonely Lane  
and, an ape with angel glands,  
erased the final wisps of pain  
with the music of rubber bands.

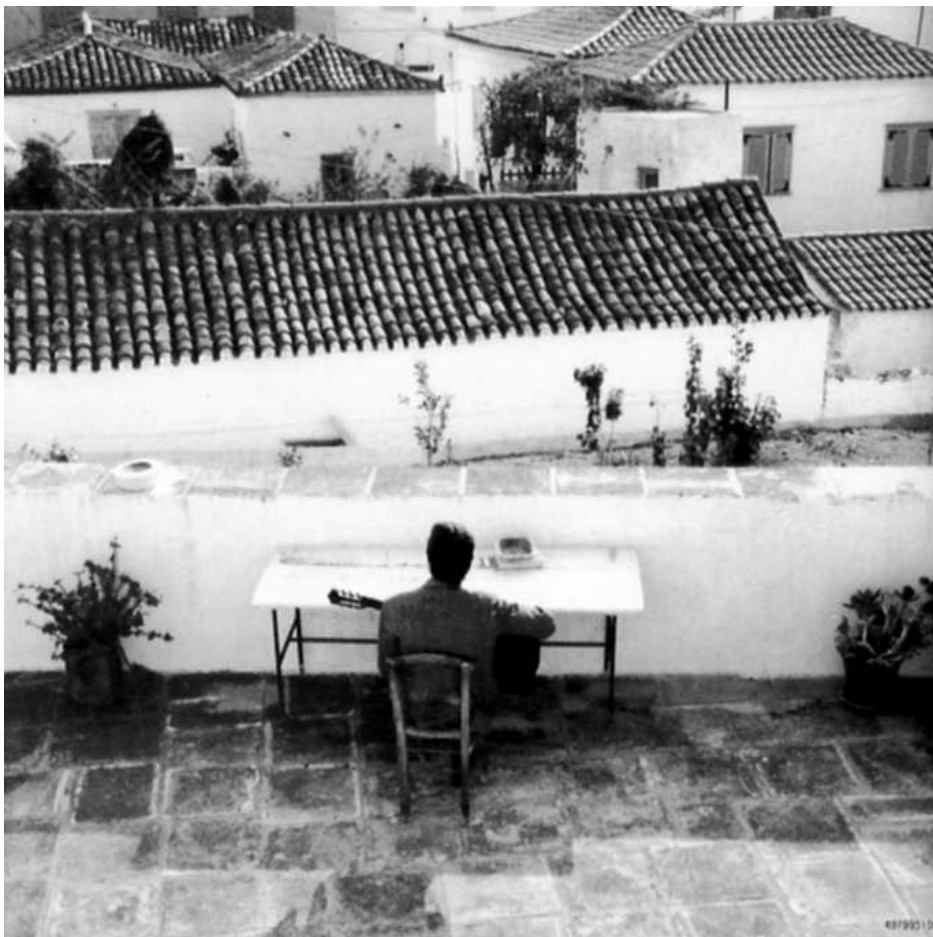
And now I hear your master sing,  
you kneel for him to come.  
His body is a golden string  
that your body is hanging from.  
His body is a golden string,  
my body has grown numb.  
Oh now you hear your master sing,  
your shirt is all undone.

And will you kneel beside this bed  
that we polished so long ago,  
before your master chose instead  
to make my bed of snow?  
Your eyes are wild and your knuckles are red  
and you're speaking far too low.  
No I can't make out what your master said  
before he made you go.

Then I think you're playing far too rough  
for a lady who's been to the moon;  
I've lain by this window long enough  
to get used to an empty room.  
And your love is some dust in an old man's cough  
who is tapping his foot to a tune,  
and your thighs are a ruin, you want too much,  
let's say you came back some time too soon.

I loved your master perfectly  
I taught him all that he knew.  
He was starving in some deep mystery  
like a man who is sure what is true.  
And I sent you to him with my guarantee  
I could teach him something new,  
and I taught him how you would long for me  
no matter what he said no matter what you'd do.

I believe that you heard your master sing  
while I was sick in bed,  
I'm sure that he told you everything  
I must keep locked away in my head.  
Your master took you travelling,  
well at least that's what you said,  
And now do you come back to bring  
your prisoner wine and bread?



## Winter Lady

Trav'ling lady, stay awhile  
until the night is over.  
I'm just a station on your way,  
I know I'm not your lover.  
Well I lived with a child of snow  
when I was a soldier,  
and I fought every man for her  
until the nights grew colder.

She used to wear her hair like you  
except when she was sleeping,  
and then she'd weave it on a loom  
of smoke and gold and breathing.

And why are you so quiet now  
standing there in the doorway?  
You chose your journey long before  
you came upon this highway.

Trav'ling lady stay awhile  
until the night is over.  
I'm just a station on your way,  
I know I'm not your lover.



## stranger songs

It's true that all the men you knew were dealers  
who said they were through with dealing  
Every time you gave them shelter  
I know that kind of man  
It's hard to hold the hand of anyone  
who is reaching for the sky just to surrender,  
who is reaching for the sky just to surrender.  
And then sweeping up the jokers that he left behind  
you find he did not leave you very much  
not even laughter  
Like any dealer he was watching for the card  
that is so high and wild  
he'll never need to deal another  
He was just some Joseph looking for a manger  
He was just some Joseph looking for a manger

And then leaning on your window sill  
he'll say one day you caused his will  
to weaken with your love and warmth and shelter  
And then taking from his wallet  
an old schedule of trains, he'll say  
I told you when I came I was a stranger  
I told you when I came I was a stranger.

But now another stranger seems  
to want you to ignore his dreams  
as though they were the burden of some other  
O you've seen that man before  
his golden arm dispatching cards  
but now it's rusted from the elbows to the finger  
And he wants to trade the game he plays for shelter  
Yes he wants to trade the game he knows for shelter.

Ah you hate to see another tired man  
lay down his hand  
like he was giving up the holy game of poker  
And while he talks his dreams to sleep  
you notice there's a highway  
that is curling up like smoke above his shoulder.  
It is curling just like smoke above his shoulder.

You tell him to come in sit down  
but something makes you turn around  
The door is open you can't close your shelter  
You try the handle of the road  
It opens do not be afraid  
It's you my love, you who are the stranger  
It's you my love, you who are the stranger.

Well, I've been waiting, I was sure  
we'd meet between the trains we're waiting for  
I think it's time to board another  
Please understand, I never had a secret chart  
to get me to the heart of this  
or any other matter  
When he talks like this  
you don't know what he's after  
When he speaks like this,  
you don't know what he's after.

Let's meet tomorrow if you choose  
upon the shore, beneath the bridge  
that they are building on some endless river  
Then he leaves the platform  
for the sleeping car that's warm  
You realize, he's only advertising one more shelter  
And it comes to you, he never was a stranger  
And you say ok the bridge or someplace later.

And leaning on your window sill  
he'll say one day you caused his will  
to weaken with your love and warmth and shelter  
And then taking from his wallet  
An old schedule of trains, he'll say  
I told you when I came I was a stranger  
I told you when I came I was a stranger

## Sisters of Mercy

Oh the sisters of mercy, they are not departed or gone.  
They were waiting for me when I thought that I just can't go on.  
And they brought me their comfort and later they brought me this song.  
Oh I hope you run into them, you who've been travelling so long.  
Yes you who must leave everything that you cannot control.  
It begins with your family, but soon it comes around to your soul.  
Well I've been where you're hanging, I think I can see how you're pinned:  
When you're not feeling holy, your loneliness says that you've sinned.

Well they lay down beside me, I made my confession to them.  
They touched both my eyes and I touched the dew on their hem.  
If your life is a leaf that the seasons tear off and condemn  
they will bind you with love that is graceful and green as a stem.

When I left they were sleeping, I hope you run into them soon.  
Don't turn on the lights, you can read their address by the moon.  
And you won't make me jealous if I hear that they sweetened your night:  
We weren't lovers like that and besides it would still be all right,  
We weren't lovers like that and besides it would still be all right.



## So Long Marianne

Come over to the window, my little darling,  
I'd like to try to read your palm.  
I used to think I was some kind of Gypsy boy  
before I let you take me home.  
Now so long, Marianne, it's time that we began  
to laugh and cry and cry and laugh about it all again.

Well you know that I love to live with you,  
but you make me forget so very much.  
I forget to pray for the angels  
and then the angels forget to pray for us.

We met when we were almost young  
deep in the green lilac park.  
You held on to me like I was a crucifix,  
as we went kneeling through the dark.

Your letters they all say that you're beside me now.  
Then why do I feel alone?  
I'm standing on a ledge and your fine spider web  
is fastening my ankle to a stone.

For now I need your hidden love.  
I'm cold as a new razor blade.  
You left when I told you I was curious,  
I never said that I was brave.

Oh, you are really such a pretty one.  
I see you've gone and changed your name again.  
And just when I climbed this whole mountainside,  
to wash my eyelids in the rain!





## Hey, That's No Way To Say Goodbye

I loved you in the morning, our kisses deep and warm,  
your hair upon the pillow like a sleepy golden storm,  
yes, many loved before us, I know that we are not new,  
in city and in forest they smiled like me and you,  
but now it's come to distances and both of us must try,  
your eyes are soft with sorrow,  
Hey, that's no way to say goodbye.

I'm not looking for another as I wander in my time,  
walk me to the corner, our steps will always rhyme  
you know my love goes with you as your love stays with me,  
it's just the way it changes, like the shoreline and the sea,  
but let's not talk of love or chains and things we can't untie,  
your eyes are soft with sorrow,  
Hey, that's no way to say goodbye.

I loved you in the morning, our kisses deep and warm,  
your hair upon the pillow like a sleepy golden storm,  
yes many loved before us, I know that we are not new,  
in city and in forest they smiled like me and you,  
but let's not talk of love or chains and things we can't untie,  
your eyes are soft with sorrow,  
Hey, that's no way to say goodbye.



## stories of the street

The stories of the street are mine, the Spanish voices laugh.  
The Cadillacs go creeping now through the night and the poison gas,  
and I lean from my window sill in this old hotel I chose,  
yes one hand on my suicide, one hand on the rose.  
I know you've heard it's over now and war must surely come,  
the cities they are broke in half and the middle men are gone.  
But let me ask you one more time, O children of the dusk,  
All these hunters who are shrieking now oh do they speak for us?

And where do all these highways go, now that we are free?  
Why are the armies marching still that were coming home to me?  
O lady with your legs so fine O stranger at your wheel,  
You are locked into your suffering and your pleasures are the seal.

The age of lust is giving birth, and both the parents ask  
the nurse to tell them fairy tales on both sides of the glass.  
And now the infant with his cord is hauled in like a kite,  
and one eye filled with blueprints, one eye filled with night.

O come with me my little one, we will find that farm  
and grow us grass and apples there and keep all the animals warm.  
And if by chance I wake at night and I ask you who I am,  
O take me to the slaughterhouse, I will wait there with the lamb.

With one hand on the hexagram and one hand on the girl  
I balance on a wishing well that all men call the world.  
We are so small between the stars, so large against the sky,  
and lost among the subway crowds I try to catch your eye.



## Teachers

I met a woman long ago  
her hair the black that black can go,  
Are you a teacher of the heart?  
Soft she answered no.  
I met a girl across the sea,  
her hair the gold that gold can be,  
Are you a teacher of the heart?  
Yes, but not for thee.

I met a man who lost his mind  
in some lost place I had to find,  
follow me the wise man said,  
but he walked behind.

I walked into a hospital  
where none was sick and none was well,  
when at night the nurses left  
I could not walk at all.

Morning came and then came noon,  
dinner time a scalpel blade  
lay beside my silver spoon.

Some girls wander by mistake  
into the mess that scalpels make.  
Are you the teachers of my heart?  
We teach old hearts to break.

One morning I woke up alone,  
the hospital and the nurses gone.  
Have I carved enough my Lord?  
Child, you are a bone.

I ate and ate and ate,  
no I did not miss a plate, well  
How much do these suppers cost?  
We'll take it out in hate.

I spent my hatred everyplace,  
on every work on every face,  
someone gave me wishes  
and I wished for an embrace.

Several girls embraced me, then  
I was embraced by men,  
Is my passion perfect?  
No, do it once again.

I was handsome I was strong,  
I knew the words of every song.  
Did my singing please you?  
No, the words you sang were wrong.

Who is it whom I address,  
who takes down what I confess?  
Are you the teachers of my heart?  
We teach old hearts to rest.

Oh teachers are my lessons done?  
I cannot do another one.  
They laughed and laughed and said, Well child,  
are your lessons done?  
are your lessons done?  
are your lessons done?



## One Of Us cannot Be Wrong

I lit a thin green candle, to make you jealous of me.  
But the room just filled up with mosquitos,  
they heard that my body was free.  
Then I took the dust of a long sleepless night  
and I put it in your little shoe.  
And then I confess that I tortured the dress  
that you wore for the world to look through.  
I showed my heart to the doctor: he said I just have to quit.  
Then he wrote himself a prescription,  
and your name was mentioned in it!  
Then he locked himself in a library shelf  
with the details of our honeymoon,  
and I hear from the nurse that he's gotten much worse  
and his practice is all in a ruin.

I heard of a saint who had loved you,  
so I studied all night in his school.  
He taught that the duty of lovers  
is to tarnish the golden rule.  
And just when I was sure that his teachings were pure  
he drowned himself in the pool.  
His body is gone but back here on the lawn  
his spirit continues to drool.

An Eskimo showed me a movie  
he'd recently taken of you:  
the poor man could hardly stop shivering,  
his lips and his fingers were blue.  
I suppose that he froze when the wind took your clothes  
and I guess he just never got warm.  
But you stand there so nice, in your blizzard of ice,  
oh please let me come into the storm.

## Bird on the Wire

Like a bird on the wire,  
like a drunk in a midnight choir  
I have tried in my way to be free.  
Like a worm on a hook,  
like a knight from some old fashioned book  
I have saved all my ribbons for thee.  
If I, if I have been unkind,  
I hope that you can just let it go by.  
If I, if I have been untrue  
I hope you know it was never to you.

Like a baby, stillborn,  
like a beast with his horn  
I have torn everyone who reached out for me.  
But I swear by this song  
and by all that I have done wrong  
I will make it all up to thee.  
I saw a beggar leaning on his wooden crutch,  
he said to me, "You must not ask for so much."  
And a pretty woman leaning in her darkened door,  
she cried to me, "Hey, why not ask for more?"

Oh like a bird on the wire,  
like a drunk in a midnight choir  
I have tried in my way to be free.



## story of Isaac

The door it opened slowly,  
my father he came in,  
I was nine years old.  
And he stood so tall above me,  
his blue eyes they were shining  
and his voice was very cold.  
He said, "I've had a vision  
and you know I'm strong and holy,  
I must do what I've been told."  
So he started up the mountain,  
I was running, he was walking,  
and his axe was made of gold.

Well, the trees they got much smaller,  
the lake a lady's mirror,  
we stopped to drink some wine.  
Then he threw the bottle over.  
Broke a minute later  
and he put his hand on mine.  
Thought I saw an eagle  
but it might have been a vulture,  
I never could decide.  
Then my father built an altar,  
he looked once behind his shoulder,  
he knew I would not hide.

You who build these altars now  
to sacrifice these children,  
you must not do it anymore.  
A scheme is not a vision  
and you never have been tempted  
by a demon or a god.  
You who stand above them now,  
your hatchets blunt and bloody,  
you were not there before,  
when I lay upon a mountain  
and my father's hand was trembling  
with the beauty of the word.

And if you call me brother now,  
forgive me if I inquire,  
"Just according to whose plan?"  
When it all comes down to dust  
I will kill you if I must,  
I will help you if I can.  
When it all comes down to dust  
I will help you if I must,  
I will kill you if I can.  
And mercy on our uniform,  
man of peace or man of war,  
the peacock spreads his fan.





## A Bunch Of Lonesome Heroes

A bunch of lonesome and very quarrelsome heroes  
were smoking out along the open road;  
the night was very dark and thick between them,  
each man beneath his ordinary load.

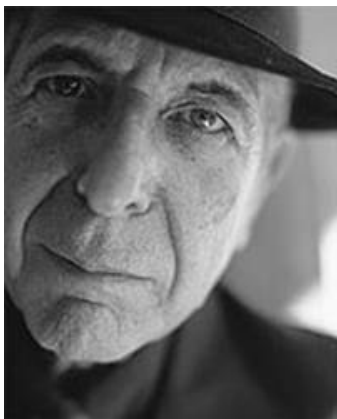
"I'd like to tell my story,"  
said one of them so young and bold,  
"I'd like to tell my story,  
before I turn into gold."

But no one really could hear him,  
the night so dark and thick and green;  
well I guess that these heroes must always live there  
where you and I have only been.

Put out your cigarette, my love,  
you've been alone too long;  
and some of us are very hungry now  
to hear what it is you've done that was so wrong.

I sing this for the crickets,  
I sing this for the army,  
I sing this for your children  
and for all who do not need me.

"I'd like to tell my story,"  
said one of them so bold,  
"Oh yes, I'd like to tell my story  
'cause you know I feel I'm turning into gold."



# The Partisan

(by Anna Marly/Hy Zaret)

When they poured across the border  
I was cautioned to surrender,  
this I could not do;  
I took my gun and vanished.

I have changed my name so often,  
I've lost my wife and children  
but I have many friends,  
and some of them are with me.

An old woman gave us shelter,  
kept us hidden in the garret,  
then the soldiers came;  
she died without a whisper.

There were three of us this morning  
I'm the only one this evening  
but I must go on;  
the frontiers are my prison.

Oh, the wind, the wind is blowing,  
through the graves the wind is blowing,  
freedom soon will come;  
then we'll come from the shadows.

Les Allemands e'taient chez moi, [The Germans were at my home]  
ils me dirent, "Signe toi," [They said, "Sign yourself,"]  
mais je n'ai pas peur; [But I am not afraid]  
j'ai repris mon arme. [I have retaken my weapon.]

J'ai change' cent fois de nom, [I have changed names a hundred times]  
j'ai perdu femme et enfants [I have lost wife and children]  
mais j'ai tant d'amis; [But I have so many friends]  
j'ai la France entie`re. [I have all of France]

Un vieil homme dans un grenier [An old man, in an attic]  
pour la nuit nous a cache', [Hid us for the night]  
les Allemands l'ont pris; [The Germans captured him]  
il est mort sans surprise. [He died without surprise.]

Oh, the wind, the wind is blowing,  
through the graves the wind is blowing,  
freedom soon will come;  
then we'll come from the shadows.



## seems so long ago, Nancy

It seems so long ago,  
Nancy was alone,  
looking at the Late Late show  
through a semi-precious stone.  
In the House of Honesty  
her father was on trial,  
in the House of Mystery  
there was no one at all,  
there was no one at all.

It seems so long ago,  
none of us were strong;  
Nancy wore green stockings  
and she slept with everyone.  
She never said she'd wait for us  
although she was alone,  
I think she fell in love for us  
in nineteen sixty one,  
in nineteen sixty one.

It seems so long ago,  
Nancy was alone,  
a forty five beside her head,  
an open telephone.  
We told her she was beautiful,  
we told her she was free  
but none of us would meet her in  
the House of Mystery,  
the House of Mystery.

And now you look around you,  
see her everywhere,  
many use her body,  
many comb her hair.  
In the hollow of the night  
when you are cold and numb  
you hear her talking freely then,  
she's happy that you've come,  
she's happy that you've come.

## The Old Revolution

I finally broke into the prison,  
I found my place in the chain.  
Even damnation is poisoned with rainbows,  
all the brave young men  
they're waiting now to see a signal  
which some killer will be lighting for pay.

Into this furnace I ask you now to venture,  
you whom I cannot betray.

I fought in the old revolution  
on the side of the ghost and the King.  
Of course I was very young  
and I thought that we were winning;  
I can't pretend I still feel very much like singing  
as they carry the bodies away.

Lately you've started to stutter  
as though you had nothing to say.  
To all of my architects let me be traitor.  
Now let me say I myself gave the order  
to sleep and to search and to destroy.

Yes, you who are broken by power,  
you who are absent all day,  
you who are kings for the sake of your children's story,  
the hand of your beggar is burdened down with money,  
the hand of your lover is clay.



## The Butcher

I came upon a butcher,  
he was slaughtering a lamb,  
I accused him there  
with his tortured lamb.  
He said, "Listen to me, child,  
I am what I am  
and you, you are my only son."

Well, I found a silver needle,  
I put it into my arm.  
It did some good,  
did some harm.  
But the nights were cold  
and it almost kept me warm,  
how come the night is long?

I saw some flowers growing up  
where that lamb fell down;  
was I supposed to praise my Lord,  
make some kind of joyful sound?  
He said, "Listen, listen to me now,  
I go round and round  
and you, you are my only child."

Do not leave me now,  
do not leave me now,  
I'm broken down  
from a recent fall.  
Blood upon my body  
and ice upon my soul,  
lead on, my son, it is your world.



## YOU KNOW WHO I AM

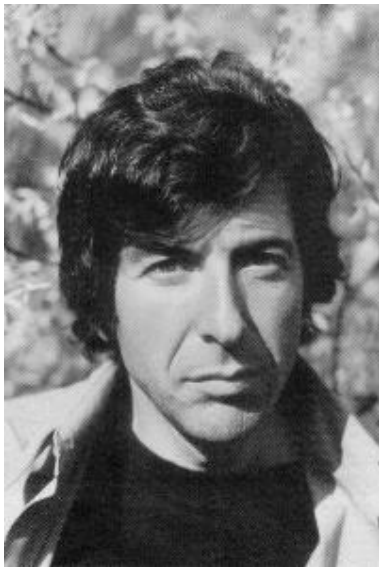
I cannot follow you, my love,  
you cannot follow me.  
I am the distance you put between  
all of the moments that we will be.

You know who I am,  
you've stared at the sun,  
well I am the one who loves  
changing from nothing to one.

Sometimes I need you naked,  
sometimes I need you wild,  
I need you to carry my children in  
and I need you to kill a child.

If you should ever track me down  
I will surrender there  
and I will leave with you one broken man  
whom I will teach you to repair.

I cannot follow you, my love,  
you cannot follow me.  
I am the distance you put between  
all of the moments that we will be.

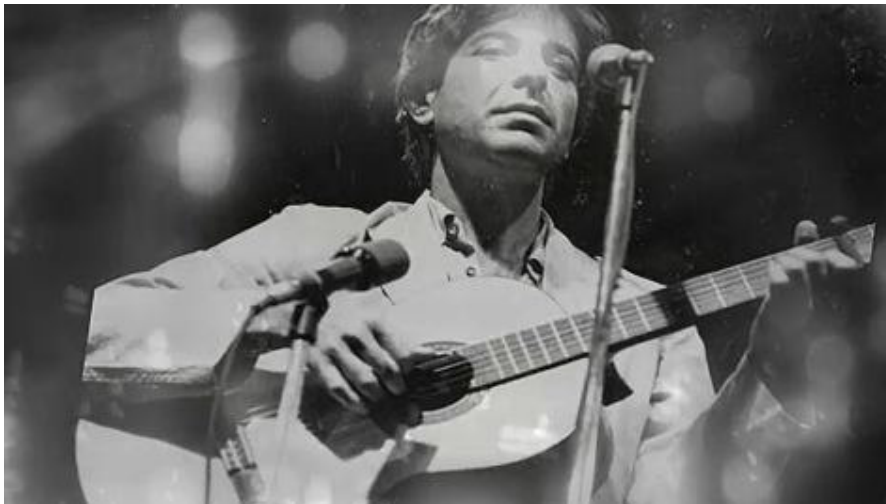


## Lady Midnight

I came by myself to a very crowded place;  
I was looking for someone who had lines in her face.  
I found her there but she was past all concern;  
I asked her to hold me, I said, "Lady, unfold me,"  
but she scorned me and she told me  
I was dead and I could never return.

Well, I argued all night like so many have before,  
saying, "Whatever you give me, I seem to need so much more."  
Then she pointed at me where I kneeled on her floor,  
she said, "Don't try to use me or slyly refuse me,  
just win me or lose me,  
it is this that the darkness is for."

I cried, "Oh, Lady Midnight, I fear that you grow old,  
the stars eat your body and the wind makes you cold."  
"If we cry now," she said, "it will just be ignored."  
So I walked through the morning, sweet early morning,  
I could hear my lady calling,  
"You've won me, you've won me, my lord,  
you've won me, you've won me, my lord,  
yes, you've won me, you've won me, my lord,  
ah, you've won me, you've won me, my lord,  
ah, you've won me, you've won me, my lord."





## Tonight Will Be Fine

Sometimes I find I get to thinking of the past.  
We swore to each other then that our love would surely last.  
You kept right on loving, I went on a fast,  
now I am too thin and your love is too vast.

But I know from your eyes  
and I know from your smile  
that tonight will be fine,  
will be fine, will be fine, will be fine  
for a while.

I choose the rooms that I live in with care,  
the windows are small and the walls almost bare,  
there's only one bed and there's only one prayer;  
I listen all night for your step on the stair.

But I know from your eyes  
and I know from your smile  
that tonight will be fine,  
will be fine, will be fine, will be fine  
for a while.

Oh sometimes I see her undressing for me,  
she's the soft naked lady love meant her to be  
and she's moving her body so brave and so free.  
If I've got to remember that's a fine memory.

And I know from her eyes  
and I know from her smile  
that tonight will be fine,  
will be fine, will be fine, will be fine  
for a while.

## Avalanche

Well I stepped into an avalanche,  
it covered up my soul;  
when I am not this hunchback that you see,  
I sleep beneath the golden hill.  
You who wish to conquer pain,  
you must learn, learn to serve me well.

You strike my side by accident  
as you go down for your gold.  
The cripple here that you clothe and feed  
is neither starved nor cold;  
he does not ask for your company,  
not at the centre, the centre of the world.

When I am on a pedestal,  
you did not raise me there.  
Your laws do not compel me  
to kneel grotesque and bare.  
I myself am the pedestal  
for this ugly hump at which you stare.

You who wish to conquer pain,  
you must learn what makes me kind;  
the crumbs of love that you offer me,  
they're the crumbs I've left behind.  
Your pain is no credential here,  
it's just the shadow, shadow of my wound.

I have begun to long for you,  
I who have no greed;  
I have begun to ask for you,  
I who have no need.  
You say you've gone away from me,  
but I can feel you when you breathe.

Do not dress in those rags for me,  
I know you are not poor;  
you don't love me quite so fiercely now  
when you know that you are not sure,  
it is your turn, beloved,  
it is your flesh that I wear.



## Last Year's Man

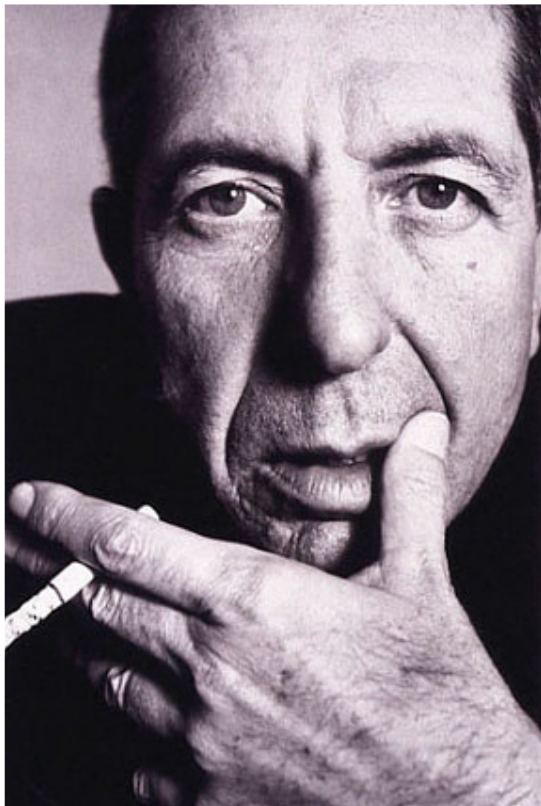
The rain falls down on last year's man,  
that's a jew's harp on the table,  
that's a crayon in his hand.  
And the corners of the blueprint are ruined since they rolled  
far past the stems of thumbtacks  
that still throw shadows on the wood.  
And the skylight is like skin for a drum I'll never mend  
and all the rain falls down amen  
on the works of last year's man.

I met a lady, she was playing with her soldiers in the dark  
oh one by one she had to tell them  
that her name was Joan of Arc.  
I was in that army, yes I stayed a little while;  
I want to thank you, Joan of Arc,  
for treating me so well.  
And though I wear a uniform I was not born to fight;  
all these wounded boys you lie beside,  
goodnight, my friends, goodnight.

I came upon a wedding that old families had contrived;  
Bethlehem the bridegroom,  
Babylon the bride.  
Great Babylon was naked, oh she stood there trembling for me,  
and Bethlehem inflamed us both  
like the shy one at some orgy.  
And when we fell together all our flesh was like a veil  
that I had to draw aside to see  
the serpent eat its tail.

Some women wait for Jesus, and some women wait for Cain  
so I hang upon my altar  
and I hoist my axe again.  
And I take the one who finds me back to where it all began  
when Jesus was the honeymoon  
and Cain was just the man.  
And we read from pleasant Bibles that are bound in blood and skin  
that the wilderness is gathering  
all its children back again.

The rain falls down on last year's man,  
an hour has gone by  
and he has not moved his hand.  
But everything will happen if he only gives the word;  
the lovers will rise up  
and the mountains touch the ground.  
But the skylight is like skin for a drum I'll never mend  
and all the rain falls down amen  
on the works of last year's man.



## Dress Rehearsal Rag

Four o'clock in the afternoon  
and I didn't feel like very much.  
I said to myself, "Where are you golden boy,  
where is your famous golden touch?"  
I thought you knew where  
all of the elephants lie down,  
I thought you were the crown prince  
of all the wheels in Ivory Town.  
Just take a look at your body now,  
there's nothing much to save  
and a bitter voice in the mirror cries,  
"Hey, Prince, you need a shave."  
Now if you can manage to get  
your trembling fingers to behave,  
why don't you try unwrapping  
a stainless steel razor blade?  
That's right, it's come to this,  
yes it's come to this,  
and wasn't it a long way down,  
wasn't it a strange way down?

There's no hot water  
and the cold is running thin.  
Well, what do you expect from  
the kind of places you've been living in?  
Don't drink from that cup,  
it's all caked and cracked along the rim.  
That's not the electric light, my friend,  
that is your vision growing dim.  
Cover up your face with soap, there,  
now you're Santa Claus.  
And you've got a gift for anyone  
who will give you his applause.  
I thought you were a racing man,  
ah, but you couldn't take the pace.  
That's a funeral in the mirror  
and it's stopping at your face.

That's right, it's come to this,  
yes it's come to this,  
and wasn't it a long way down,  
ah wasn't it a strange way down?

Once there was a path  
and a girl with chestnut hair,  
and you passed the summers  
picking all of the berries that grew there;  
there were times she was a woman,  
oh, there were times she was just a child,  
and you held her in the shadows  
where the raspberries grow wild.  
And you climbed the twilight mountains  
and you sang about the view,  
and everywhere that you wandered  
love seemed to go along with you.  
That's a hard one to remember,  
yes it makes you clench your fist.  
And then the veins stand out like highways,  
all along your wrist.  
And yes it's come to this,  
it's come to this,  
and wasn't it a long way down,  
wasn't it a strange way down?

You can still find a job,  
go out and talk to a friend.  
On the back of every magazine  
there are those coupons you can send.  
Why don't you join the Rosicrucians,  
they can give you back your hope,  
you can find your love with diagrams  
on a plain brown envelope.  
But you've used up all your coupons  
except the one that seems  
to be written on your wrist  
along with several thousand dreams.

Now Santa Claus comes forward,  
that's a razor in his mit;  
and he puts on his dark glasses  
and he shows you where to hit;  
and then the cameras pan,  
the stand in stunt man,  
dress rehearsal rag,  
it's just the dress rehearsal rag,  
you know this dress rehearsal rag,  
it's just a dress rehearsal rag.





## Diamonds In the Mine

The woman in blue, she's asking for revenge,  
the man in white -- that's you -- says he has no friends.  
The river is swollen up with rusty cans  
and the trees are burning in your promised land.

And there are no letters in the mailbox,  
and there are no grapes upon the vine,  
and there are no chocolates in the boxes anymore,  
and there are no diamonds in the mine.

Well, you tell me that your lover has a broken limb,  
you say you're kind of restless now and it's on account of him.  
Well, I saw the man in question, it was just the other night,  
he was eating up a lady where the lions and Christians fight.

And there are no letters in the mailbox  
and there are no grapes upon the vine,  
and there are no chocolates in the boxes anymore,  
and there are no diamonds in the mine.

(You tell them now)

Ah, there is no comfort in the covens of the witch,  
some very clever doctor went and sterilized the bitch,  
and the only man of energy, yes the revolution's pride,  
he trained a hundred women just to kill an unborn child.

And there are no letters in the mailbox,  
oh no, there are no, no grapes upon your vine,  
and there are, there are no chocolates in your boxes anymore,  
and there are no diamonds in your mine.  
And there are no letters in the mailbox,  
and there are no grapes upon the vine,  
and there are no chocolates in your boxes anymore,  
and there are no diamonds in your mine.

## love calls you By your Name

You thought that it could never happen  
to all the people that you became,  
your body lost in legend, the beast so very tame.  
But here, right here,  
between the birthmark and the stain,  
between the ocean and your open vein,  
between the snowman and the rain,  
once again, once again,  
love calls you by your name.

The women in your scrapbook  
whom you still praise and blame,  
you say they chained you to your fingernails  
and you climb the halls of fame.  
Oh but here, right here,  
between the peanuts and the cage,  
between the darkness and the stage,  
between the hour and the age,  
once again, once again,  
love calls you by your name.

Shouldering your loneliness  
like a gun that you will not learn to aim,  
you stumble into this movie house,  
then you climb, you climb into the frame.  
Yes, and here, right here  
between the moonlight and the lane,  
between the tunnel and the train,  
between the victim and his stain,  
once again, once again,  
love calls you by your name.

I leave the lady meditating  
on the very love which I, I do not wish to claim,  
I journey down the hundred steps,  
but the street is still the very same.  
And here, right here,  
between the dancer and his cane,  
between the sailboat and the drain,  
between the newsreel and your tiny pain,  
once again, once again,  
love calls you by your name.

Where are you, Judy, where are you, Anne?  
Where are the paths your heroes came?  
Wondering out loud as the bandage pulls away,  
was I, was I only limping, was I really lame?  
Oh here, come over here,  
between the windmill and the grain,  
between the sundial and the chain,  
between the traitor and her pain,  
once again, once again,  
love calls you by your name.



## Famous Blue Raincoat

It's four in the morning, the end of December  
I'm writing you now just to see if you're better  
New York is cold, but I like where I'm living  
There's music on Clinton Street all through the evening.

I hear that you're building your little house deep in the desert  
You're living for nothing now, I hope you're keeping some kind of record.

Yes, and Jane came by with a lock of your hair  
She said that you gave it to her  
That night that you planned to go clear  
Did you ever go clear?

Ah, the last time we saw you you looked so much older  
Your famous blue raincoat was torn at the shoulder  
You'd been to the station to meet every train  
And you came home without Lili Marlene

And you treated my woman to a flake of your life  
And when she came back she was nobody's wife.

Well I see you there with the rose in your teeth  
One more thin gypsy thief  
Well I see Jane's awake --

She sends her regards.

And what can I tell you my brother, my killer  
What can I possibly say?  
I guess that I miss you, I guess I forgive you  
I'm glad you stood in my way.

If you ever come by here, for Jane or for me  
Your enemy is sleeping, and his woman is free.

Yes, and thanks, for the trouble you took from her eyes  
I thought it was there for good so I never tried.

And Jane came by with a lock of your hair  
She said that you gave it to her  
That night that you planned to go clear --

Sincerely, L. Cohen



## Sing Another Song, Boys

(Let's sing another song, boys, this one has grown old and bitter.)

Ah his fingernails, I see they're broken,  
his ships they're all on fire.  
The moneylender's lovely little daughter  
ah, she's eaten, she's eaten with desire.  
She spies him through the glasses  
from the pawnshops of her wicked father.  
She hails him with a microphone  
that some poor singer, just like me, had to leave her.  
She tempts him with a clarinet,  
she waves a Nazi dagger.  
She finds him lying in a heap;  
she wants to be his woman.  
He says, "Yes, I might go to sleep  
but kindly leave, leave the future,  
leave it open."

He stands where it is steep,  
oh I guess he thinks that he's the very first one,  
his hand upon his leather belt now  
like it was the wheel of some big ocean liner.  
And she will learn to touch herself so well  
as all the sails burn down like paper.  
And he has lit the chain  
of his famous cigarillo.  
Ah, they'll never, they'll never ever reach the moon,  
at least not the one that we're after;  
it's floating broken on the open sea, look out there, my friends,  
and it carries no survivors.  
But let's leave these lovers wondering  
why they cannot have each other,  
and let's sing another song, boys,  
this one has grown old and bitter.

## Joan Of Arc

Now the flames they followed Joan of Arc  
as she came riding through the dark;  
no moon to keep her armour bright,  
no man to get her through this very smoky night.  
She said, "I'm tired of the war,  
I want the kind of work I had before,  
a wedding dress or something white  
to wear upon my swollen appetite."

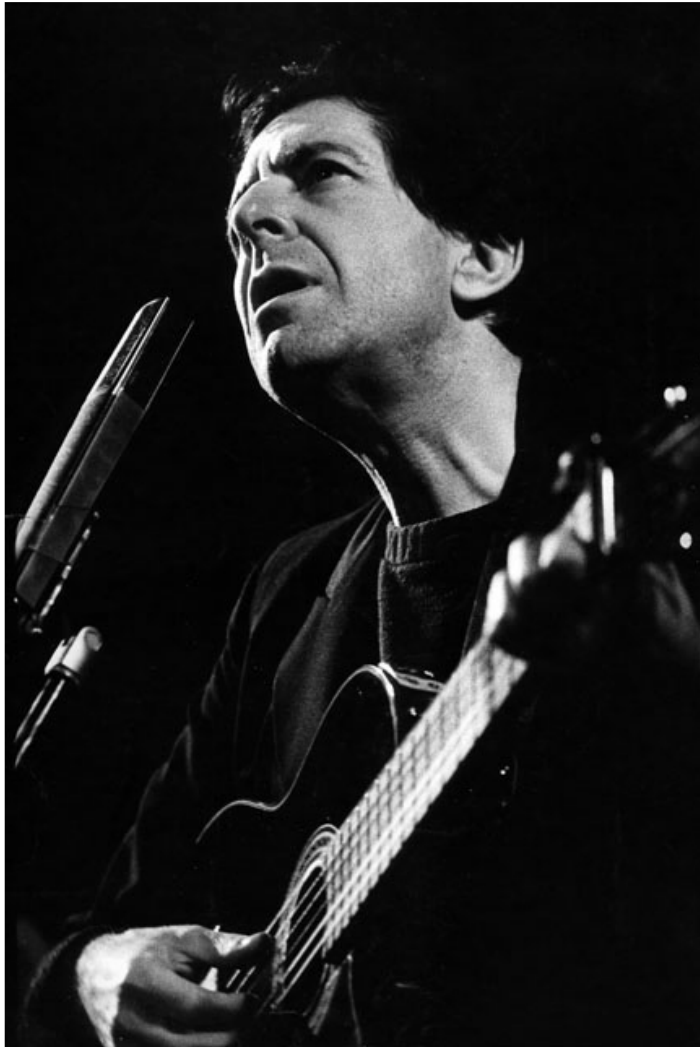
Well, I'm glad to hear you talk this way,  
you know I've watched you riding every day  
and something in me yearns to win  
such a cold and lonesome heroine.  
"And who are you?" she sternly spoke  
to the one beneath the smoke.  
"Why, I'm fire," he replied,  
"And I love your solitude, I love your pride."

"Then fire, make your body cold,  
I'm going to give you mine to hold,"  
saying this she climbed inside  
to be his one, to be his only bride.  
And deep into his fiery heart  
he took the dust of Joan of Arc,  
and high above the wedding guests  
he hung the ashes of her wedding dress.

It was deep into his fiery heart  
he took the dust of Joan of Arc,  
and then she clearly understood  
if he was fire, oh then she must be wood.  
I saw her wince, I saw her cry,  
I saw the glory in her eye.  
Myself I long for love and light,  
but must it come so cruel, and oh so bright?

## Minute prologue

I've been listening  
to all the dissention.  
I've been listening  
to all the pain.  
And I feel that no matter  
what I do for you,  
it's going to come back again.  
But I think that I can heal it,  
but I think that I can heal it,  
I'm a fool, but I think I can heal it  
with this song.





## passing Through

I saw Jesus on the cross on a hill called Calvary  
"Do you hate mankind for what they done to you?"  
He said, "Talk of love not hate, things to do - it's getting late.  
I've so little time and I'm only passing through."

Passing through, passing through.  
Sometimes happy, sometimes blue,  
glad that I ran into you.  
Tell the people that you saw me passing through.

I saw Adam leave the Garden with an apple in his hand,  
I said "Now you're out, what are you going to do?"  
"Plant some crops and pray for rain, maybe raise a little cane.  
I'm an orphan now, and I'm only passing through."

Passing through, passing through ...

I was with Washington at Valley Ford, shivering in the snow.  
I said, "How come the men here suffer like they do?"  
"Men will suffer, men will fight, even die for what is right  
even though they know they're only passing through"

Passing through, passing through ...

I was with Franklin Roosevelt's side on the night before he died.  
He said, "One world must come out of World War Two" (ah, the fool)  
"Yankee, Russian, white or tan," he said, "A man is still a man.  
We're all on one road, and we're only passing through."

Passing through, passing through ...

(let's do it one more time)

Passing through, passing through ...

## please Don't Pass Me By (A Disgrace)

I was walking in New York City and I brushed up against the man in front of me. I felt a cardboard placard on his back. And when we passed a streetlight, I could read it, it said "Please don't pass me by - I am blind, but you can see - I've been blinded totally - Please don't pass me by." I was walking along 7th Avenue, when I came to 14th Street I saw on the corner curious mutilations of the human form; it was a school for handicapped people. And there were cripples, and people in wheelchairs and crutches and it was snowing, and I got this sense that the whole city was singing this:

Oh please don't pass me by,  
oh please don't pass me by,  
for I am blind, but you can see,  
yes, I've been blinded totally,  
oh please don't pass me by.

And you know as I was walking I thought it was them who were singing it, I thought it was they who were singing it, I thought it was the other who was singing it, I thought it was someone else. But as I moved along I knew it was me, and that I was singing it to myself. It went:

Please don't pass me by,  
oh please don't pass me by,  
for I am blind, but you can see,  
well, I've been blinded totally,  
oh please don't pass me by.

Oh please don't pass me by.

Now I know that you're sitting there deep in your velvet seats and you're thinking "Uh, he's up there saying something that he thinks about, but I'll never have to sing that song." But I promise you friends, that you're going to be singing this song: it may not be tonight, it may not be tomorrow, but one day you'll be on your knees and I want you to know the words when the time comes. Because you're going to have to sing it to yourself, or to another, or to your brother. You're going to have to learn to sing this song, it goes:

Please don't pass me by,  
ah you don't have to sing this .. not for you.  
Please don't pass me by,  
for I am blind, but you can see,  
yes, I've been blinded totally,  
oh please don't pass me by.

Well I sing this for the Jews and the Gypsies and the smoke that they made.  
And I sing this for the children of England, their faces so grave. And I sing  
this for a saviour with no one to save. Hey, won't you be naked for me? Hey,  
won't you be naked for me? It goes:

Please don't pass me by,  
oh please don't pass me by,  
for I am blind, but you can see,  
yes, I've been blinded totally,  
oh now, please don't pass me by.

Now there's nothing that I tell you that will help you connect the blood  
tortured night with the day that comes next. But I want it to hurt you, I  
want it to end. Oh, won't you be naked for me? Oh now:

Please don't pass me by,  
oh please don't pass me by,  
for I am blind, but you can see,  
but I've been blinded totally,  
oh, please don't pass me by.

Well I sing this song for you Blonde Beasts, I sing this song for you Venuses  
upon your shells on the foam of the sea. And I sing this for the freaks and  
the cripples, and the hunchback, and the burned, and the burning, and the  
maimed, and the broken, and the torn, and all of those that you talk about at  
the coffee tables, at the meetings, and the demonstrations, on the streets,  
in your music, in my songs. I mean the real ones that are burning, I mean the  
real ones that are burning

I say, please don't pass me by,  
oh now, please don't pass me by,  
for I am blind, yeah but you can see,  
ah now, I've been blinded totally,  
oh no, please don't pass me by.

I know that you still think that its me. I know that you think that there's somebody else. I know that these words aren't yours. But I tell you friends that one day

You're going to get down on your knees,  
you're going to get down on your knees,  
you're going to get down on your knees,  
you're going to get down on your knees,  
you're going to get down on your knees,  
you're going to get down on your knees,  
you're going to get down on your knees,  
you're going to get down on your knees,  
you're going to get down ..

Oh, please don't pass me by,  
oh, please don't pass me by,  
for I am blind, yeah but you can see,  
yes, I've been blinded totally,  
oh, please don't pass me by.

Well you know I have my songs and I have my poems. I have my book and I have the army, and sometimes I have your applause. I make some money, but you know what my friends, I'm still out there on the corner. I'm with the freaks, I'm with the hunted, I'm with the maimed, yes I'm with the torn, I'm with the down, I'm with the poor. Come on now ...

Ah, please don't pass me by,  
well I've got to go now friends,  
but, please don't pass me by,  
for I am blind, yeah but you can see,  
oh, I've been blinded, I've been blinded totally,  
oh now, please don't pass me by.

Now I want to take away my dignity, yes take my dignity. My friends, take my dignity, take my form, take my style, take my honour, take my courage, take my time, take my time, .. time .. 'Cause you know I'm with you singing this song. And I wish you would, I wish you would, I wish you would go home with someone else. Wish you'd go home with someone else. I wish you'd go home with someone else. Don't be the person that you came with. Oh, don't be the person that you came with, Oh don't be the person that you came with. Ah, I'm not going to be. I can't stand him. I can't stand who I am. That's why I've got to get down on my knees. Because I can't make it by myself. I'm not by myself anymore because the man I was before he was a tyrant, he was a slave, he was in chains, he was broken and then he sang:

Oh, please don't pass me by,  
oh, please don't pass me by,  
for I am blind, yes I am blind, Oh but you can see,  
yes, I've been blinded totally,  
oh, please don't pass me by.

Well I hope I see you out there on the corner. Yeah I hope as I go by that I hear you whisper with the breeze. Because I'm going to leave you now, I'm going to find me someone new. Find someone new.

And please don't pass me by.



## Queen Victoria

Queen Victoria,  
My father and all his tobacco loved you,  
I love you too in all your forms,  
the slim and lovely virgin floating among German beer,  
the mean governess of the huge pink maps,  
the solitary mourner of a prince.

Queen Victoria,  
I am cold and rainy,  
I am dirty as a glass roof in a train station,  
I feel like an empty cast iron exhibition,  
I want ornaments on everything,  
because my love, she gone with other boys.

Queen Victoria,  
do you have a punishment under the white lace,  
will you be short with her, will you make her read those little Bibles,  
will you spank her with a mechanical corset.  
I want her pure as power, I want her skin slightly musty with petticoats  
will you wash the easy bidet out of her head?

Queen Victoria,  
I'm not much nourished by modern love,  
will you come into my life  
with your sorrow and your black carriages,  
And your perfect  
memories.

Queen Victoria,  
the Twentieth Century belongs to you and me.  
Let us be two severe giants not less lonely for our partnership,  
who discolour test tubes in the halls of Science,  
who turn up unwelcome at every World's Fair,  
heavy with proverbs and corrections,  
confusing the star-dazed tourists  
with our incomparable sense of loss.

## IS THIS WHAT YOU WANTED?

You were the promise at dawn,  
I was the morning after.  
You were Jesus Christ my Lord,  
I was the money lender.  
You were the sensitive woman,  
I was the very reverend Freud.  
You were the manual orgasm,  
I was the dirty little boy.

And is this what you wanted  
to live in a house that is haunted  
by the ghost of you and me?

You were Marlon Brando,  
I was Steve McQueen.  
You were K.Y. Jelly,  
I was Vaseline.  
You were the father of modern medicine,  
I was Mr. Clean.  
You were the whore and the beast of Babylon,  
I was Rin Tin Tin.

You got old and wrinkled,  
I stayed seventeen.  
You lusted after so many,  
I lay here with one.  
You defied your solitude,  
I came through alone.  
You said you could never love me,  
I undid your gown.



## chelsea Hotel #1

I remember you well in the Chelsea Hotel  
You were taking so brave and so free  
Giving me head on the unmade bed  
While the limousines wait in the street

(And) Those were the reasons and that was New York  
I was running for the money and the flesh  
That was called love for the workers in song  
Probably (It) still is for those of us/them left

But You got away, didn't you baby  
You just threw it all to the ground  
You got away, they can't pay you now  
For mailing your sweet little song

I remember you well in the Chelsea Hotel  
In the winter of sixty-seven  
My friends of that year they were all trying to go queer  
And me I was just getting even  
And me I was just getting even  
And me I was just getting even

(And) those were the reasons and that was New York  
I was running for the money and the flesh  
That was called love for the workers in song  
Probably (It) still is for those of us/them left

But you got away, didn't you baby  
You just threw it all to the ground  
You got away they can't pay you now  
For making your sweet little sound





## chelsea Hotel #2

I remember you  
well in the Chelsea Hotel,  
you were talking so brave and so sweet,  
giving me head on the unmade bed,  
while the limousines wait in the street.  
Those were the reasons and that was New York,  
we were running for the money and the flesh.  
And that was called love for the workers in song  
probably still is for those of them left.

Ah but you got away, didn't you babe,  
you just turned your back on the crowd,  
you got away, I never once heard you say,  
I need you, I don't need you,  
I need you, I don't need you  
and all of that jiving around.

I remember you well in the Chelsea Hotel  
you were famous, your heart was a legend.  
You told me again you preferred handsome men  
but for me you would make an exception.  
And clenching your fist for the ones like us  
who are oppressed by the figures of beauty,  
you fixed yourself, you said, "Well never mind,  
we are ugly but we have the music."

I don't mean to suggest that I loved you the best,  
I can't keep track of each fallen robin.  
I remember you well in the Chelsea Hotel,  
that's all, I don't even think of you that often.

## lover lover lover

I asked my father, I said, "Father change my name."  
The one I'm using now it's covered up  
with fear and filth and cowardice and shame.

Yes and lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover come back to me,  
yes and lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover come back to me.

He said, "I locked you in this body,  
I meant it as a kind of trial.  
You can use it for a weapon,  
or to make some woman smile."

Yes and lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover come back to me  
yes and lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover come back to me.

"Then let me start again," I cried,  
"please let me start again,  
I want a face that's fair this time,  
I want a spirit that is calm."

Yes and lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover come back to me  
yes and lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover come back to me.

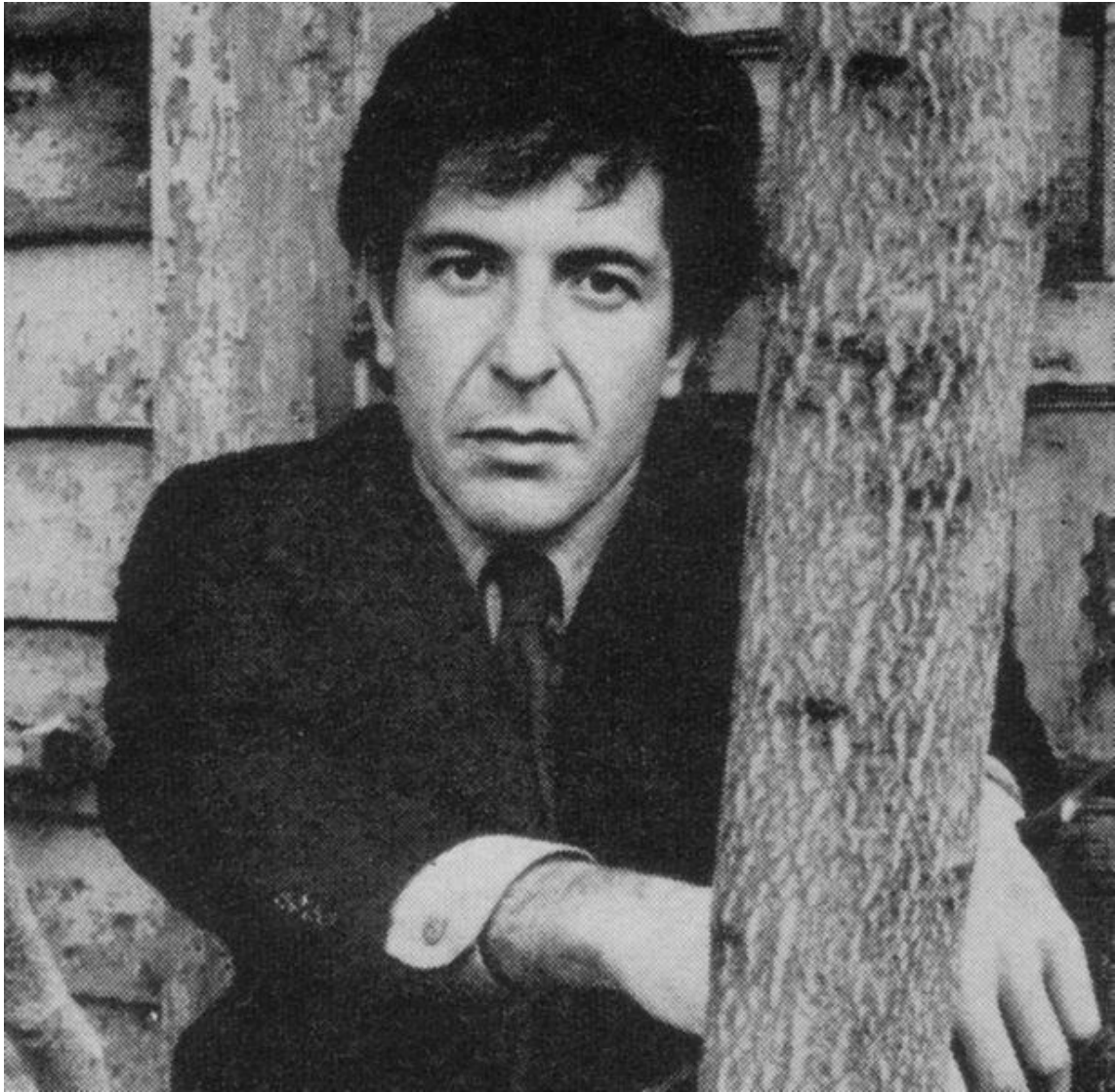
"I never never turned aside," he said,  
"I never walked away.  
It was you who built the temple,  
it was you who covered up my face."

Yes and lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover come back to me  
yes and lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover come back to me.

And may the spirit of this song,  
may it rise up pure and free.  
May it be a shield for you,  
a shield against the enemy.

Yes and lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover come back to me  
yes and lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover come back to me.

Yes and lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover come back to me  
yes and lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover, lover come back to me.



## Field Commander Cohen

Field Commander Cohen, he was our most important spy.  
Wounded in the line of duty,  
parachuting acid into diplomatic cocktail parties,  
urging Fidel Castro to abandon fields and castles.  
Leave it all and like a man,  
come back to nothing special,  
such as waiting rooms and ticket lines,  
silver bullet suicides,  
and messianic ocean tides,  
and racial roller-coaster rides  
and other forms of boredom advertised as poetry.

I know you need your sleep now,  
I know your life's been hard.  
But many men are falling,  
where you promised to stand guard.

I never asked but I heard you cast your lot along with the poor.  
But then I overheard your prayer,  
that you be this and nothing more  
than just some grateful faithful woman's favourite singing millionaire,  
the patron Saint of envy and the grocer of despair,  
working for the Yankee Dollar.

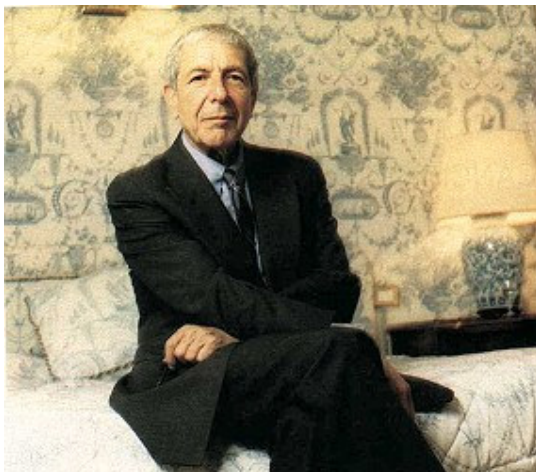
Ah, lover come and lie with me, if my lover is who you are,  
and be your sweetest self awhile until I ask for more, my child.  
Then let the other selves be wrong, yeah, let them manifest and come  
till every taste is on the tongue,  
till love is pierced and love is hung,  
and every kind of freedom done, then oh,  
oh my love, oh my love, oh my love,  
oh my love, oh my love, oh my love.

## Why Don't You Try

Why don't you try to do without him?  
Why don't you try to live alone?  
Do you really need his hands for your passion?  
Do you really need his heart for your throne?  
Do you need his labour for your baby?  
Do you need his beast for the bone?  
Do you need to hold a leash to be a lady?  
I know you're going to make, make it on your own.

Why don't you try to forget him?  
Just open up your dainty little hand.  
You know this life is filled with many sweet companions,  
many satisfying one-night stands.  
Do you want to be the ditch around a tower?  
Do you want to be the moonlight in his cave?  
Do you want to give your blessing to his power  
as he goes whistling past his daddy, past his daddy's grave.

I'd like to take you to the ceremony,  
well, that is if I remember the way.  
You see Jack and Jill they're going to join their misery,  
I'm afraid it's time for everyone to pray.  
You can see they've finally taken cover,  
they're willing, yeah they're willing to obey.  
Their vows are difficult, they're for each other,  
so let nobody put a loophole, a loophole in their way.



## There is a War

There is a war between the rich and poor,  
a war between the man and the woman.  
There is a war between the ones who say there is a war  
and the ones who say there isn't.

Why don't you come on back to the war, that's right, get in it,  
why don't you come on back to the war, it's just beginning.

Well I live here with a woman and a child,  
the situation makes me kind of nervous.  
Yes, I rise up from her arms, she says "I guess you call this love";  
I call it service.  
Why don't you come on back to the war, don't be a tourist,  
why don't you come on back to the war, before it hurts us,  
why don't you come on back to the war, let's all get nervous.

You cannot stand what I've become,  
you much prefer the gentleman I was before.  
I was so easy to defeat, I was so easy to control,  
I didn't even know there was a war.

Why don't you come on back to the war, don't be embarrassed,  
why don't you come on back to the war, you can still get married.

There is a war between the rich and poor,  
a war between the man and the woman.  
There is a war between the left and right,  
a war between the black and white,  
a war between the odd and the even.

Why don't you come on back to the war, pick up your tiny burden,  
why don't you come on back to the war, let's all get even,  
why don't you come on back to the war, can't you hear me speaking?

## A Singer Must Die

Now the courtroom is quiet, but who will confess.  
Is it true you betrayed us? The answer is Yes.  
Then read me the list of the crimes that are mine,  
I will ask for the mercy that you love to decline.  
And all the ladies go moist, and the judge has no choice,  
a singer must die for the lie in his voice.

And I thank you, I thank you for doing your duty,  
you keepers of truth, you guardians of beauty.  
Your vision is right, my vision is wrong,  
I'm sorry for smudging the air with my song.

Oh, the night it is thick, my defences are hid  
in the clothes of a woman I would like to forgive,  
in the rings of her silk, in the hinge of her thighs,  
where I have to go begging in beauty's disguise.  
Oh goodnight, goodnight, my night after night,  
my night after night, after night, after night, after night, after night.

I am so afraid that I listen to you,  
your sun glassed protectors they do that to you.  
It's their ways to detain, their ways to disgrace,  
their knee in your balls and their fist in your face.  
Yes and long live the state by whoever it's made,  
sir, I didn't see nothing, I was just getting home late.



## I Tried To Leave You

I tried to leave you, I don't deny  
I closed the book on us, at least a hundred times.  
I'd wake up every morning by your side.

The years go by, you lose your pride.  
The baby's crying, so you do not go outside,  
and all your work it's right before your eyes.

Goodnight, my darling, I hope you're satisfied,  
the bed is kind of narrow, but my arms are open wide.  
And here's a man still working for your smile.





## Who By Fire

And who by fire, who by water,  
who in the sunshine, who in the night time,  
who by high ordeal, who by common trial,  
who in your merry merry month of may,  
who by very slow decay,  
and who shall I say is calling?

And who in her lonely slip, who by barbiturate,  
who in these realms of love, who by something blunt,  
and who by avalanche, who by powder,  
who for his greed, who for his hunger,  
and who shall I say is calling?

And who by brave assent, who by accident,  
who in solitude, who in this mirror,  
who by his lady's command, who by his own hand,  
who in mortal chains, who in power,  
and who shall I say is calling?



## Take This Longing

Many men have loved the bells  
you fastened to the rein,  
and everyone who wanted you  
they found what they will always want again.  
Your beauty lost to you yourself  
just as it was lost to them.

Oh take this longing from my tongue,  
whatever useless things these hands have done.  
Let me see your beauty broken down  
like you would do for one you love.

Your body like a searchlight  
my poverty revealed,  
I would like to try your charity  
until you cry, "Now you must try my greed."  
And everything depends upon  
how near you sleep to me

Just take this longing from my tongue  
all the lonely things my hands have done.  
Let me see your beauty broken down  
like you would do for one your love.

Hungry as an archway  
through which the troops have passed,  
I stand in ruins behind you,  
with your winter clothes, your broken sandal straps.  
I love to see you naked over there  
especially from the back.

Oh take this longing from my tongue,  
all the useless things my hands have done,  
untie for me your hired blue gown,  
like you would do for one that you love.

You're faithful to the better man,  
I'm afraid that he left.  
So let me judge your love affair  
in this very room where I have sentenced  
mine to death.  
I'll even wear these old laurel leaves  
that he's shaken from his head.

Just take this longing from my tongue,  
all the useless things my hands have done,  
let me see your beauty broken down,  
like you would do for one you love.

Like you would do for one you love.



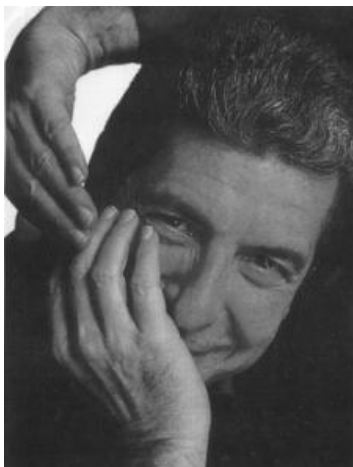
## Leaving Green Sleeves

Alas, my love, you did me wrong,  
to cast me out discourteously,  
for I have loved you so long,  
delighting in your very company.  
Now if you intend to show me disdain,  
don't you know it all the more enraptures me,  
for even so I still remain your lover in captivity.

Green sleeves, you're all alone,  
the leaves have fallen, the men have gone.  
Green sleeves, there's no one home,  
not even the Lady Green Sleeves

I sang my songs, I told my lies,  
to lie between your matchless thighs.  
And ain't it fine, ain't it wild  
to finally end our exercise  
Then I saw you naked in the early dawn,  
oh, I hoped you would be someone new.  
I reached for you but you were gone,  
so lady I'm going too.

Green sleeves, you're all alone,  
the leaves have fallen, the men have all gone home.  
Green sleeves, it's so easily done,  
leaving the Lady Green Sleeves.



## True Love Leaves No Traces

As the mist leaves no scar  
On the dark green hill  
So my body leaves no scar  
On you and never will

Through windows in the dark  
The children come, the children go  
Like arrows with no targets  
Like shackles made of snow

True love leaves no traces  
If you and I are one  
It's lost in our embraces  
Like stars against the sun

As a falling leaf may rest  
A moment on the air  
So your head upon my breast  
So my hand upon your hair

And many nights endure  
Without a moon or star  
So we will endure  
When one is gone and far

True love leaves no traces  
If you and I are one  
It's lost in our embraces  
Like stars against the sun



## Iodine

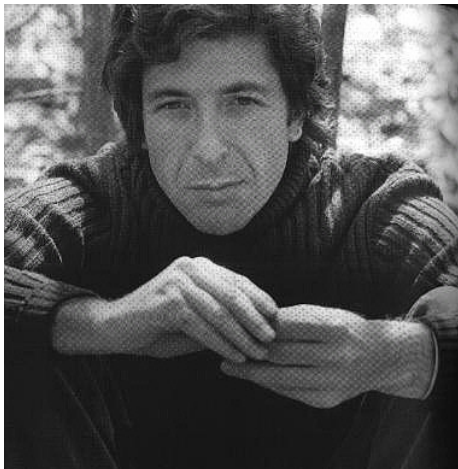
I needed you, I knew I was in danger  
of losing what I used to think was mine  
You let me love you till I was a failure,  
You let me love you till I was a failure --  
Your beauty on my bruise like iodine

I asked you if a man could be forgiven  
And though I failed at love, was this a crime?  
You said, Don't worry, don't worry, darling  
You said, Don't worry, don't you worry, darling  
There are many ways a man can serve his time

You covered up that place I could not master  
It wasn't dark enough to shut my eyes  
So I was with you, O sweet compassion  
Yes I was with you, O sweet compassion  
Compassion with the sting of iodine

Your saintly kisses reeked of iodine  
Your fragrance with a fume of iodine  
And pity in the room like iodine

Your sister fingers burned like iodine  
And all my wanton lust was iodine  
My masquerade of trust was iodine  
And everywhere the flare of iodine



## Paper Thin Hotel

The walls of this hotel are paper-thin  
Last night I heard you making love to him  
The struggle mouth to mouth and limb to limb  
The grunt of unity when he came in

I stood there with my ear against the wall  
I was not seized by jealousy at all  
In fact a burden lifted from my soul  
I learned that love was out of my control  
A heavy burden lifted from my soul  
I heard that love was out of my control

I listened to your kisses at the door  
I never heard the world so clear before  
You ran your bath and you began to sing  
I felt so good I couldn't feel a thing

And I can't wait to tell you to your face  
And I can't wait for you to take my place  
You are The Naked Angel In My Heart  
You are The Woman With Her Legs Apart  
It's written on the walls of this hotel  
You go to heaven once you've been to hell

A heavy burden lifted from my soul  
I heard that love was out of my control

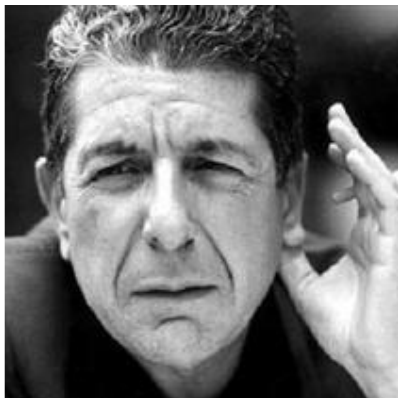


## Memories

Frankie Lane, he was singing Jezebel  
I pinned an Iron Cross to my lapel  
I walked up to the tallest and the blondest girl  
I said, Look, you don't know me now but very soon you will  
So won't you let me see  
I said "won't you let me see"  
I said "won't you let me see  
Your naked body?"

Just dance me to the dark side of the gym  
Chances are I'll let you do most anything  
I know you're hungry, I can hear it in your voice  
And there are many parts of me to touch, you have your choice  
Ah but no you cannot see  
She said "no you cannot see"  
She said "no you cannot see  
My naked body"

So We're dancing close, the band is playing Stardust  
Balloons and paper streamers floating down on us  
She says, You've got a minute left to fall in love  
In solemn moments such as this I have put my trust  
And all my faith to see  
I said all my faith to see  
I said all my faith to see  
Her naked body





## I left a woman waiting

I left a woman waiting  
I met her sometime later  
She said, I see your eyes are dead  
What happened to you, lover?  
What happened to you, my lover?  
What happened to you, lover?  
What happened to you?

And since she spoke the truth to me  
I tried to answer truthfully  
Whatever happened to my eyes  
Happened to your beauty  
Happened to your beauty  
What happened to your beauty  
Happened to me

We took ourselves to someone's bed  
And there we fell together  
Quick as dogs and truly dead were we  
And free as running water  
Free as running water  
Free as running water  
Free as you and me  
The way it's got to be  
The way it's got to be, lover



## Don't Go Home With Your Hard-On

I was born in a beauty salon  
My father was a dresser of hair  
My mother was a girl you could call on  
When you called she was always there

When you called she was always there  
When you called she was always there  
When you called she was always there  
When you called she was always there

Ah but don't go home with your hard-on  
It will only drive you insane  
You can't shake it (or break it) with your Motown  
You can't melt it down in the rain

You can't melt it down in the rain  
You can't melt it down in the rain  
You can't melt it down in the rain

I've looked behind all of the faces  
That smile you down to you knees  
And the lips that say, Come on, taste us  
And when you try to they make you say Please

When you try to they make you say Please  
When you try to they make you say Please  
When you try to they make you say Please  
When you try to they make you say Please

Here come's your bride with her veil on  
Approach her, you wretch, if you dare  
Approach her, you ape with your tail on  
Once you have her she'll always be there

Once you have her she'll always be there  
Once you have her she'll always be there  
Once you have her she'll always be there  
Once you have her she'll always be there

So I work in that same beauty salon  
I'm chained to the old masquerade  
The lipstick, the shadow, the silicone  
I follow my father's trade

I follow my father's trade  
Yes I follow my father's trade  
Yes I follow my father's trade  
Yes I follow my father's trade

Ah but don't go home with your hard-on  
It will only drive you insane  
You can't shake it (or break it) with your Motown  
You can't melt it down in the rain  
You can't melt it down in the rain  
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You can't melt it down in the rain  
You can't melt it down in the rain  
You can't melt it down in the rain  
You can't melt it down in the rain



# Fingerprints

I touched you once too often  
Now I don't know who I am  
My fingerprints were missing  
When I wiped away the jam

Yes I called my fingerprints all night  
But they don't seem to care  
The last time that I saw them  
They were leafing through your hair

Fingerprints, fingerprints  
Where are you now my fingerprints?

Yeah I thought I'd leave this morning  
So I emptied out your drawer  
A hundred thousand fingerprints  
They floated to the floor

You know you hardly stopped to pick them up  
You don't care what you lose  
Ah you don't even seem to know  
Whose fingerprints are whose

Fingerprints, fingerprints  
Where are you now my fingerprints?

And now you want to marry me  
You want to take me down the aisle  
You want to throw confetti fingerprints  
You know that's not my style

O sure I'd like to marry you  
But I can't face the dawn  
With any girl who knew me  
When my fingerprints were on

Fingerprints, fingerprints  
Where are you now my fingerprints?

Fingerprints, oh fingerprints  
Where are you now my fingerprints?



## Death of a Ladies Man

Ah the man she wanted all her life was hanging by a thread  
"I never even knew how much I wanted you," she said.  
His muscles they were numbered and his style was obsolete.  
"O baby, I have come too late." She knelt beside his feet.  
"I'll never see a face like yours in years of men to come  
I'll never see such arms again in wrestling or in love."  
And all his virtues burning in the smoky Holocaust  
She took unto herself most everything her lover lost

Now the master of this landscape he was standing at the view  
with a sparrow of St. Francis that he was preaching to  
She beckoned to the sentry of his high religious mood  
She said, "I'll make a place between my legs,  
I'll show you solitude."

He offered her an orgy in a many mirrored room  
He promised her protection for the issue of her womb  
She moved her body hard against a sharpened metal spoon  
She stopped the bloody rituals of passage to the moon

She took his much admired oriental frame of mind  
and the heart-of-darkness alibi his money hides behind  
She took his blonde madonna and his monastery wine --  
"This mental space is occupied and everything is mine."

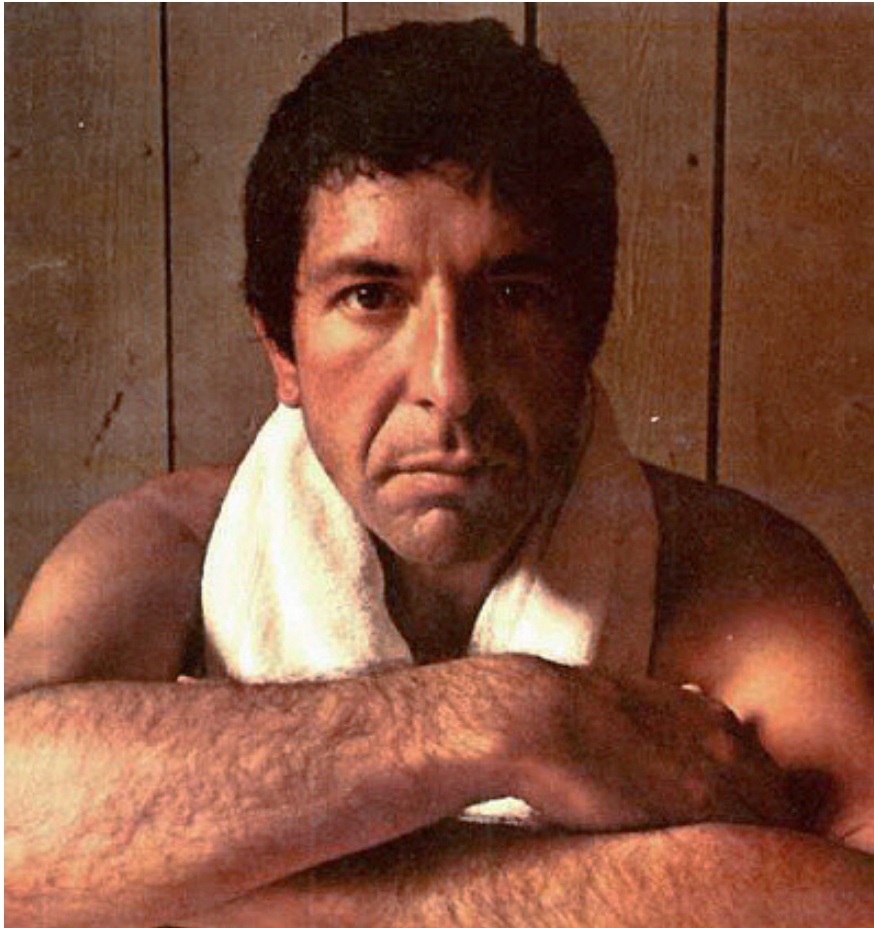
He tried to make a final stand beside the railway track  
She said, "The art of longing's over and it's never coming back."  
She took his tavern parliament, his cap, his cocky dance,  
she mocked his female fashions and his working-class moustache.

The last time that I saw him he was trying hard to get  
a woman's education but he's not a woman yet  
And the last time that I saw her she was living with some boy  
who gives her soul an empty room and gives her body joy.

So the great affair is over but whoever would have guessed  
it would leave us all so vacant and so deeply unimpressed  
It's like our visit to the moon or to that other star  
I guess you go for nothing if you really want to go that far.

It's like our visit to the moon or to that other star  
I guess you go for nothing if you really want to go that far.

It's like our visit to the moon or to that other star  
I guess you go for nothing if you really want to go that far.



## Dance Me To The End Of Love

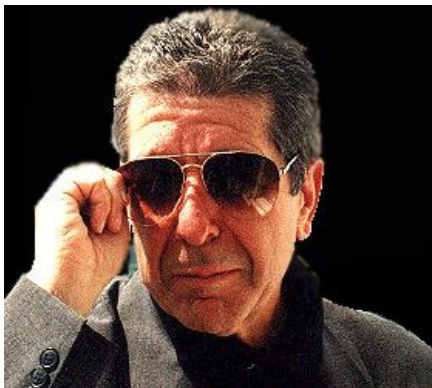
Dance me to your beauty with a burning violin  
Dance me through the panic 'til I'm gathered safely in  
Lift me like an olive branch and be my homeward dove  
Dance me to the end of love  
Dance me to the end of love

Oh let me see your beauty when the witnesses are gone  
Let me feel you moving like they do in Babylon  
Show me slowly what I only know the limits of  
Dance me to the end of love  
Dance me to the end of love

Dance me to the wedding now, dance me on and on  
Dance me very tenderly and dance me very long  
We're both of us beneath our love, we're both of us above  
Dance me to the end of love  
Dance me to the end of love

Dance me to the children who are asking to be born  
Dance me through the curtains that our kisses have outworn  
Raise a tent of shelter now, though every thread is torn  
Dance me to the end of love

Dance me to your beauty with a burning violin  
Dance me through the panic till I'm gathered safely in  
Touch me with your naked hand or touch me with your glove  
Dance me to the end of love  
Dance me to the end of love  
Dance me to the end of love





## Coming Back to You

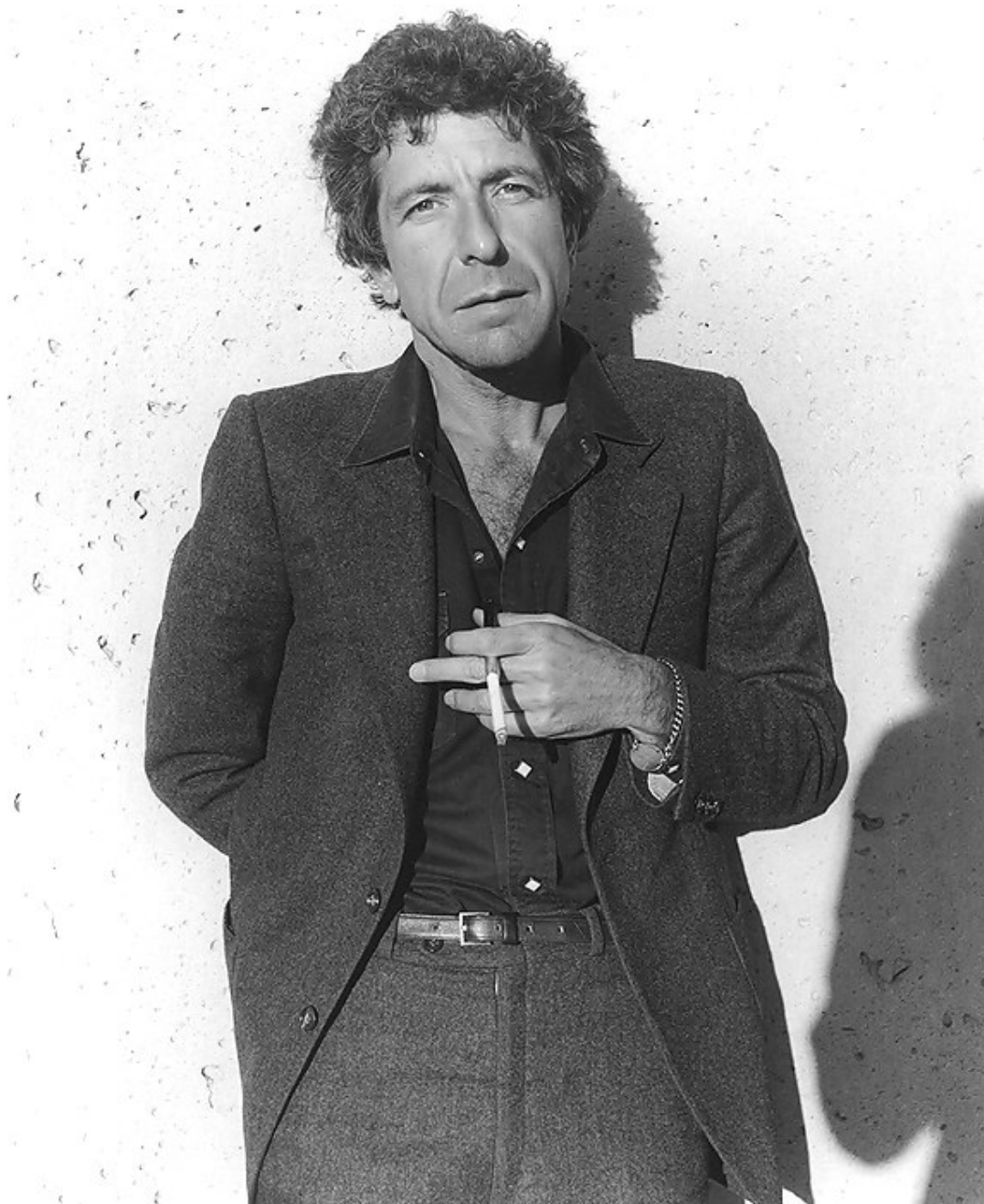
Maybe I'm still hurting  
I can't turn the other cheek  
But you know that I still love you  
It's just that I can't speak  
I looked for you in everyone  
And they called me on that too  
I lived alone but I was only  
Coming back to you

Ah they're shutting down the factory now  
Just when all the bills are due  
And the fields they're under lock and key  
Tho' the rain and the sun come through  
And springtime starts but then it stops  
In the name of something new  
And all the senses rise against this  
Coming back to you

And they're handing down my sentence now  
And I know what I must do  
Another mile of silence while I'm  
Coming back to you

There are many in your life  
And many still to be  
Since you are a shining light  
There's many that you'll see  
But I have to deal with envy  
When you choose the precious few  
Who've left their pride on the other side of  
Coming back to you

Even in your arms I know  
I'll never get it right  
Even when you bend to give me  
Comfort in the night  
I've got to have your word on this  
Or none of it is true  
And all I've said was just instead of  
Coming back to you



## The Law

How many times did you call me  
And I knew it was late  
I left everybody  
But I never went straight  
I don't claim to be guilty  
But I do understand  
There's a Law, there's an Arm, there's a Hand  
There's a Law, there's an Arm, there's a Hand

Now my heart's like a blister  
From doing what I do  
If the moon has a sister  
It's got to be you  
I'm going to miss you forever  
Tho' it's not what I planned  
There's a Law, there's an Arm, there's a Hand  
There's a Law, there's an Arm, there's a Hand

Now the deal has been dirty  
Since dirty began  
I'm not asking for mercy  
Not from the man  
You just don't ask for mercy  
While you're still on the stand  
There's a Law, there's an Arm, there's a Hand  
There's a Law, there's an Arm, there's a Hand

I don't claim to be guilty  
Guilty's too grand  
There's a Law, there's an Arm, there's a Hand  
There's a Law, there's an Arm, there's a Hand

That's all I can say, baby  
That's all I can say  
It wasn't for nothing  
That they put me away  
I fell with my angel  
Down the chain of command  
There's a Law, there's an Arm, there's a Hand  
There's a Law, there's an Arm, there's a Hand  
There's a Law, there's an Arm, there's a Hand



## The Night comes On

I went down to the place  
Where I knew she lay waiting  
Under the marble and the snow  
I said, Mother I'm frightened  
The thunder and the lightning  
I'll never come through this alone  
She said, I'll be with you  
My shawl wrapped around you  
My hand on your head when you go  
And the night came on  
It was very calm  
I wanted the night to go on and on  
But she said, Go back to the World

We were fighting in Egypt  
When they signed this agreement  
That nobody else had to die  
There was this terrible sound  
And my father went down  
With a terrible wound in his side  
He said, Try to go on  
Take my books, take my gun  
Remember, my son, how they lied  
And the night comes on  
It's very calm  
I'd like to pretend that my father was wrong  
But you don't want to lie, not to the young

We were locked in this kitchen  
I took to religion  
And I wondered how long she would stay  
I needed so much  
To have nothing to touch  
I've always been greedy that way  
But my son and my daughter  
Climbed out of the water  
Crying, Papa, you promised to play  
And they lead me away  
To the great surprise  
It's Papa, don't peek, Papa, cover your eyes  
And they hide, they hide in the World

Now I look for her always  
I'm lost in this calling  
I'm tied to the threads of some prayer  
Saying, When will she summon me  
When will she come to me  
What must I do to prepare  
When she bends to my longing  
Like a willow, like a fountain  
She stands in the luminous air  
And the night comes on  
And it's very calm  
I lie in her arms and says, When I'm gone  
I'll be yours, yours for a song

Now the crickets are singing  
The vesper bells ringing  
The cat's curled asleep in his chair  
I'll go down to Bill's Bar  
I can make it that far  
And I'll see if my friends are still there  
Yes, and here's to the few  
Who forgive what you do  
And the fewer who don't even care  
And the night comes on  
It's very calm  
I want to cross over, I want to go home  
But she says, Go back, go back to the World

# Hallelujah

Now I've heard there was a secret chord  
That David played, and it pleased the Lord  
But you don't really care for music, do you?  
It goes like this  
The fourth, the fifth  
The minor fall, the major lift  
The baffled king composing Hallelujah

Hallelujah  
Hallelujah  
Hallelujah  
Hallelujah

Your faith was strong but you needed proof  
You saw her bathing on the roof  
Her beauty and the moonlight overthrew her  
She tied you  
To a kitchen chair  
She broke your throne, and she cut your hair  
And from your lips she drew the Hallelujah

Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

You say I took the name in vain  
I don't even know the name  
But if I did, well really, what's it to you?  
There's a blaze of light  
In every word  
It doesn't matter which you heard  
The holy or the broken Hallelujah

Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

I did my best, it wasn't much  
I couldn't feel, so I tried to touch  
I've told the truth, I didn't come to fool you  
And even though

It all went wrong  
I'll stand before the Lord of Song  
With nothing on my tongue but Hallelujah

Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah





## Hallelujah II.

Baby, I've been here before.  
I know this room, I've walked this floor.  
I used to live alone before I knew you.

Yeah I've seen your flag on the marble arch,  
But listen, love is not some kind of victory march,  
No it's a cold and it's a very broken Hallelujah.

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, (Hallelujah...)

There was a time you let me know  
What's really going on below,  
Ah but now you never show it to me, do you?

Yeah but I remember, yeah when I moved in you,  
And the holy dove, she was moving too,  
Yes every single breath that we drew was Hallelujah.

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.

Maybe there's a God above,  
As for me, all I've ever seemed to learn from love  
Is how to shoot at someone who outdrew you.

Yeah but it's not a complaint that you hear tonight,  
It's not the laughter of someone who claims to have seen the light  
No it's a cold and it's a very lonely Hallelujah.

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.

I did my best, it wasn't much.  
I couldn't feel, so I learned to touch.  
I've told the truth, I didn't come all this way to fool you.

Yeah even though it all went wrong  
I'll stand right here before the Lord of Song  
With nothing on my lips but Hallelujah.

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.



## The captain

Now the Captain called me to his bed  
He fumbled for my hand  
"Take these silver bars," he said  
"I'm giving you command."  
"Command of what, there's no one here  
There's only you and me --  
All the rest are dead or in retreat  
Or with the enemy."

"Complain, complain, that's all you've done  
Ever since we lost  
If it's not the Crucifixion  
Then it's the Holocaust."  
"May Christ have mercy on your soul  
For making such a joke  
Amid these hearts that burn like coal  
And the flesh that rose like smoke."

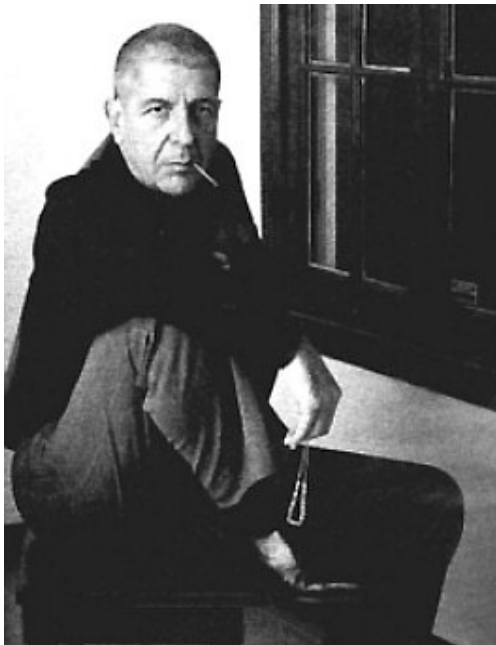
"I know that you have suffered, lad,  
But suffer this awhile:  
Whatever makes a soldier sad  
Will make a killer smile."  
"I'm leaving, Captain, I must go  
There's blood upon your hand  
But tell me, Captain, if you know  
Of a decent place to stand."

"There is no decent place to stand  
In a massacre;  
But if a woman take your hand  
Go and stand with her."  
"I left a wife in Tennessee  
And a baby in Saigon --  
I risked my life, but not to hear  
Some country-western song."

"Ah but if you cannot raise your love  
To a very high degree,  
Then you're just the man I've been thinking of --  
So come and stand with me."  
"Your standing days are done," I cried,  
"You'll rally me no more.  
I don't even know what side  
We fought on, or what for."

"I'm on the side that's always lost  
Against the side of Heaven  
I'm on the side of Snake-eyes tossed  
Against the side of Seven.  
And I've read the Bill of Human Rights  
And some of it was true  
But there wasn't any burden left  
So I'm laying it on you."

Now the Captain he was dying  
But the Captain wasn't hurt  
The silver bars were in my hand  
I pinned them to my shirt.



## Hunter's Lullaby

Your father's gone a-hunting  
He's deep in the forest so wild  
And he cannot take his wife with him  
He cannot take his child

Your father's gone a-hunting  
In the quicksand and the clay  
And a woman cannot follow him  
Although she knows the way

Your father's gone a-hunting  
Through the silver and the glass  
Where only greed can enter  
But spirit, spirit cannot pass

Your father's gone a-hunting  
For the beast we'll never cannot bind  
And he leaves a baby sleeping  
And his blessings all behind

Your father's gone a-hunting  
And he's lost his lucky charm  
And he's lost the guardian heart  
That keeps the hunter from the harm

Your father's gone a-hunting  
He asked me to say goodbye  
And he warned me not to stop him  
I wouldn't, I wouldn't even try



## Heart With No Companion

I greet you from the other side  
Of sorrow and despair  
With a love so vast and shattered  
It will reach you everywhere

And I sing this for the captain  
Whose ship has not been built  
For the mother in confusion  
Her cradle still unfilled  
For the heart with no companion  
For the soul without a king  
For the prima ballerina  
Who cannot dance to anything

Through the days of shame that are coming  
Through the nights of wild distress  
Tho' your promise count for nothing  
You must keep it nonetheless

You must keep it for the captain  
Whose ship has not been built  
For the mother in confusion  
Her cradle still unfilled



## If It Be Your Will

If it be your will  
That I speak no more  
And my voice be still  
As it was before  
I will speak no more  
I shall abide until  
I am spoken for  
If it be your will

If it be your will  
That a voice be true  
From this broken hill  
I will sing to you  
From this broken hill  
All your praises they shall ring  
If it be your will  
To let me sing  
From this broken hill  
All your praises they shall ring  
If it be your will  
To let me sing

If it be your will  
If there is a choice  
Let the rivers fill  
Let the hills rejoice  
Let your mercy spill  
On all these burning hearts in hell  
If it be your will  
To make us well

And draw us near  
And bind us tight  
All your children here  
In their rags of light  
In our rags of light  
All dressed to kill  
And end this night  
If it be your will

If it be your will.





## First We Take Manhattan

They sentenced me to twenty years of boredom  
For trying to change the system from within  
I'm coming now, I'm coming to reward them  
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin

I'm guided by a signal in the heavens  
I'm guided by this birthmark on my skin  
I'm guided by the beauty of our weapons  
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin

I'd really like to live beside you, baby  
I love your body and your spirit and your clothes  
But you see that line there moving through the station?  
I told you, I told you, told you, I was one of those

Ah you loved me as a loser, but now you're worried that I just might win  
You know the way to stop me, but you don't have the discipline  
How many nights I prayed for this, to let my work begin  
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin

I don't like your fashion business mister  
And I don't like these drugs that keep you thin  
I don't like what happened to my sister  
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin

I'd really like to live beside you, baby ...

And I thank you for those items that you sent me  
The monkey and the plywood violin  
I practiced every night, now I'm ready  
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin

I am guided

Ah remember me, I used to live for music  
Remember me, I brought your groceries in  
Well it's Father's Day and everybody's wounded  
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin

## Ain't No Cure For Love

I loved you for a long, long time  
I know this love is real  
It don't matter how it all went wrong  
That don't change the way I feel  
And I can't believe that time's  
Gonna heal this wound I'm speaking of  
There ain't no cure,  
There ain't no cure,  
There ain't no cure for love

I'm aching for you baby  
I can't pretend I'm not  
I need to see you naked  
In your body and your thought  
I've got you like a habit  
And I'll never get enough  
There ain't no cure,  
There ain't no cure,  
There ain't no cure for love

There ain't no cure for love  
There ain't no cure for love  
All the rocket ships are climbing through the sky  
The holy books are open wide  
The doctors working day and night  
But they'll never ever find that cure for love  
There ain't no drink no drug  
(Ah tell them, angels)  
There's nothing pure enough to be a cure for love

I see you in the subway and I see you on the bus  
I see you lying down with me, I see you waking up  
I see your hand, I see your hair  
Your bracelets and your brush  
And I call to you, I call to you  
But I don't call soft enough  
There ain't no cure,  
There ain't no cure,  
There ain't no cure for love

I walked into this empty church I had no place else to go  
When the sweetest voice I ever heard, whispered to my soul  
I don't need to be forgiven for loving you so much  
It's written in the scriptures  
It's written there in blood  
I even heard the angels declare it from above  
There ain't no cure,  
There ain't no cure,  
There ain't no cure for love

There ain't no cure for love  
There ain't no cure for love  
All the rocket ships are climbing through the sky  
The holy books are open wide  
The doctors working day and night  
But they'll never ever find that cure,  
That cure for love



# Everybody Knows

*(co-written by Sharon Robinson)*

Everybody knows that the dice are loaded  
Everybody rolls with their fingers crossed  
Everybody knows that the war is over  
Everybody knows the good guys lost  
Everybody knows the fight was fixed  
The poor stay poor, the rich get rich  
That's how it goes  
Everybody knows

Everybody knows that the boat is leaking  
Everybody knows that the captain lied  
Everybody got this broken feeling  
Like their father or their dog just died

Everybody talking to their pockets  
Everybody wants a box of chocolates  
And a long stem rose  
Everybody knows

Everybody knows that you love me baby  
Everybody knows that you really do  
Everybody knows that you've been faithful  
Ah give or take a night or two  
Everybody knows you've been discreet  
But there were so many people you just had to meet  
Without your clothes  
And everybody knows

Everybody knows, everybody knows  
That's how it goes  
Everybody knows

Everybody knows, everybody knows  
That's how it goes  
Everybody knows

And everybody knows that it's now or never  
Everybody knows that it's me or you  
And everybody knows that you live forever  
Ah when you've done a line or two  
Everybody knows the deal is rotten  
Old Black Joe's still pickin' cotton  
For your ribbons and bows  
And everybody knows

And everybody knows that the Plague is coming  
Everybody knows that it's moving fast  
Everybody knows that the naked man and woman  
Are just a shining artifact of the past  
Everybody knows the scene is dead  
But there's gonna be a meter on your bed  
That will disclose  
What everybody knows

And everybody knows that you're in trouble  
Everybody knows what you've been through  
From the bloody cross on top of Calvary  
To the beach of Malibu  
Everybody knows it's coming apart  
Take one last look at this Sacred Heart  
Before it blows  
And everybody knows

Everybody knows, everybody knows  
That's how it goes  
Everybody knows

Oh everybody knows, everybody knows  
That's how it goes  
Everybody knows

Everybody knows

## I'm Your Man

If you want a lover  
I'll do anything you ask me to  
And if you want another kind of love  
I'll wear a mask for you  
If you want a partner  
Take my hand  
Or if you want to strike me down in anger  
Here I stand  
I'm your man

If you want a boxer  
I will step into the ring for you  
And if you want a doctor  
I'll examine every inch of you  
If you want a driver  
Climb inside  
Or if you want to take me for a ride  
You know you can  
I'm your man

Ah, the moon's too bright  
The chain's too tight  
The beast won't go to sleep  
I've been running through these promises to you  
That I made and I could not keep  
Ah but a man never got a woman back  
Not by begging on his knees  
Or I'd crawl to you baby  
And I'd fall at your feet  
And I'd howl at your beauty  
Like a dog in heat  
And I'd claw at your heart  
And I'd tear at your sheet  
I'd say please, please  
I'm your man

And if you've got to sleep  
A moment on the road  
I will steer for you  
And if you want to work the street alone  
I'll disappear for you  
If you want a father for your child  
Or only want to walk with me a while  
Across the sand  
I'm your man

If you want a lover  
I'll do anything you ask me to  
And if you want another kind of love  
I'll wear a mask for you



## Take This Waltz

Now in Vienna there's ten pretty women  
There's a shoulder where Death comes to cry  
There's a lobby with nine hundred windows  
There's a tree where the doves go to die  
There's a piece that was torn from the morning  
And it hangs in the Gallery of Frost  
Ay, Ay, Ay, Ay  
Take this waltz, take this waltz  
Take this waltz with the clamp on its jaws

Oh I want you, I want you, I want you  
On a chair with a dead magazine  
In the cave at the tip of the lily  
In some hallways where love's never been  
On a bed where the moon has been sweating  
In a cry filled with footsteps and sand  
Ay, Ay, Ay, Ay  
Take this waltz, take this waltz  
Take its broken waist in your hand

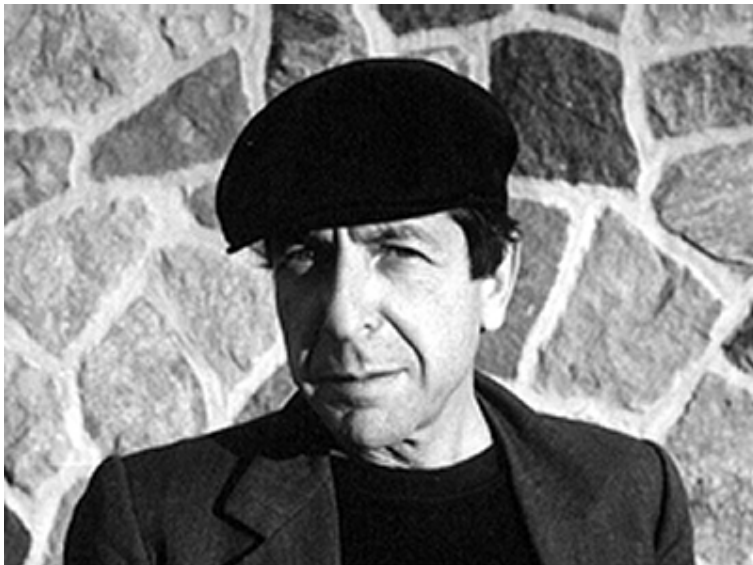
This waltz, this waltz, this waltz, this waltz  
With its very own breath of brandy and Death  
Dragging its tail in the sea

There's a concert hall in Vienna  
Where your mouth had a thousand reviews  
There's a bar where the boys have stopped talking  
They've been sentenced to death by the blues  
Ah, but who is it climbs to your picture  
With a garland of freshly cut tears?  
Ay, Ay, Ay, Ay  
Take this waltz, take this waltz  
Take this waltz it's been dying for years



There's an attic where children are playing  
Where I've got to lie down with you soon  
In a dream of Hungarian lanterns  
In the mist of some sweet afternoon  
And I'll see what you've chained to your sorrow  
All your sheep and your lilies of snow  
Ay, Ay, Ay, Ay  
Take this waltz, take this waltz  
With its "I'll never forget you, you know!"

And I'll dance with you in Vienna  
I'll be wearing a river's disguise  
The hyacinth wild on my shoulder,  
My mouth on the dew of your thighs  
And I'll bury my soul in a scrapbook,  
With the photographs there, and the moss  
And I'll yield to the flood of your beauty  
My cheap violin and my cross  
And you'll carry me down on your dancing  
To the pools that you lift on your wrist  
Oh my love, Oh my love  
Take this waltz, take this waltz  
It's yours now. It's all that there is



## Jazz Police

Can you tell me why the bells are ringing?  
Nothing's happened in a million years  
I've been sitting here since Wednesday morning  
Wednesday morning can't believe my ears

Jazz police are looking through my folders  
Jazz police are talking to my niece  
Jazz police have got their final orders  
Jazz, drop your axe, it's Jazz police!

Jesus taken serious by the many  
Jesus taken joyous by a few  
Jazz police are paid by J.P. Getty  
Jazzers paid by J. Paul Getty II

Jazz police I hear you calling  
Jazz police I feel so blue  
Jazz police I think I'm falling,  
I'm falling for you

Wild as any freedom loving racist  
I applaud the actions of the chief  
Tell me now oh beautiful and spacious  
Am I in trouble with the Jazz police?

They will never understand our culture  
They'll never understand the Jazz police  
Jazz police are working for my mother  
Blood is thicker margarine than grease

Let me be somebody I admire  
Let me be that muscle down the street  
Stick another turtle on the fire  
Guys like me are mad for turtle meat

Jazz police I hear you calling  
Jazz police I feel so blue  
Jazz police I think I'm falling,  
I'm falling for you

## I can't Forget

I stumbled out of bed  
I got ready for the struggle  
I smoked a cigarette  
And I tightened up my gut  
I said this can't be me  
Must be my double  
And I can't forget, I can't forget  
I can't forget but I don't remember what

I'm burning up the road  
I'm heading down to Phoenix  
I got this old address  
Of someone that I knew  
It was high and fine and free  
Ah, you should have seen us  
And I can't forget, I can't forget  
I can't forget but I don't remember who

I'll be there today  
With a big bouquet of cactus  
I got this rig that runs on memories  
And I promise, cross my heart,  
They'll never catch us  
But if they do, just tell them it was me

Yeah I loved you all my life  
And that's how I want to end it  
The summer's almost gone  
The winter's tuning up  
Yeah, the summer's gone  
But a lot goes on forever  
And I can't forget, I can't forget  
I can't forget but I don't remember what

## Tower of Song

Well my friends are gone and my hair is grey  
I ache in the places where I used to play  
And I'm crazy for love but I'm not coming on  
I'm just paying my rent every day  
Oh in the Tower of Song

I said to Hank Williams: how lonely does it get?  
Hank Williams hasn't answered yet  
But I hear him coughing all night long  
A hundred floors above me  
In the Tower of Song

I was born like this, I had no choice  
I was born with the gift of a golden voice  
And twenty-seven angels from the Great Beyond  
They tied me to this table right here  
In the Tower of Song

So you can stick your little pins in that voodoo doll  
I'm very sorry, baby, doesn't look like me at all  
I'm standing by the window where the light is strong  
Ah they don't let a woman kill you  
Not in the Tower of Song

Now you can say that I've grown bitter but of this you may be sure  
The rich have got their channels in the bedrooms of the poor  
And there's a mighty judgement coming, but I may be wrong  
You see, you hear these funny voices  
In the Tower of Song

I see you standing on the other side  
I don't know how the river got so wide  
I loved you baby, way back when  
And all the bridges are burning that we might have crossed  
But I feel so close to everything that we lost  
We'll never have to lose it again

Now I bid you farewell, I don't know when I'll be back  
There moving us tomorrow to that tower down the track  
But you'll be hearing from me baby, long after I'm gone  
I'll be speaking to you sweetly  
From a window in the Tower of Song

Yeah my friends are gone and my hair is grey  
I ache in the places where I used to play  
And I'm crazy for love but I'm not coming on  
I'm just paying my rent every day  
Oh in the Tower of Song



## The Future

Give me back my broken night  
my mirrored room, my secret life  
it's lonely here,  
there's no one left to torture  
Give me absolute control  
over every living soul  
And lie beside me, baby,  
that's an order!

Give me crack and anal sex  
Take the only tree that's left  
and stuff it up the hole  
in your culture  
Give me back the Berlin wall  
give me Stalin and St Paul  
I've seen the future, brother:  
it is murder.  
Things are going to slide, slide in all directions  
Won't be nothing  
Nothing you can measure anymore  
The blizzard, the blizzard of the world  
has crossed the threshold  
and it has overturned  
the order of the soul  
When they said REPENT REPENT  
I wonder what they meant  
When they said REPENT REPENT  
I wonder what they meant  
When they said REPENT REPENT  
I wonder what they meant

You don't know me from the wind  
you never will, you never did  
I'm the little jew  
who wrote the Bible  
I've seen the nations rise and fall  
I've heard their stories, heard them all  
but love's the only engine of survival  
Your servant here, he has been told  
to say it clear, to say it cold:  
It's over, it ain't going  
any further  
And now the wheels of heaven stop  
you feel the devil's riding crop  
Get ready for the future:  
it is murder

There'll be the breaking of the ancient  
western code  
Your private life will suddenly explode  
There'll be phantoms  
There'll be fires on the road  
and the white man dancing  
You'll see a woman  
hanging upside down  
her features covered by her fallen gown  
and all the lousy little poets  
coming round  
tryin' to sound like Charlie Manson  
and the white man dancin'

Give me back the Berlin wall  
Give me Stalin and St Paul  
Give me Christ  
or give me Hiroshima  
Destroy another fetus now  
We don't like children anyhow  
I've seen the future, baby:  
it is murder

# Waiting For The Miracle

*(co-written by Sharon Robinson)*

Baby, I've been waiting,  
I've been waiting night and day.  
I didn't see the time,  
I waited half my life away.  
There were lots of invitations  
and I know you sent me some,  
but I was waiting  
for the miracle, for the miracle to come.

I know you really loved me.  
but, you see, my hands were tied.  
I know it must have hurt you,  
it must have hurt your pride  
to have to stand beneath my window  
with your bugle and your drum,  
and me I'm up there waiting  
for the miracle, for the miracle to come.

Ah I don't believe you'd like it,  
You wouldn't like it here.  
There ain't no entertainment  
and the judgements are severe.  
The Maestro says it's Mozart  
but it sounds like bubble gum  
when you're waiting  
for the miracle, for the miracle to come.

Waiting for the miracle  
There's nothing left to do.  
I haven't been this happy  
since the end of World War II.



Nothing left to do  
when you know that you've been taken.  
Nothing left to do  
when you're begging for a crumb  
Nothing left to do  
when you've got to go on waiting  
waiting for the miracle to come.

I dreamed about you, baby.  
It was just the other night.  
Most of you was naked  
Ah but some of you was light.  
The sands of time were falling  
from your fingers and your thumb,  
and you were waiting  
for the miracle, for the miracle to come

Ah baby, let's get married,  
we've been alone too long.  
Let's be alone together.  
Let's see if we're that strong.  
Yeah let's do something crazy,  
something absolutely wrong  
while we're waiting  
for the miracle, for the miracle to come.

When you've fallen on the highway  
and you're lying in the rain,  
and they ask you how you're doing  
of course you'll say you can't complain --  
If you're squeezed for information,  
that's when you've got to play it dumb:  
You just say you're out there waiting  
for the miracle, for the miracle to come.

## Be For Real

*(by Frederick Knight)*

Are you back in my life to stay  
Or is it just for today  
Oh that you're gonna need me?  
If it's a thrill you're looking for  
Honey, I'm flexible. Oh, yeah.

Just be for real won't you, Baby  
Be for real oh, Baby  
You see I, I don't want to be hurt by love again

So you see I'm not naive.  
I just would like to believe  
Ah what you tell me.  
So don't give me the world today  
And tomorrow take it away.  
Don't do that to me, darling.

Just be for real won't you, Baby  
Be for real won't you, Baby

Been hurt so many times  
You see I, I don't want to be hurt by love again.

(I don't give a damn about the truth, Baby  
Except for the naked truth. Oh yeah)

Just be for real won't you, Baby  
Be for real won't you, Baby

No, no, no, no  
It's just that I, I don't want to be hurt by love again.

Thanks for the song Mr. Knight.

## closing Time

Ah we're drinking and we're dancing  
and the band is really happening  
and the Johnny Walker wisdom running high  
And my very sweet companion  
she's the Angel of Compassion  
she's rubbing half the world against her thigh  
And every drinker every dancer  
lifts a happy face to thank her  
the fiddler fiddles something so sublime  
all the women tear their blouses off  
and the men they dance on the polka-dots  
and it's partner found, it's partner lost  
and it's hell to pay when the fiddler stops:  
it's CLOSING TIME

Yeah the women tear their blouses off  
and the men they dance on the polka-dots  
and it's partner found, it's partner lost  
and it's hell to pay when the fiddler stops:  
it's CLOSING TIME

Ah we're lonely, we're romantic  
and the cider's laced with acid  
and the Holy Spirit's crying, "Where's the beef?"  
And the moon is swimming naked  
and the summer night is fragrant  
with a mighty expectation of relief  
So we struggle and we stagger  
down the snakes and up the ladder  
to the tower where the blessed hours chime  
and I swear it happened just like this:  
a sigh, a cry, a hungry kiss  
the Gates of Love they budged an inch  
I can't say much has happened since  
but CLOSING TIME

I swear it happened just like this:  
a sigh, a cry, a hungry kiss  
the Gates of Love they budged an inch  
I can't say much has happened since  
CLOSING TIME

I loved you for your beauty  
but that doesn't make a fool of me:  
you were in it for your beauty too  
and I loved you for your body  
there's a voice that sounds like God to me  
declaring, declaring, declaring that your body's really you  
And I loved you when our love was blessed  
and I love you now there's nothing left  
but sorrow and a sense of overtime  
and I missed you since the place got wrecked  
And I just don't care what happens next  
looks like freedom but it feels like death  
it's something in between, I guess  
it's CLOSING TIME

Yeah I missed you since the place got wrecked  
By the winds of change and the weeds of sex  
looks like freedom but it feels like death  
it's something in between, I guess  
it's CLOSING TIME

Yeah we're drinking and we're dancing  
but there's nothing really happening  
and the place is dead as Heaven on a Saturday night  
And my very close companion  
gets me fumbling gets me laughing  
she's a hundred but she's wearing  
something tight  
and I lift my glass to the Awful Truth  
which you can't reveal to the Ears of Youth  
except to say it isn't worth a dime  
And the whole damn place goes crazy twice  
and it's once for the devil and once for Christ  
but the Boss don't like these dizzy heights  
we're busted in the blinding lights,  
busted in the blinding lights  
of CLOSING TIME

The whole damn place goes crazy twice  
and it's once for the devil and once for Christ  
but the Boss don't like these dizzy heights  
we're busted in the blinding lights,  
busted in the blinding lights  
of CLOSING TIME

Oh the women tear their blouses off  
and the men they dance on the polka-dots  
It's CLOSING TIME  
And it's partner found, it's partner lost  
and it's hell to pay when the fiddler stops  
It's CLOSING TIME  
I swear it happened just like this:  
a sigh, a cry, a hungry kiss  
It's CLOSING TIME  
The Gates of Love they budged an inch  
I can't say much has happened since  
But CLOSING TIME  
I loved you when our love was blessed  
I love you now there's nothing left  
But CLOSING TIME  
I miss you since the place got wrecked  
By the winds of change and the weeds of sex.



## Antem

The birds they sang  
at the break of day  
Start again  
I heard them say  
Don't dwell on what  
has passed away  
or what is yet to be.

Ah the wars they will  
be fought again  
The holy dove  
She will be caught again  
bought and sold  
and bought again  
the dove is never free.

Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack in everything  
That's how the light gets in.

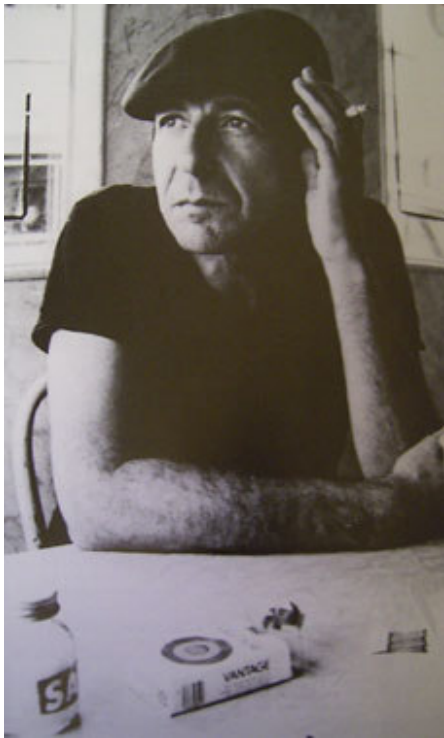
We asked for signs  
the signs were sent:  
the birth betrayed  
the marriage spent  
Yeah the widowhood  
of every government --  
signs for all to see.

I can't run no more  
with that lawless crowd  
while the killers in high places  
say their prayers out loud.  
But they've summoned, they've summoned up  
a thundercloud  
and they're going to hear from me.

You can add up the parts  
but you won't have the sum  
You can strike up the march,  
there is no drum  
Every heart, every heart  
to love will come  
but like a refugee.

Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack, a crack in everything  
That's how the light gets in.

Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack, a crack in everything  
That's how the light gets in.  
That's how the light gets in.  
That's how the light gets in.



## Democracy

It's coming through a hole in the air,  
from those nights in Tiananmen Square.  
It's coming from the feel  
that this ain't exactly real,  
or it's real, but it ain't exactly there.  
From the wars against disorder,  
from the sirens night and day,  
from the fires of the homeless,  
from the ashes of the gay:  
Democracy is coming to the U.S.A.

It's coming through a crack in the wall;  
on a visionary flood of alcohol;  
from the staggering account  
of the Sermon on the Mount  
which I don't pretend to understand at all.  
It's coming from the silence  
on the dock of the bay,  
from the brave, the bold, the battered  
heart of Chevrolet:  
Democracy is coming to the U.S.A.

It's coming from the sorrow in the street,  
the holy places where the races meet;  
from the homicidal bitchin'  
that goes down in every kitchen  
to determine who will serve and who will eat.  
From the wells of disappointment  
where the women kneel to pray  
for the grace of God in the desert here  
and the desert far away:  
Democracy is coming to the U.S.A.



Sail on, sail on  
O mighty Ship of State!  
To the Shores of Need  
Past the Reefs of Greed  
Through the Squalls of Hate  
Sail on, sail on, sail on, sail on.

It's coming to America first,  
the cradle of the best and of the worst.  
It's here they got the range  
and the machinery for change  
and it's here they got the spiritual thirst.  
It's here the family's broken  
and it's here the lonely say  
that the heart has got to open  
in a fundamental way:  
Democracy is coming to the U.S.A.

It's coming from the women and the men.  
O baby, we'll be making love again.  
We'll be going down so deep  
the river's going to weep,  
and the mountain's going to shout Amen!  
It's coming like the tidal flood  
beneath the lunar sway,  
imperial, mysterious,  
in amorous array:  
Democracy is coming to the U.S.A.

I'm sentimental, if you know what I mean  
I love the country but I can't stand the scene.  
And I'm neither left or right  
I'm just staying home tonight,  
getting lost in that hopeless little screen.  
But I'm stubborn as those garbage bags  
that Time cannot decay,  
I'm junk but I'm still holding up  
this little wild bouquet:  
Democracy is coming to the U.S.A.

## Light As The Breeze

She stands before you naked  
you can see it, you can taste it,  
and she comes to you light as the breeze.  
Now you can drink it or you can nurse it,  
it don't matter how you worship  
as long as you're  
down on your knees.

So I knelt there at the delta,  
at the alpha and the omega,  
at the cradle of the river and the seas.  
And like a blessing come from heaven  
for something like a second  
I was healed and my heart  
was at ease.

O baby I waited  
so long for your kiss  
for something to happen,  
oh something like this.

And you're weak and you're harmless  
and you're sleeping in your harness  
and the wind going wild  
in the trees,  
and it ain't exactly prison  
but you'll never be forgiven  
for whatever you've done  
with the keys.

It's dark now and it's snowing  
O my love I must be going,  
The river has started to freeze.  
And I'm sick of pretending  
I'm broken from bending  
I've lived too long on my knees.

Then she dances so graceful  
and your heart's hard and hateful  
and she's naked  
but that's just a tease.  
And you turn in disgust  
from your hatred and from your love  
and comes to you  
light as the breeze.

There's blood on every bracelet  
you can see it, you can taste it,  
and it's Please baby  
please baby please.  
And she says, Drink deeply, pilgrim  
but don't forget there's still a woman  
beneath this  
resplendent chemise.

So I knelt there at the delta,  
at the alpha and the omega,  
I knelt there like one who believes.  
And the blessings come from heaven  
and for something like a second  
I'm cured and my heart  
is at ease



# **Always**

*(by Irving Berlin)*

(Oh friends, .. don't matter if you're a man or a woman. If you're in love with somebody, these are the words that you got to learn to say. Now listen carefully. Here it comes...)

I'll be loving you always  
with a love that's true, always  
When the thing you've planned  
needs my helping hand,  
I will understand, always, always

Days may not be fair, always  
Yeah but that's when I'll be there, always  
Not for just an hour,  
Not for just a day,  
Not for just a year, but always.

I said that I'll be loving you, always  
with a love that's true, always.  
When the thing you've planned  
needs my helping hand,  
I will, I will understand, always, always

(Oh that's pretty ... that's pretty too ... Oh darling)

The days may not be fair, always  
Yeah but that's when I'll be there, always  
Not for just a second, or a minute, or an hour,  
Not for just a weekend and a shake down in the shower,  
Not for just the summer and the winter going sour,  
But always, always, always

(Ok if you don't want to quit, let's try it one more time)

I'll be loving you, always  
with a love that's true, always.  
When the thing you've planned  
needs my helping hand,  
I will understand, I will, I will understand, always, always

The days may not be fair, always  
(Don't worry, baby)  
That's when I'll be there, always  
Not for just an hour,  
Not for just a day,  
Not for just a year, but always.



## In My Secret Life

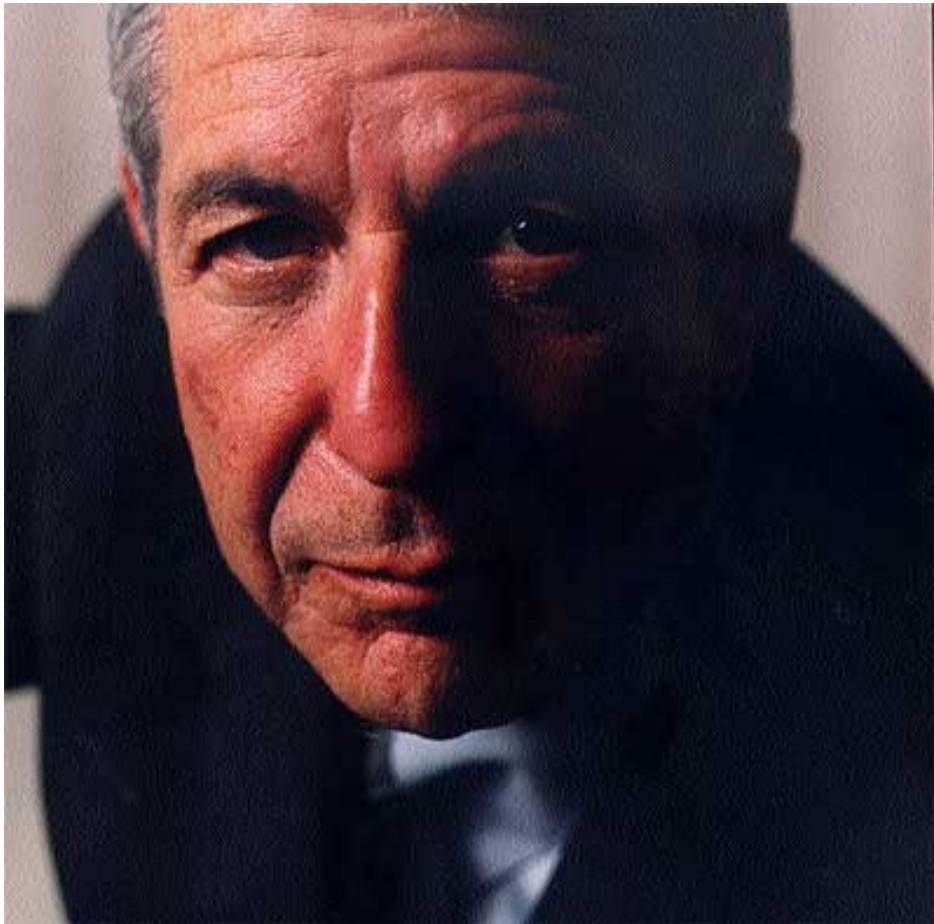
I saw you this morning.  
You were moving so fast.  
Can't seem to loosen my grip  
On the past.  
And I miss you so much.  
There's no one in sight.  
And we're still making love  
In My Secret Life.

I smile when I'm angry.  
I cheat and I lie.  
I do what I have to do  
To get by.  
But I know what is wrong,  
And I know what is right.  
And I'd die for the truth  
In My Secret Life.

Hold on, hold on, my brother.  
My sister, hold on tight.  
I finally got my orders.  
I'll be marching through the morning,  
Marching through the night,  
Moving cross the borders  
Of My Secret Life.

Looked through the paper.  
Makes you want to cry.  
Nobody cares if the people  
Live or die.  
And the dealer wants you thinking  
That it's either black or white.  
Thank G-d it's not that simple  
In My Secret Life.

I bite my lip.  
I buy what I'm told:  
From the latest hit,  
To the wisdom of old.  
But I'm always alone.  
And my heart is like ice.  
And it's crowded and cold  
In My Secret Life.



## **Thousand Kisses Deep**

The ponies run, the girls are young,  
The odds are there to beat.  
You win a while, and then it's done –  
Your little winning streak.  
And summoned now to deal  
With your invincible defeat,  
You live your life as if it's real,  
A Thousand Kisses Deep.

I'm turning tricks, I'm getting fixed,  
I'm back on Boogie Street.  
You lose your grip, and then you slip  
Into the Masterpiece.  
And maybe I had miles to drive,  
And promises to keep:  
You ditch it all to stay alive,  
A Thousand Kisses Deep.

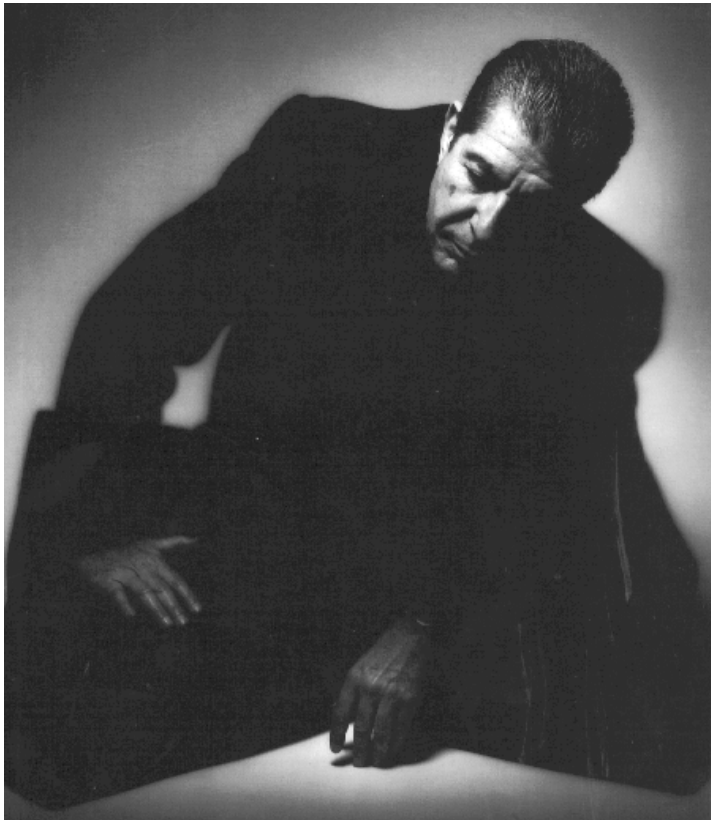
And sometimes when the night is slow,  
The wretched and the meek,  
We gather up our hearts and go,  
A Thousand Kisses Deep.

Confined to sex, we pressed against  
The limits of the sea:  
I saw there were no oceans left  
For scavengers like me.  
I made it to the forward deck.  
I blessed our remnant fleet –  
And then consented to be wrecked,  
A Thousand Kisses Deep.



I'm turning tricks, I'm getting fixed,  
I'm back on Boogie Street.  
I guess they won't exchange the gifts  
That you were meant to keep.  
And quiet is the thought of you,  
The file on you complete,  
Except what we forgot to do,  
A Thousand Kisses Deep.

And sometimes when the night is slow,  
The wretched and the meek,  
We gather up our hearts and go,  
A Thousand Kisses Deep.  
The odds are there to beat . . .



## That Don't Make It Junk

I fought against the bottle,  
But I had to do it drunk –  
Took my diamond to the pawnshop –  
But that don't make it junk.

I know that I'm forgiven,  
But I don't know how I know  
I don't trust my inner feelings –  
Inner feelings come and go.

How come you called me here tonight?  
How come you bother  
With my heart at all?  
You raise me up in grace,  
Then you put me in a place,  
Where I must fall.

Too late to fix another drink –  
The lights are going out –  
I'll listen to the darkness sing –  
I know what that's about.

I tried to love you my way,  
But I couldn't make it hold.  
So I closed the Book of Longing  
And I do what I am told.

How come you called me here tonight?  
How come you bother with my heart at all?  
You raise me up in grace,  
Then you put me in a place,  
Where I must fall.

I fought against the bottle,  
But I had to do it drunk –  
Took my diamond to the pawnshop –  
But that don't make it junk.

## Here It Is

Here is your crown  
And your seal and rings;  
And here is your love  
For all things.

Here is your cart,  
And your cardboard and piss;  
And here is your love  
For all of this.

May everyone live,  
And may everyone die.  
Hello, my love,  
And my love, Goodbye.

Here is your wine,  
And your drunken fall;  
And here is your love.  
Your love for it all.

Here is your sickness.  
Your bed and your pan;  
And here is your love  
For the woman, the man.

May everyone live,  
And may everyone die.  
Hello, my love,  
And, my love, Goodbye.

And here is the night,  
The night has begun;  
And here is your death  
In the heart of your son.

And here is the dawn,  
(Until death do us part);  
And here is your death,  
In your daughter's heart.

May everyone live,  
And may everyone die.  
Hello, my love,  
And, my love, Goodbye.

And here you are hurried,  
And here you are gone;  
And here is the love,  
That it's all built upon.

Here is your cross,  
Your nails and your hill;  
And here is your love,  
That lists where it will

May everyone live,  
And may everyone die.  
Hello, my love,  
And my love, Goodbye.

## Love Itself

The light came through the window,  
Straight from the sun above,  
And so inside my little room  
There plunged the rays of Love.

In streams of light I clearly saw  
The dust you seldom see,  
Out of which the Nameless makes  
A Name for one like me.

I'll try to say a little more:  
Love went on and on  
Until it reached an open door –  
Then Love Itself  
Love Itself was gone.

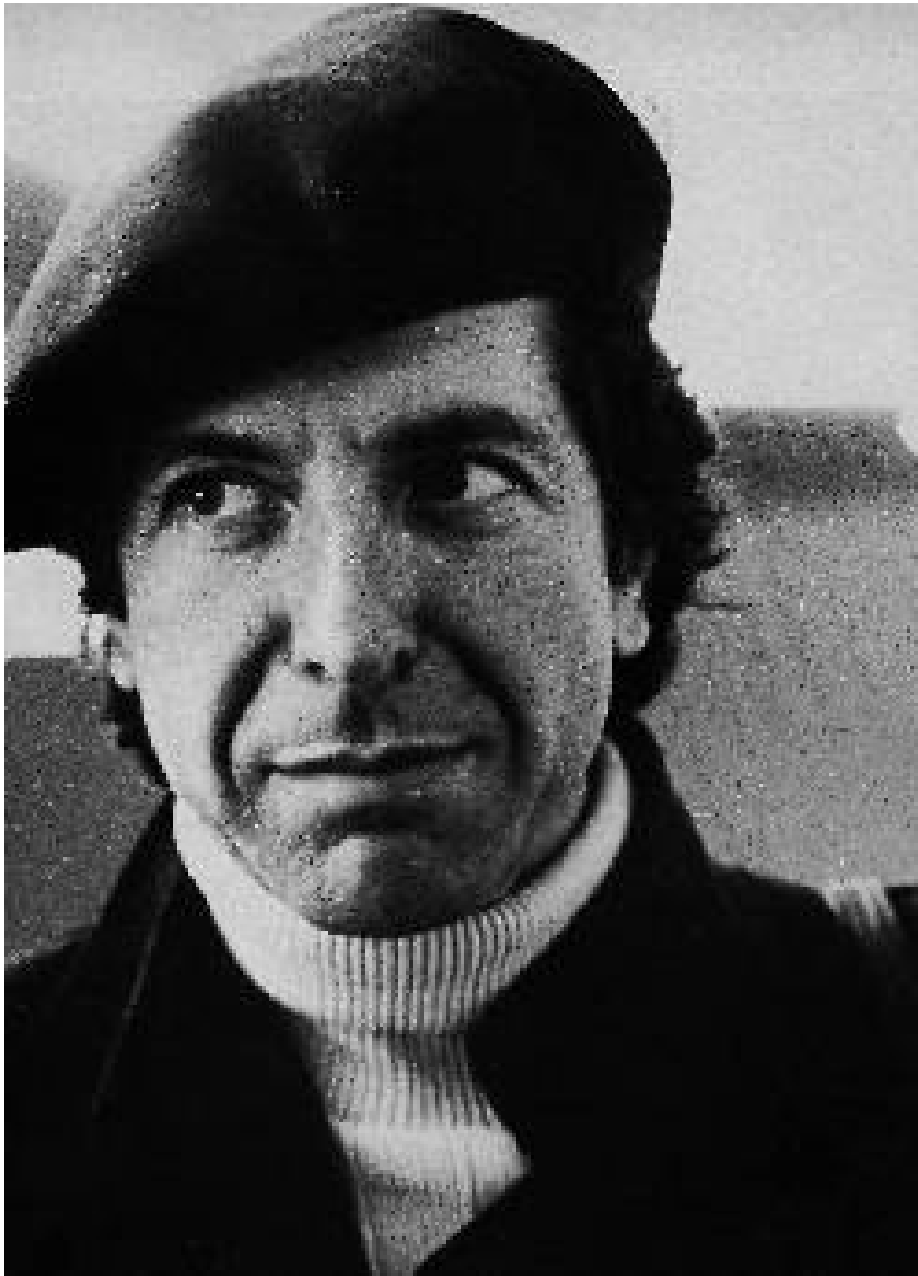
All busy in the sunlight  
The flecks did float and dance,  
And I was tumbled up with them  
In formless circumstance.

I'll try to say a little more:  
Love went on and on  
Until it reached an open door –  
Then Love Itself  
Love Itself was gone.

Then I came back from where I'd been.  
My room, it looked the same –  
But there was nothing left between  
The Nameless and the Name.

All busy in the sunlight  
The flecks did float and dance,  
And I was tumbled up with them  
In formless circumstance.

I'll try to say a little more:  
Love went on and on  
Until it reached an open door –  
Then Love itself,  
Love Itself was gone.  
Love Itself was gone.



## By The Rivers Dark

By the rivers dark  
I wandered on.  
I lived my life  
in Babylon.

And I did forget  
My holy song:  
And I had no strength  
In Babylon.

By the rivers dark  
Where I could not see  
Who was waiting there  
Who was hunting me.

And he cut my lip  
And he cut my heart.  
So I could not drink  
From the river dark.

And he covered me,  
And I saw within,  
My lawless heart  
And my wedding ring,

I did not know  
And I could not see  
Who was waiting there,  
Who was hunting me.

By the rivers dark  
I panicked on.  
I belonged at last  
to Babylon.

Then he struck my heart  
With a deadly force,  
And he said, 'This heart:  
It is not yours.'

And he gave the wind  
My wedding ring;  
And he circled us  
With everything.

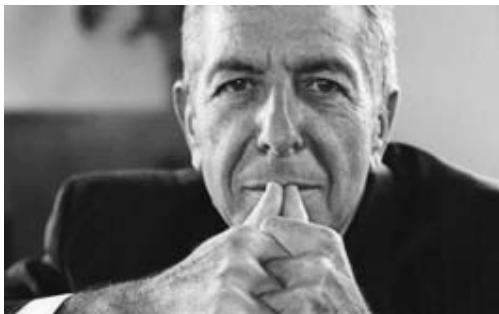
By the rivers dark,  
In a wounded dawn,  
I live my life  
In Babylon.

Though I take my song  
From a withered limb,  
Both song and tree,  
They sing for him.

Be the truth unsaid  
And the blessing gone,  
If I forget  
My Babylon.

I did not know  
And I could not see  
Who was waiting there,  
Who was hunting me.

By the rivers dark,  
Where it all goes on;  
By the rivers dark  
In Babylon.





## Alexandra Leaving

Suddenly the night has grown colder.  
The god of love preparing to depart.  
Alexandra hoisted on his shoulder,  
They slip between the sentries of the heart.

Upheld by the simplicities of pleasure,  
They gain the light, they formlessly entwine;  
And radiant beyond your widest measure  
They fall among the voices and the wine.

It's not a trick, your senses all deceiving,  
A fitful dream, the morning will exhaust –  
Say goodbye to Alexandra leaving.  
Then say goodbye to Alexandra lost.

Even though she sleeps upon your satin;  
Even though she wakes you with a kiss.  
Do not say the moment was imagined;  
Do not stoop to strategies like this.

As someone long prepared for this to happen,  
Go firmly to the window. Drink it in.  
Exquisite music. Alexandra laughing.  
Your firm commitments tangible again.

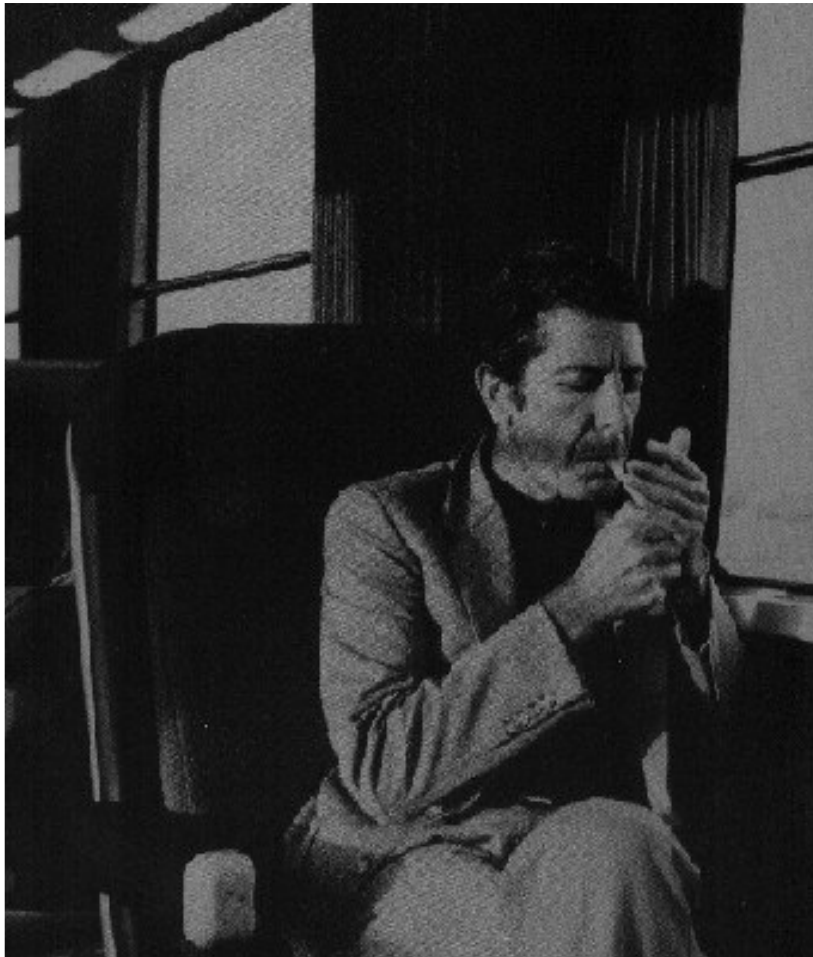
And you who had the honor of her evening,  
And by the honor had your own restored –  
Say goodbye to Alexandra leaving;  
Alexandra leaving with her lord.

Even though she sleeps upon your satin;  
Even though she wakes you with a kiss.  
Do not say the moment was imagined;  
Do not stoop to strategies like this.

As someone long prepared for the occasion;  
In full command of every plan you wrecked –  
Do not choose a coward's explanation  
that hides behind the cause and the effect.

And you who were bewildered by a meaning;  
Whose code was broken, crucifix uncrossed –  
Say goodbye to Alexandra leaving.  
Then say goodbye to Alexandra lost.

Say goodbye to Alexandra leaving.  
Then say goodbye to Alexandra lost.



## You Have Loved Enough

I said I'd be your lover.  
You laughed at what I said.  
I lost my job forever.  
I was counted with the dead.

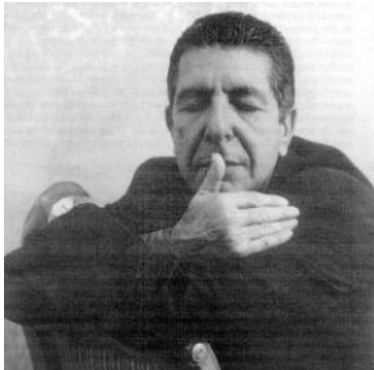
I swept the marble chambers,  
But you sent me down below.  
You kept me from believing  
Until you let me know:

That I am not the one who loves –  
It's love that seizes me.  
When hatred with his package comes,  
You forbid delivery.

And when the hunger for your touch  
Rises from the hunger,  
You whisper, "You have loved enough,  
Now let me be the Lover."

I swept the marble chambers,  
But you sent me down below.  
You kept me from believing  
Until you let me know:

That I am not the one who loves –  
It's love that chooses me.  
When hatred with his package comes,  
You forbid delivery.



## Boogie Street

O Crown of Light, O Darkened One,  
I never thought we'd meet.  
You kiss my lips, and then it's done:  
I'm back on Boogie Street.

A sip of wine, a cigarette,  
And then it's time to go.  
I tidied up the kitchenette;  
I tuned the old banjo.  
I'm wanted at the traffic-jam.  
They're saving me a seat.  
I'm what I am, and what I am,  
Is back on Boogie Street.

And O my love, I still recall  
The pleasures that we knew;  
The rivers and the waterfall,  
Wherein I bathed with you.  
Bewildered by your beauty there,  
I'd kneel to dry your feet.  
By such instructions you prepare  
A man for Boogie Street.

So come, my friends, be not afraid.  
We are so lightly here.  
It is in love that we are made;  
In love we disappear.  
Tho' all the maps of blood and flesh  
Are posted on the door,  
There's no one who has told us yet  
What Boogie Street is for.

O Crown of Light, O Darkened One,  
I never thought we'd meet.  
You kiss my lips, and then it's done:  
I'm back on Boogie Street.

## The Land Of Plenty

Don't really know who sent me  
To raise my voice and say:  
May the lights in The Land of Plenty  
Shine on the truth some day.

I don't know why I come here,  
Knowing as I do,  
What you really think of me,  
What I really think of you.

For the millions in a prison,  
That wealth has set apart –  
For the Christ who has not risen,  
From the caverns of the heart –

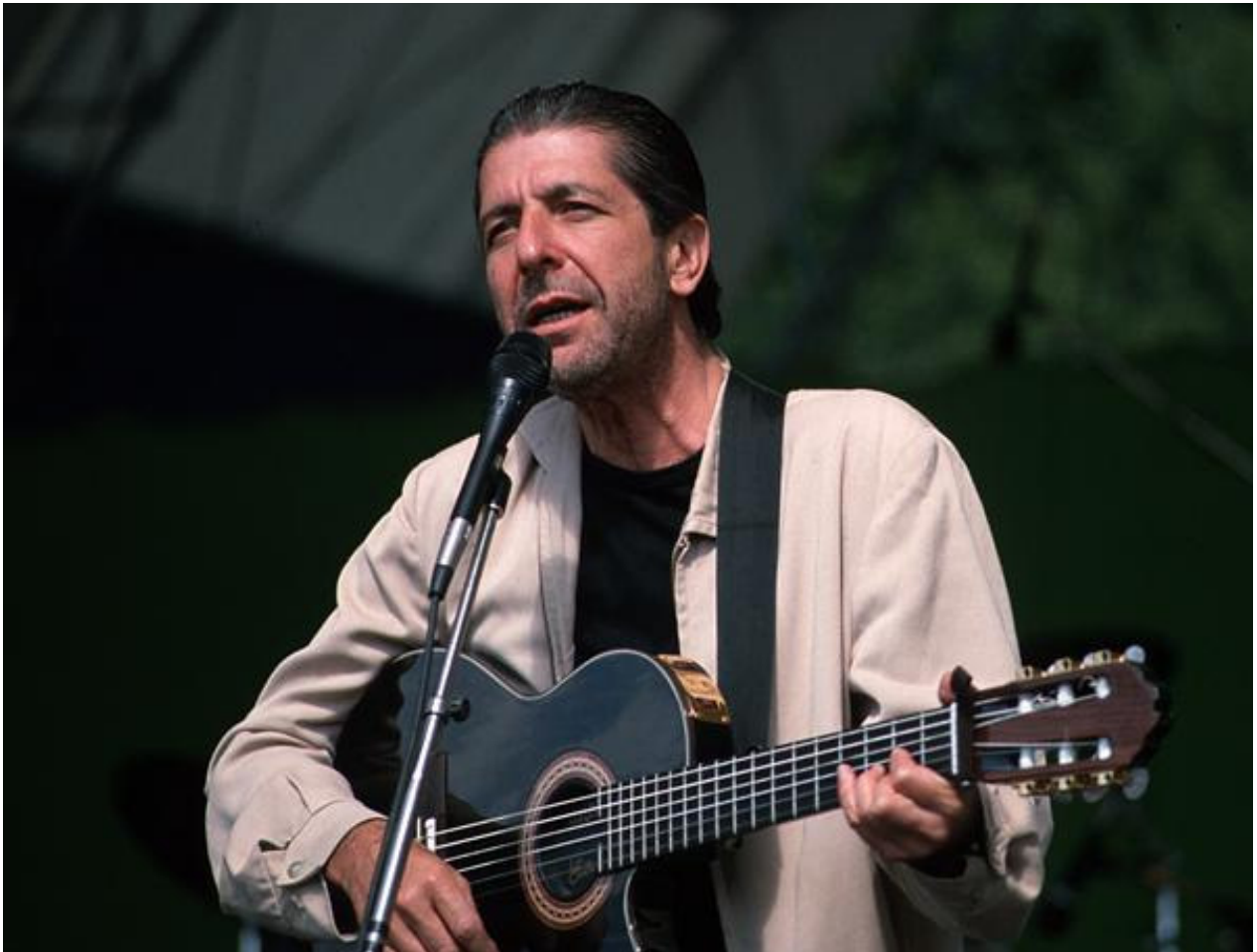
For the innermost decision,  
That we cannot but obey -  
For what's left of our religion,  
I lift my voice and pray:  
May the lights in The Land of Plenty  
Shine on the truth some day.

I know I said I'd meet you,  
I'd meet you at the store,  
But I can't buy it, baby.  
I can't buy it anymore.

And I don't really know who sent me,  
To raise my voice and say:  
May the lights in The Land of Plenty  
Shine on the truth some day.

I don't know why I come here,  
knowing as I do,  
what you really think of me,  
what I really think of you.

For the innermost decision  
That we cannot but obey  
For what's left of our religion  
I lift my voice and pray:  
May the lights in The Land of Plenty  
Shine on the truth some day.



## Go No More A-Roving

*(Words by Lord Byron, music by Leonard Cohen)*

[Dedicated to Irving Layton]

So we'll go no more a-roving  
So late into the night,  
Though the heart be still as loving,  
And the moon be still as bright.  
For the sword outwears its sheath,  
And the soul outwears the breast,  
And the heart must pause to breathe,  
And love itself have rest.  
Though the night was made for loving,  
And the day returns too soon,  
Yet we'll go no more a-roving  
By the light of the moon.



## Because Of

Because of a few songs  
Wherein I spoke of their mystery,  
Women have been  
Exceptionally kind  
to my old age.  
They make a secret place  
In their busy lives  
And they take me there.  
They become naked  
In their different ways  
and they say,  
"Look at me, Leonard  
Look at me one last time."  
Then they bend over the bed  
And cover me up  
Like a baby that is shivering.





## The Letters

You never liked to get  
The letters that I sent.  
But now you've got the gist  
Of what my letters meant.  
You're reading them again,  
The ones you didn't burn.  
You press them to your lips,  
My pages of concern.  
I said there'd been a flood.  
I said there's nothing left.  
I hoped that you would come.  
I gave you my address.  
Your story was so long,  
The plot was so intense,  
It took you years to cross  
The lines of self-defense.  
The wounded forms appear:  
The loss, the full extent;  
And simple kindness here,  
The solitude of strength.  
You walk into my room.  
You stand there at my desk,  
Begin your letter to  
The one who's coming next.



## Undertow

I set out one night  
When the tide was low  
There were signs in the sky  
But I did not know  
I'd be caught in the grip  
Of the undertow  
Ditched on a beach  
Where the sea hates to go  
With a child in my arms  
And a chill in my soul  
And my heart the shape  
Of a begging bowl



## Morning Glory

No words this time? No words. No, there are times when nothing can be done. Not this time. Is it censorship? Is it censorship? No, it's evaporation. No, it's evaporation. Is this leading somewhere? Yes. We're going down the lane. Is this going somewhere? Into the garden. Into the backyard. We're walking down the driveway. Are we moving towards... We're in the backyard. ...some transcendental moment? It's almost light. That's right. That's it. Are we moving towards some transcendental moment? That's right. That's it. Do you think you'll be able to pull it off? Yes. Do you think you can pull it off? Yes, it might happen. I'm all ears. I'm all ears. Oh the morning glory!



## On That Day

Some people say  
It's what we deserve  
For sins against g-d  
For crimes in the world  
I wouldn't know  
I'm just holding the fort  
Since that day  
They wounded New York  
Some people say  
They hate us of old  
Our women unveiled  
Our slaves and our gold  
I wouldn't know  
I'm just holding the fort  
But answer me this  
I won't take you to court  
Did you go crazy  
Or did you report  
On that day  
On that day  
They wounded New York



## villanelle For Our Time

From bitter searching of the heart,  
Quickened with passion and with pain  
We rise to play a greater part.  
This is the faith from which we start:  
Men shall know commonwealth again  
From bitter searching of the heart.  
We loved the easy and the smart,  
But now, with keener hand and brain,  
We rise to play a greater part.  
The lesser loyalties depart,  
And neither race nor creed remain  
From bitter searching of the heart.  
Not steering by the venal chart  
That tricked the mass for private gain,  
We rise to play a greater part.  
Reshaping narrow law and art  
Whose symbols are the millions slain,  
From bitter searching of the heart  
We rise to play a greater part.



## There For You

When it all went down  
And the pain came through  
I get it now  
I was there for you  
Don't ask me how  
I know it's true  
I get it now  
I was there for you  
I make my plans  
Like I always do  
But when I look back  
I was there for you  
I walk the streets  
Like I used to do  
And I freeze with fear  
But I'm there for you  
I see my life  
In full review  
It was never me  
It was always you  
You sent me here  
You sent me there  
Breaking things  
I can't repair  
Making objects  
Out of thoughts  
Making more  
By thinking not  
Eating food  
And drinking wine  
A body that  
I thought was mine  
Dressed as Arab  
Dressed as Jew  
O mask of iron  
I was there for you  
Moods of glory  
Moods so foul  
The world comes through

A bloody towel  
And death is old  
But it's always new  
I freeze with fear  
And I'm there for you  
I see it clear  
I always knew  
It was never me  
I was there for you  
I was there for you  
My darling one  
And by your law  
It all was done



## Dear Heather

Dear Heather  
Please walk by me again  
With a drink in your hand  
And your legs all white  
From the winter

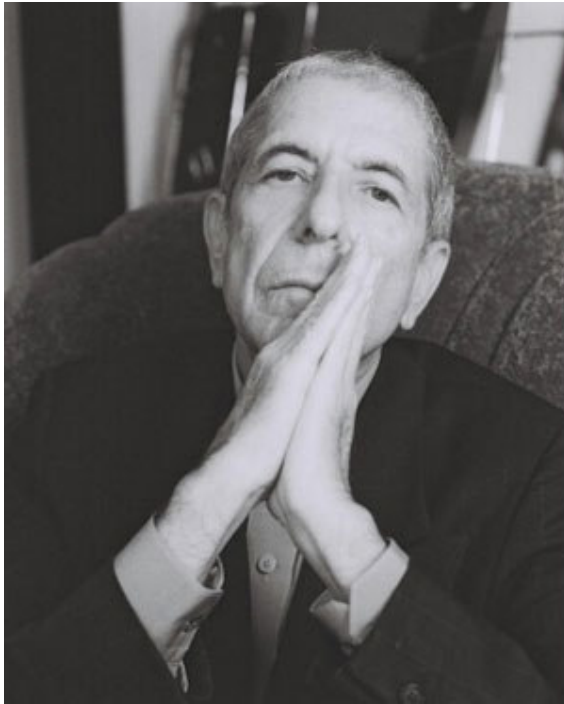




## Nightingale

Dedicated to Carl Anderson (1945-2004)

I built my house beside the wood  
So I could hear you singing  
And it was sweet and it was good  
And love was all beginning  
Fare thee well my nightingale  
'Twas long ago I found you  
Now all your songs of beauty fail  
The forest closes 'round you  
The sun goes down behind a veil  
'Tis now that you would call me  
So rest in peace my nightingale  
Beneath your branch of holly  
Fare thee well my nightingale  
I lived but to be near you  
Tho' you are singing somewhere still  
I can no longer hear you



## To A Teacher

Dedicated to A. M. Klein (1909-1972)

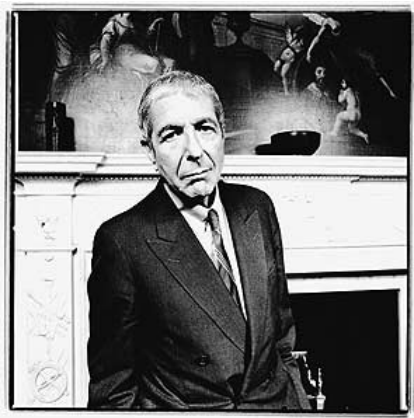
Hurt once and for all into silence.  
A long pain ending without a song to prove it.  
Who could stand beside you so close to Eden,  
When you glinted in every eye the held-high  
razor, shivering every ram and son?  
And now the silent loony bin, where  
The shadows live in the rafters like  
Day-weary bats,  
Until the turning mind, a radar signal,  
lures them to exaggerate  
Mountain-size on the white stone wall  
Your tiny limp.  
How can I leave you in such a house?  
Are there no more saints and wizards  
to praise their ways with pupils,  
No more evil to stun with the slap  
of a wet red tongue?  
Did you confuse the Messiah in a mirror  
and rest because he had finally come?  
Let me cry Help beside you, Teacher.  
I have entered under this dark roof  
As fearlessly as an honoured son  
Enters his father's house.



# The Faith

[Based on a Quebec folk song]

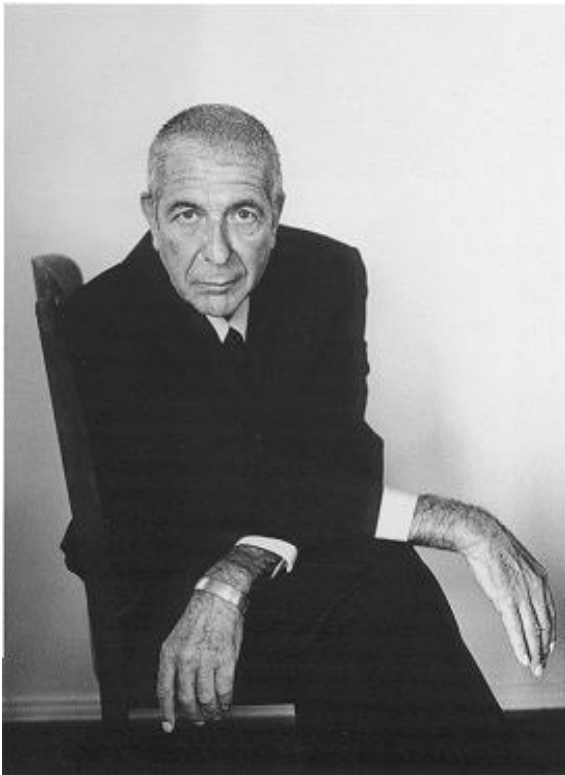
The sea so deep and blind  
The sun, the wild regret  
The club, the wheel, the mind,  
O love, aren't you tired yet?  
The club, the wheel, the mind  
O love, aren't you tired yet?  
The blood, the soil, the faith  
These words you can't forget  
Your vow, your holy place  
O love, aren't you tired yet?  
The blood, the soil, the faith  
O love, aren't you tired yet?  
A cross on every hill  
A star, a minaret  
So many graves to fill  
O love, aren't you tired yet?  
So many graves to fill  
O love, aren't you tired yet?  
The sea so deep and blind  
Where still the sun must set  
And time itself unwind  
O love, aren't you tired yet?  
And time itself unwind  
O love, aren't you tired yet?



## Tennessee Waltz

*(Redd Stewart and Pee Wee King, additional verse: Leonard Cohen)*

I was dancing with my darlin'  
to the Tennessee Waltz  
When an old friend I happened to see  
Introduced him to my loved one  
and while they were waltzing  
My friend stole my sweetheart from me.  
I remember the night and the Tennessee Waltz  
Now I know just how much I have lost  
Yes I lost my little darlin'  
The night they were playing  
The beautiful Tennessee Waltz.  
She comes dancing through the darkness  
To the Tennessee Waltz  
And I feel like I'm falling apart  
And it's stronger than drink  
And it's deeper than sorrow  
This darkness she's left in my heart.



## priests

And who will write love songs for you  
When I am lord at last  
And your body is some little highway shrine  
That all my priests have passed  
That all my priests have passed?  
My priests they will put flowers there  
They will stand before the glass  
But they'll wear away your little window, love  
They will trample on the grass  
They will trample on the grass.  
And who will aim the arrow  
That men will follow through your grace  
When I am lord of memory  
And all your armour has turned to lace  
And all your armour has turned to lace?  
The simple life of heroes  
And the twisted life of saints  
They just confuse the sunny calendar  
With their red and golden paints  
With their red and golden paints.  
And all of you have seen the dance  
That God has kept from me  
But he has seen me watching you  
When all your minds were free  
When all your minds were free.

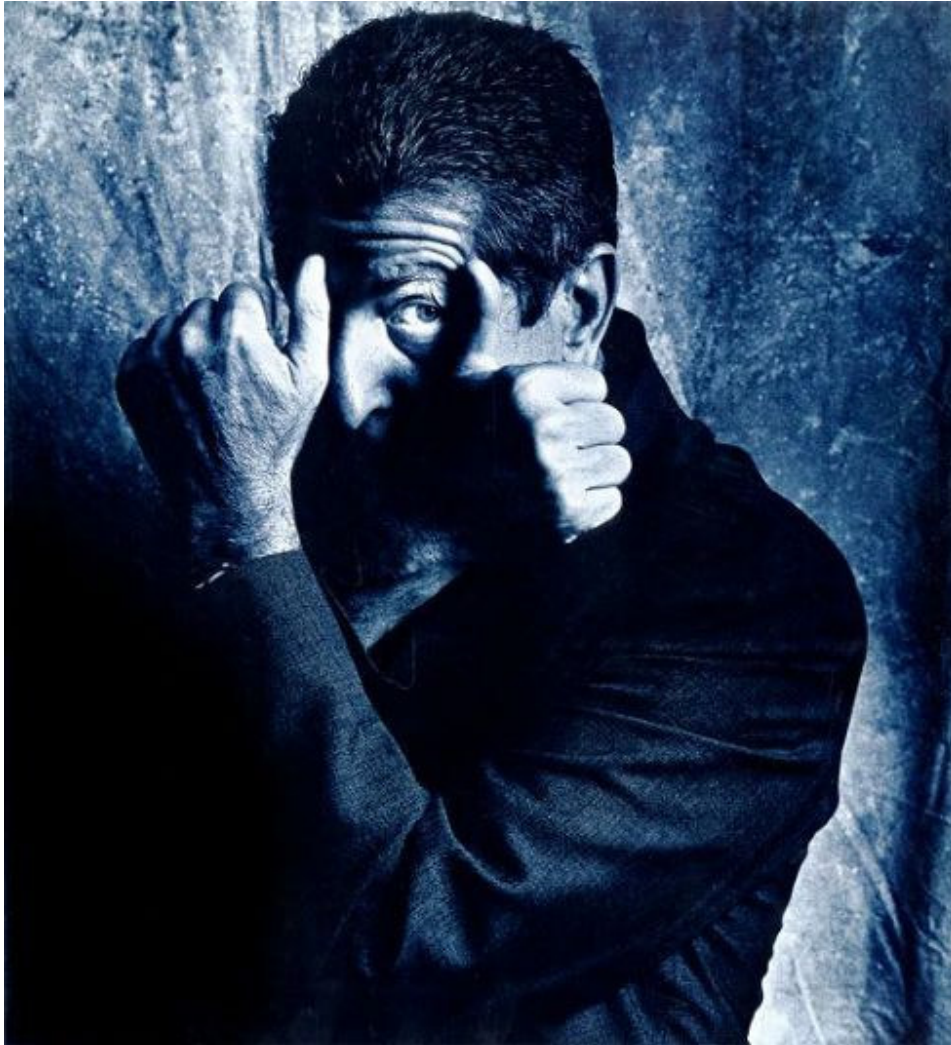


# God is Alive, Magic is Afoot

God is alive, magic is afoot  
God is alive, magic is afoot  
God is alive, magic is afoot  
God is afoot, magic is alive  
Alive is afoot, magic never died  
God never sickened  
Many poor men lied  
Many sick men lied  
Magic never weakened  
Magic never hid  
Magic always ruled  
God is afoot, God never died  
God was ruler  
Though his funeral lengthened  
Though his mourners thickened  
Magic never fled  
Though his shrouds were hoisted  
The naked God did live  
Though his words were twisted  
The naked magic thrived  
Though his death was published  
Round and round the world  
The heart did not believe  
Many hurt men wondered  
Many struck men bled  
Magic never faltered  
Magic always lead  
Many stones were rolled  
But God would not lie down  
Many wild men lied  
Many fat men listened  
Though they offered stones  
Magic still was fed  
Though they locked their coffers  
God was always served  
Magic is afoot, God is alive  
Alive is afoot  
Alive is in command  
Many weak men hungered

Many strong men thrived  
Though they boast of solitude  
God was at their side  
Nor the dreamer in his cell  
Nor the captain on the hill  
Magic is alive  
Though his death was pardoned  
Round and round the world  
The heart would not believe  
Though laws were carved in marble  
They could not shelter men  
Though altars built in parliaments  
They could not order men  
Police arrested magic and magic went with them  
Mmmmm.... for magic loves the hungry  
But magic would not tarry  
It moves from arm to arm  
It would not stay with them  
Magic is afoot  
It cannot come to harm  
It rests in an empty palm  
It spawns in an empty mind  
But magic is no instrument  
Magic is the end  
Many men drove magic  
But magic stayed behind  
Many strong men lied  
They only passed through magic  
And out the other side  
Many weak men lied  
They came to God in secret  
And though they left Him nourished  
They would not tell who healed  
Though mountains danced before them  
They said that God was dead  
Though his shrouds were hoisted  
The naked God did live  
This I mean to whisper to my mind  
This I mean to laugh within my mind  
This I mean my mind to serve  
Til' service is but magic  
Moving through the world  
And mind itself is magic

Coursing through the flesh  
And flesh itself is magic  
Dancing on a clock  
And time itself  
The magic length of God  
God is alive, magic is afoot . . .





## Everybody's Child

Yes I remember the promise  
That you made in the bar  
When the kittens was born  
And you could not keep warm

You moved away to a mountain  
The sun rose behind  
You said yourself a prayer  
That you laid down on the blind

You lost them in your freedom,  
You need 'em now you're wild  
Blessed is the memory  
Of everybody's child.

And the vow of compassion  
That ya swore through your teeth  
When the war began to end  
And the little brown photographs weep

Nobody beleive it only  
But as the train pulls away  
With its cargo of folly  
Sold as German paperweights

Costing you your freedom,  
Even now you're wild  
Blessed is the memory  
Of everybody's child

Well it's four in the morning  
And there's no one at home  
Except for your wife  
And your little baby on the phone  
Ah, somebody's gotta listen  
To a promise or two  
This room is far too small  
For a pilgrim like you

They're offering you your freedom,  
Yeah you need 'em now - you're wild  
Blessed is the memory  
Of everybody's child.

Ah, but now that you've decided  
To follow the sun,  
Like a shadow of waiting there  
Or a king on the run

Your chains are too tight  
For these seas you must swim.  
You're smiling at the seaweed,  
But your smile is much too grim.

Costing you your freedom, yeah,  
Even now you're wild,  
But blessed is the memory  
Of everybody's child



## store Room

Ça c'est une nouvelle chanson,  
c'est Store Room, Store Room...  
Dépôt? Quelque chose comme ça.  
The place where everything comes from,  
One,  
...Storeroom....  
One, Two, Three, Four ...

I love you  
Without really caring  
Whom you love:

Yeah my hands below the belt;  
Or my hands above;

In the arms of other men;  
Or in my bed again.

Just a man  
Taking  
What he needs  
From the storeroom.

Oh, I love to see you sitting there upon your golden throne.  
Your little preachers  
All around you  
Being born.

And your prophet, straight and tall,  
To undermine it all.

Just a man  
Taking  
What he needs  
From your storeroom, Storeroom!

Yeah ol' Shakespeare - he said it all,  
And he said no more.

And he left me  
Feeling just like  
A two bit whore.

Well the silence -  
It broke my heart;  
'Till I  
Spread my legs apart.

Just a man  
Taking  
What he needs  
From the storeroom, Storeroom!

Oh, my love, let us continue what has been begun -  
Praying for:  
The mother and the father,  
The daughter and the son.

But should one refuse to come, no, {'count notes'??}  
It does not subtract the sum.

Just a man  
Taking  
What he needs  
From the storeroom, Storeroom, StoreRoom, STOREROOM!

It's not a wind  
That keeps you up,  
It's not the snow,  
It's not the moon -

Coming like a headlight  
Through your window;  
It's not the thumbnail on the screen  
That scrapes away your dream;

It's just a man  
Taking  
What he needs  
From the storeroom, storeroom, Storeroom!

And the news of all these burning towns - you don't  
Really mind -  
Just a spool that you turn,  
And you turn -  
And he won't unwind.

You know these wars - that you did not start -  
They do not tear your sleep apart -

Just a man  
Taking  
What he needs  
From the storeroom, Storeroom, STOREROOM!

I loved you, without really caring  
Who it is you love:  
My hands below the belt;  
Or my hands above;

In the arms of other men;  
Or in my bed again.

He's just a man  
Taking  
What he needs  
From the storeroom, Storeroom.

ahh....



## Do I Have To Dance All Night?

I'm forty-one. The moon is full.  
You make love very well.  
You touch me like I touch myself.  
I like you, mademoiselle.

You're so fresh and you're so new.  
I do enjoy you, miss.  
There's nothing I would rather do  
Than move around just like this.

But do I have to dance all night?  
Do I have to dance all night?  
Oh tell me - bird of paradise,  
Do I have to dance all night?

You never have to tell me what  
It is you really think of me, alright.  
Let's say I'm doing fine,  
But do I have to dance all the night?

But do I have to dance all night?  
But do I have to dance all night?  
Ooh tell me Bird of Paradise,  
Do I have to dance all night?

I learned this step awhile ago.  
I had to practice it while everybody slept.  
I waited half my life for you, you know.  
I didn't even think that you'd accept.  
And here you are before me in the flesh,  
saying "yes, Yes, - YES!"

But do I have to dance all night?  
Do I have to dance all night?  
Come on, tell me, - Bird of Paradise,  
Do I have to dance all night?

I learned this step awhile ago.  
I had to practice it while everybody slept.  
I waited half my life for you, you to know,  
I never really thought that you'd accept.  
And here you are before me in the flesh,  
saying "yes, Yes, -- YEAH..!"  
- Come on now...

But do I have to dance all night?  
Do I have to dance all night?  
Oh tell me Bird of Paradise,  
Do I have to dance all night?



## Misty Blue

Oh but it's been such a long, long time.  
Thought I'd got you off my mind.  
Looks like I can't, just the thought of you  
turns my whole world a misty blue.  
Just the mention of your name  
fans the flicker to a flame.  
I can't forget the things we used to do.  
My whole world turns misty blue.  
You know I should forget you  
I really should,  
and heaven knows that I tried.  
But when I told you,  
when I said that we were through  
deep in my heart I lied  
Baby, oh what a long, long time.  
Thought I'd get you off my mind.  
Oh but I can't, just the thought of you  
turns my world misty blue  
And the very mention of your name  
fans the flicker to a flame.  
I think of things we used to do,  
my whole world turns misty blue.





## Blues By The Jews (Billy Sunday)

*as sung in 1979 in Brighton*

My name is Billy Sunday  
I speak in the name of God.  
They call me Billy Sunday  
I speak in the name of God  
And God is always angry  
Just in case you think He's not  
He's angry at your body  
For reasons that are His  
He doesn't like your body  
According to reasons that are only His  
I'd like you to know He's very very angry  
But that's just the way He is  
He's angry at the spirit  
That is turned away from Him  
He's angry at the spirit  
That's turned away from Him  
If He ever gets His Hands on it  
He's gonna tear it limb from limb

They call me Billy Sunday  
I speak in the name of God  
They call me Billy Sunday  
I speak in the name of God  
And God is always angry  
Just in case you think He's not

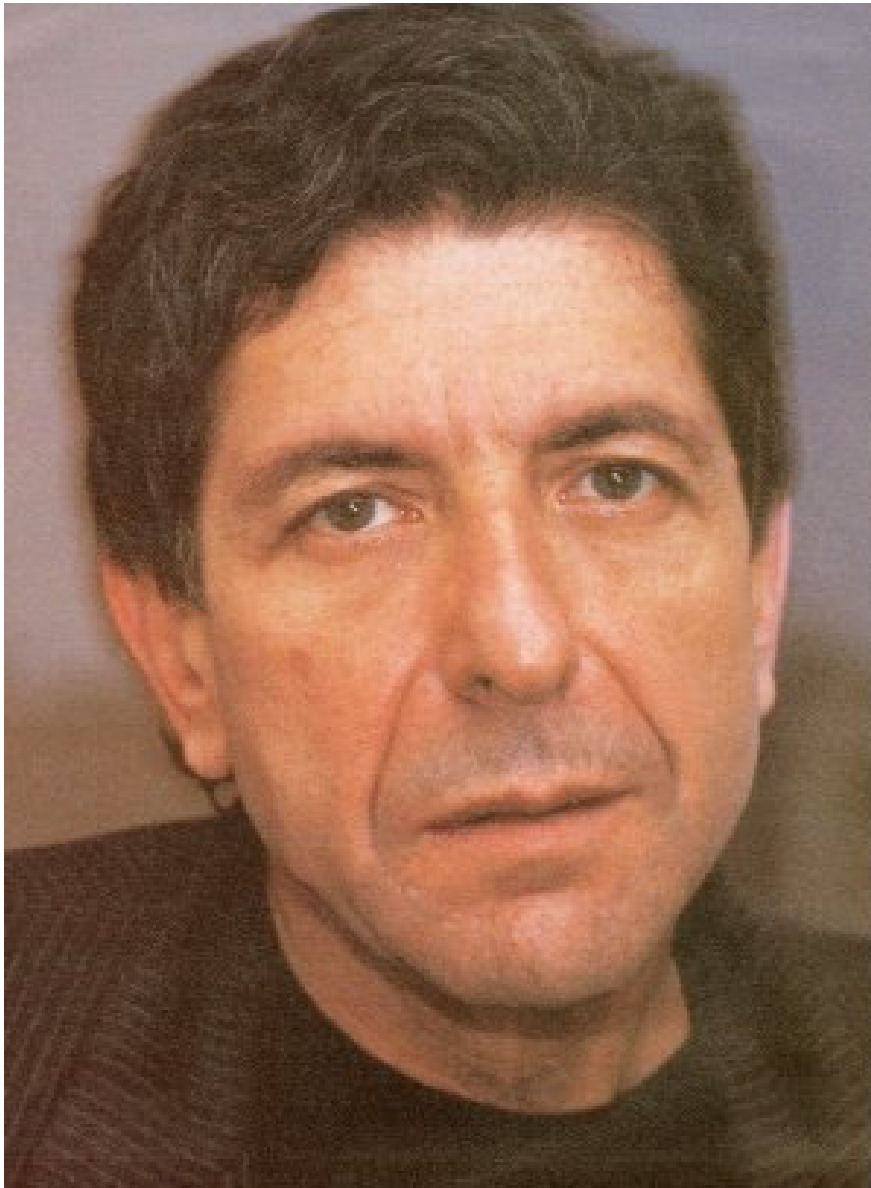
He's angry at the universe  
He drives him up the wall  
I could say for a fact  
He's not pleased with this universe  
He drives him up the wall  
He's sorry that He ever thought of you and me at all

He's angry when you're dying  
And He's angry when you're dead  
And you're always one or the other  
He's angry when you're dying  
And He's angry when you're dead  
And He's furious at me  
For everything I've ever said  
If you feel His anger some night  
Let's say in a Motel room at three a.m.  
If you feel His awesome anger  
In your Hotel room let's say at three a.m.  
It turns out that He's still very angry  
That you took so long to be afraid of Him

They call me Billy Sunday  
I speak in the name of God  
They call me Billy Sunday  
I speak in the name of God  
I came here to tell you that God is always angry  
Just in case you think He's not

If you fall asleep some night  
Which everybody does  
If you have the nerve to go to sleep one tired night  
Which most everybody does  
And you happen to have some silly dream  
To Him it's very serious.  
And if some lonely night you ask yourself  
Where all the pretty girls are gone ?  
Some night you're gonna ask yourself where where  
Where are those pretty girls gone  
Then He blows away the little scraps of paper  
That they write their names and numbers on  
Then you find that you get down on your knees  
And you want to renounce for all time a woman's sweet caress  
You have some vocation that makes you kneel down  
And renounce for eternity a woman's sweet caress  
Then He causes you do touch yourself  
As soon as you undress

They call me Billy Sunday  
I speak in the name of God  
They call me Billy Sunday  
I speak in the name of God  
And God is always angry  
Just in case you think He's not



# Thirsty For The Kiss

early Heart With No Companion  
*performed in London, 1979, and Melbourne, 1980*

Oh my love, you are the shadow.  
I go stumbling through tonight.  
And our love, just smoke and ashes  
Of a flame that once burned bright.

Do not go! I cannot follow!  
I'm so thirsty for the kiss.  
Ah that does not end in sorrow  
And a thirstiness like this.

Now I sing this for the captain  
Who's ship was never built  
For the mother in confusion  
Who's wound cannot be fixed.

For the heart with no companion,  
For the soul without a key.  
For the prima ballerina,  
Who cannot dance to anything.

For the heart with no companion,  
For the soul without a key.  
For the prima ballerina  
Who cannot dance to anything.

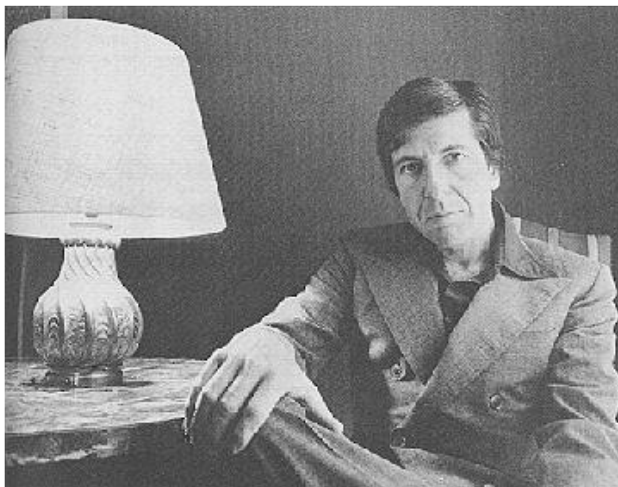
La da dada dada dadada  
Da dadada dada dadada  
La da dada dada dadada  
Da dadada dada dadada

Oh do not go! I cannot follow!  
I'm so thirsty for the kiss.  
Don't either does not end in sorrow,  
And a thirsting for your kiss.

## Song of Bernadette

*Written by Leonard Cohen and Jennifer Warnes*

There was a child named Bernadette  
I heard the story long ago  
She saw the Queen of Heaven once  
And kept the vision in her soul  
No one believed what she had seen  
No one believed what she heard  
That there were sorrows to be healed  
And mercy, mercy in this world  
So many hearts I find  
Broke like yours and mine  
Torn by what we've done and can't undo  
I just want to hold you  
Won't you let me hold you  
Like Bernadette would do  
We've been around, we fall, we fly  
We mostly fall, we mostly run  
And every now and then we try  
To mend the damage that we've done  
Tonight, tonight I cannot rest  
I've got this joy inside my breast  
To think that I did not forget  
That child, that song of Bernadette  
So many hearts I find ...



## Wither Thou Goest

Wither Thou goest - I will go.  
Wither Thou lodgest - I will lodge.  
Thy people shall be - My people - own.  
Wither Thou goest - I will go.

Wither Thou goest - I will go.  
Wither Thou lodgest - I will lodge.  
Thy people shall be - My people - own.  
Wither Thou goest - I will go.



## The Broken Lip

*Improvisation during the Frankfurt concert of April 6th, 1972  
when someone from the audience requested a non-existened song*

I never had a broken lip myself  
But I'm willing to try it out  
So why don't you come right up here  
And punch me in the mouth  
I ain't got no broken lip, babe  
And you can see my mouth is perfectly whole  
There isn't even a trace of a cold sore  
Let alone a broken lip

Come to think of it, I did have a broken lip  
But that was a long time ago  
When I was a lot younger and a lot thinner  
And a lot more ambitious  
And a lot more reverent  
A lot more reverent  
A whole lot more reverent

I think it was my sister  
Who really had the broken lip  
I remember her lip, not only was it broken  
You could say it was entirely mutilated  
She had a handicap

Oh little sister, you got no mouth at all  
Oh little sister, you got no mouth at all  
Do you find it hard to drink water?  
Do you find it hard to drink wine?  
You know I get down on my knees and I pray for you  
Little lipless sister of mine.

Oh it wasn't my sister  
No I think it was my best friend  
That's why I liked him  
He was very little competition  
In those adolescent kissing games

## Don't Know Why I'm Scared Tonight

*Improvisation during the Frankfurt concert of April 6th, 1972*

Don't know why I'm scared tonight, but baby, I am  
I don't know if it's just the crowd out there  
I don't know if it's the slaughtered lamb  
But I'm singing chains of gold for you  
You know I've become a prisoner of song  
With lawyers and contracts and royalties  
And very little else in my hand.

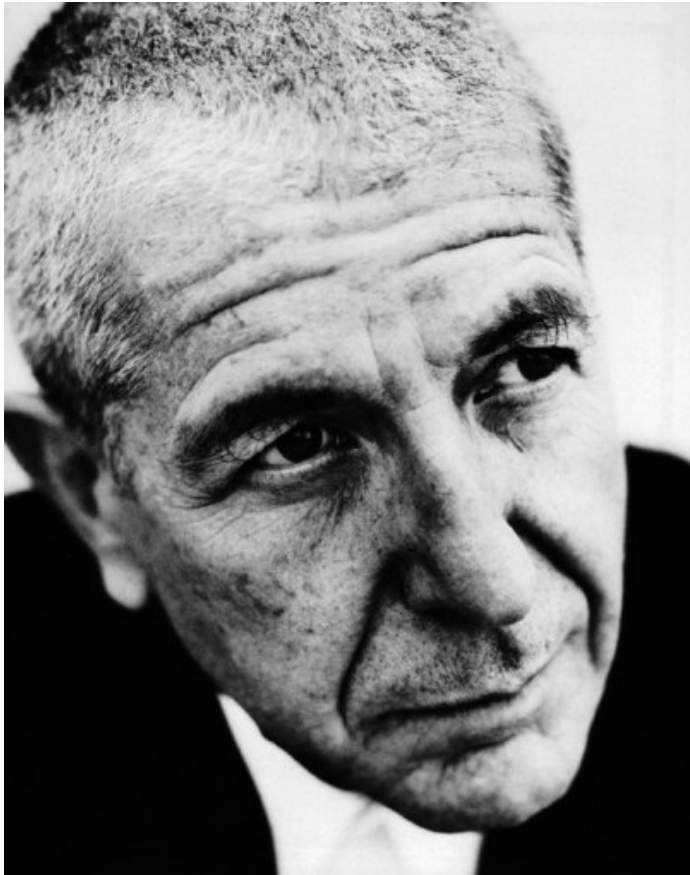




## **I'm Trying To Break Free**

*Improvisation during the Frankfurt concert of April 6th, 1972*

I'm trying to break free myself you know  
Trying to lose my old songs  
Trying to start a new life before it's too late  
Trying to get along.



## Never Any Good

I was never any good at loving you  
I was never any good at coming  
Through for you  
You're going to feel much better  
When you cut me loose forever  
I was never any good  
Never any good  
I was never any good at loving you

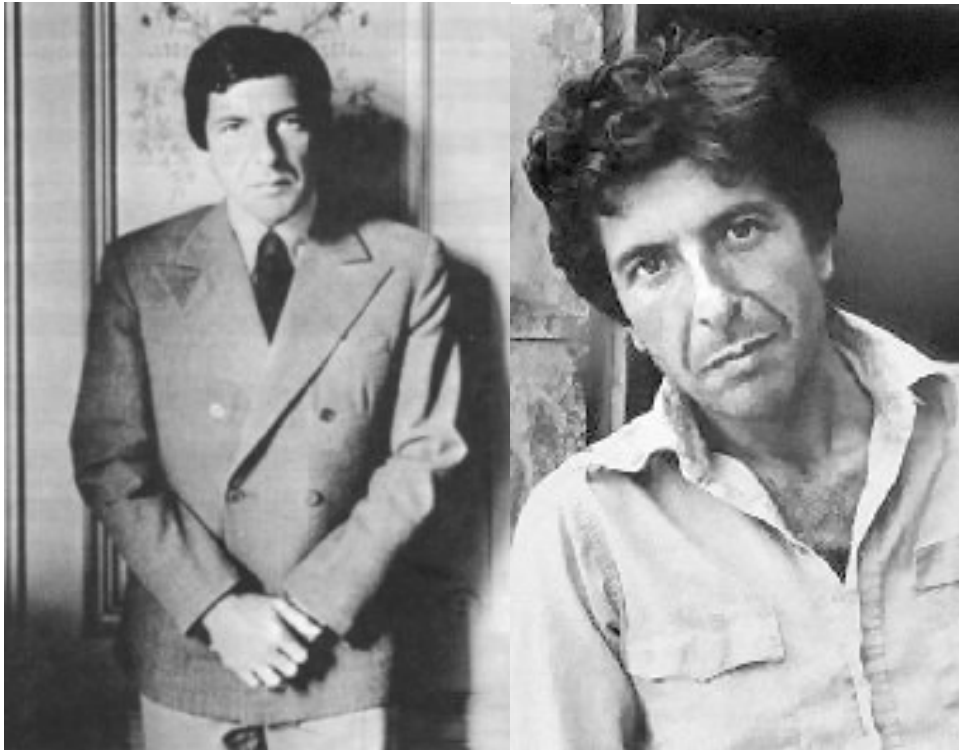
I was dying when we met  
I bet my life on you  
But you called me and I folded  
Like you knew I'd do  
You called my ace, my king, my bluff  
Okay, you win, enoughs enough  
I was never any good  
Never any good  
I was never any good at loving you

I was pretty good at taking out  
The garbage  
Pretty good at holding up the wall  
Dealing with the fire and the earthquake  
But that don't count  
That don't count  
That don't count for nothing much at all

I was never any good at loving you  
I was just a tourist in your bed looking  
At the view  
But I can't forget where my lips  
Have been  
Those holy hills, that deep ravine  
I was never any good  
Never any good  
I was never any good at loving you

I was pretty good at taking out the garbage  
Pretty good at holding up the wall  
Im sorry for my crimes against  
The moonlight  
I didnt think  
I didnt think  
I didnt think the moon would mind at all

I was never any good at loving you  
At doing what a woman really wants  
A man to do  
Youre going to feel much better  
When you cut me loose forever  
I was never any good  
Never any good  
I was never any good at loving you



## There's No Reason Why You Should

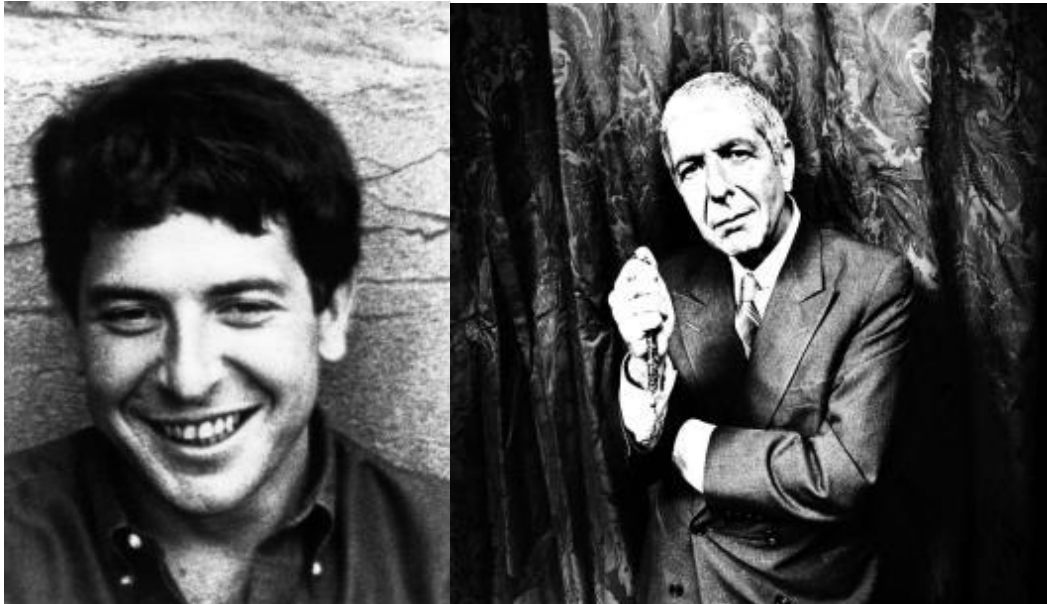
Now I'm going to give you a second chance. This is the formula in which you can articulate the very worse kind of anxieties, fears, short circuits between all possible relationships, and by singing it with me you'll resolve all those things and everything will be straight. You'll be straighter than you've ever been. You can really look at the person next to you and things will be so good, really

No it wasn't any good  
There's no reason that you should  
Remember me  
No it wasn't any good  
There's no reason why you should  
Remember me  
There's no reason why you should  
Remember me  
There's no reason why you should  
Remember me  
There's no reason why you should  
Remember me



## The Great Event

It's going to happen very soon. The great event which will end the horror. Which will end the sorrow. Next Tuesday, when the sun goes down, I will play the Moonlight Sonata backwards. This will reverse the effects of the world's mad plunge into suffering, for the last 200 million years. What a lovely night that would be. What a sigh of relief, as the senile robins become bright red again, and the retired nightingales, pick up their dusty tails, and assert the majesty of creation!



## Way Down Deep

*way down, way way down  
way way down deep  
you're got me way down, way way down,  
way way down deep  
You're got me way down, way down deep  
I wander with you in my sleep I'm way down,  
Way way down, way way down deep*

It came to me this morning  
I was walking down the street  
was like my soul could taste you  
and God You tasted sweet  
finally I can breathe again  
finally I can speak  
I've got you in the glory place  
I've got you way down deep

*I've got you way down, way way down,  
way way down deep  
You're got me way down, way way down,  
way way down deep  
You're got me way down, way down deep  
I wander with you in my sleep  
I'm way down, way way down,  
way way down deep*

It's a funny feeling  
but I cannot say I mind  
I know that I'm dealing with  
a love that's far from blind  
I see every single angle  
I look before I leap  
how else can I put it  
when you're got me way down deep

*You've got me way down, way way down,  
way way down deep  
You've got me way down, way way down,  
way way down deep  
You've got me way down, way down deep  
I wander with you in my sleep  
I'm way down, way way down  
way way down deep*

don't matter what we gave away  
was nothing we could keep  
don't matter what we didn't say  
you know that talk is cheap  
forgive me if I hate you  
you're a liar and a thief  
but I've got you in the glory place  
I got you way Down deep  
you've got me way down, way way down ...

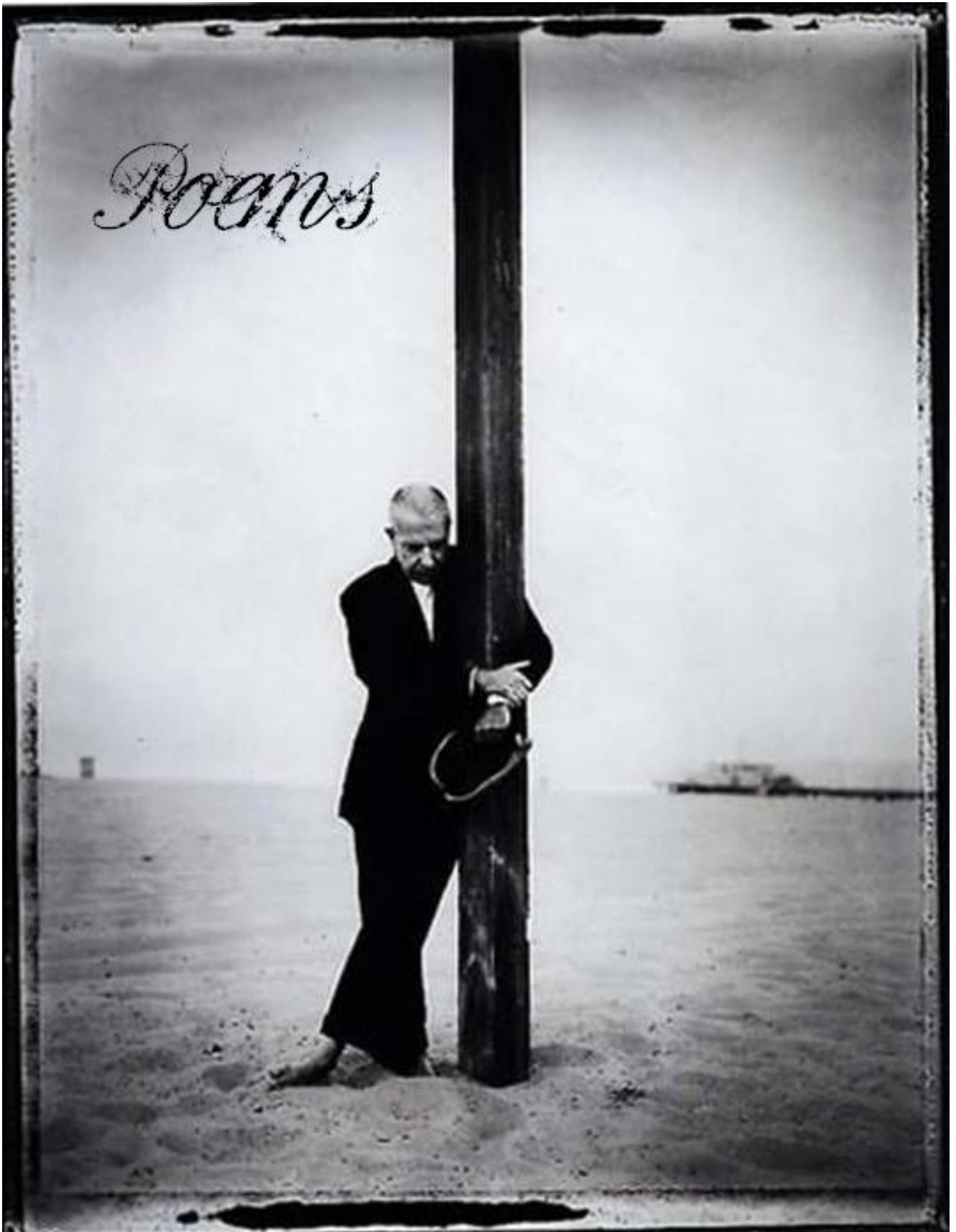
*You've got me way down, way way down,  
way way down deep  
You've got me way down, way way down,  
way way down deep  
You've got me way down, way down deep  
I wander with you in my sleep  
I'm way down, way way down  
way way down deep*

don't matter if the road is long  
don't matter if it's steep  
don't matter if the moon goes out  
and darkness is Complete  
don't matter if we lose our way  
I know we're gonna meet  
I've got you in the glory place  
I've got you Way down deep

*You've got me way down, way way down,  
way way down deep  
You've got me way down, way way down,  
way way down deep  
You've got me way down, way down deep  
I wander with you in my sleep  
I'm way down, way way down  
way way down deep  
way down, way way down, way way down deep  
way down, way way down, way way down deep.*







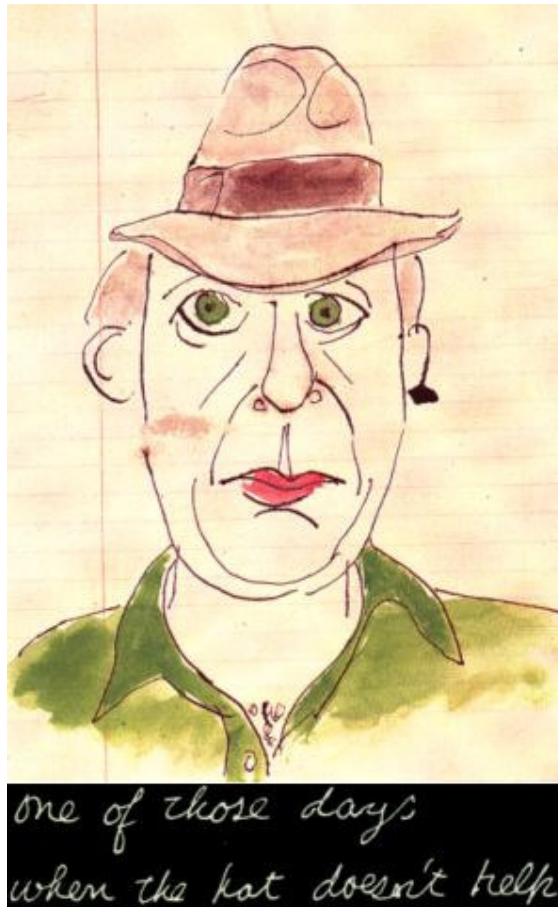
## *The Party Was Over Then Too*

When I was about fifteen  
I followed a beautiful girl  
into the Communist Party of Canada.  
There were secret meetings  
and you got yelled at  
if you were a minute late.  
We studied the McCarran Act  
passed by the stooges in Washington,  
and the Padlock Law  
passed by their lackeys in Quebec,  
and they said nasty shit  
about my family  
and how we got our money.  
They wanted to overthrow  
the country that I loved  
(and served, as a Sea Scout).  
And even the good people  
who wanted to change things,  
they hated them too  
and called them social fascists.  
They had plans for criminals  
like my uncles and aunties  
and they even had plans  
for my poor little mother  
who had slipped out of Lithuania  
with two frozen apples  
and a bandanna full of monopoly money.  
They never let me get near the girl  
and the girl never let me get near the girl.  
She became more and more beautiful  
until she married a lawyer  
and became a social fascist herself  
and very likely a criminal too.  
But I admired the Communists  
for their pig-headed devotion  
to something absolutely wrong.

It was years before I found something comparable for myself:

I joined a tiny band of steel-jawed zealots  
who considered themselves  
the Marines of the spiritual world. It's just a matter of time:

we'll be landing this raft  
on the Other Shore,  
we'll be taking that beach  
on the Other Shore.



## *Love Itself*

The light came through the window now  
straight from the sun above,  
and so inside my little room  
there plunged the rays of Love.

In streams of light I clearly saw  
the dust you seldom see,  
the dust the Nameless makes to speak  
a Name for one like me.

And all mixed up with sunlight now  
the flecks did float and dance  
and I was tumbled up with them  
in formless circumstance.

I'll try to say a little more:  
this Love went on and on  
until it reached an open door -  
Then Love itself was gone.

The self-same moment words were seen  
from every window frame,  
but there was nothing left between  
the Nameless and the Name.



## *Not A Jew*

Anyone who says

I'm not a Jew

is not a Jew

I'm very sorry

but this is final

so says:

Eliezar, son of Nissan,

priest of Israel;

a.k.a

Nightingale of the Sinai,

Yom Kippur 1973;

a.k.a

Jikan the Unconvincing,

zen monk;

a.k.a

Leonard Cohen,

Certified Food Worker,

San Bernadino County, CA;

a.k.a

The Founder,

Order of the Unified Heart;

a.k.a

The Best Dressed Man in Montreal

(local newspaper)

## *Seisen Is Dancing*

Seisen has a long body.  
Her shaved head  
threatens the skylight  
and her feet go down  
into the vegetable cellar.  
When she dances for us  
at one of our infrequent celebrations,  
the dining hall  
with it's cargo of weightless monks and nuns,  
bounces around her hips  
like a hula-hoop.  
The venerable old pine trees  
crack out of sentry duty  
and get involved,  
as do the San Gabriel mountains  
and the flat cities  
of Claremont, Upland  
and the Inland Empire.  
And ocean speaks to ocean  
saying, What the hell,  
let's go with it, rouse ourselves.  
The Milky Way undoes its spokes  
and cleaves to Seisen's haunches,  
as do the worlds beyond,  
and worlds unborn,  
not to mention darkest holes  
of brooding anti-matter,  
and random flying mental objects  
like this poem,  
fucking up the atmosphere.  
It's all going round her hips,  
and what her hips enclose;  
it's all lit up by her face,  
her ownerless expression.  
And then there's this aching fool  
over here, no, over *here*  
who thinks that  
Seisen's still a woman,  
who's trying to find a place to stand  
where Seisen isn't Dancing.

## *To A Young Nun*

This undemanding love  
that our staggered births  
have purchased for us --  
You in your generation,  
I in mine.  
I am not the one  
you are looking for.  
You are not the one  
I've stopped looking for.  
How sweetly time  
disposes of us  
as we go arm in arm  
over the Bridge of Details:  
Your turn to chop.  
My turn to cook.  
Your turn to die for love.  
My turn to resurrect.



## *You Are Right, Sahara*

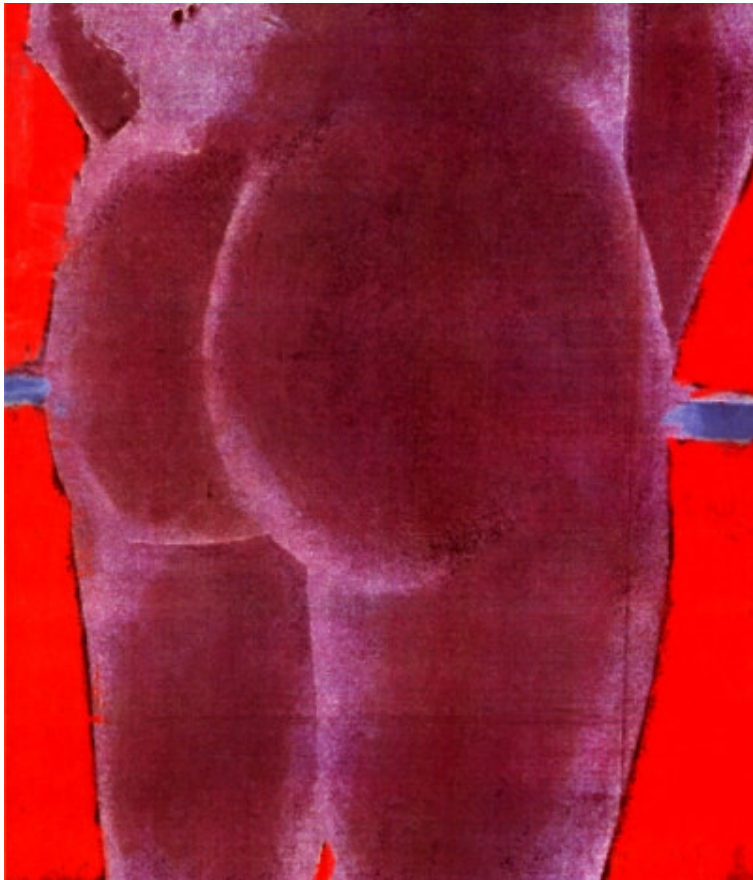
You are right, Sahara. There are no mists, or veils, or distances. But the mist is surrounded by a mist; and the veil is hidden behind a veil; and the distance continually draws away from the distance. That is why there are no mists, or veils, or distances. That is why it is called The Great Distance of Mist and Veils. It is here that The Traveler becomes The Wanderer, and The Wanderer becomes The One Who Is Lost, and The One Who Is Lost becomes The Seeker, and The Seeker becomes The Passionate Lover, and The Passionate Lover becomes The Beggar, and The Beggar becomes The Wretch, and The Wretch becomes The One Who Must Be Sacrificed, and The One Who Must Be Sacrificed becomes The Resurrected One and The Resurrected One becomes The One Who has Transcended The Great Distance of Mist and Veils. Then for a thousand years, or the rest of the afternoon, such a One spins in the Blazing Fire of Changes, embodying all the transformations, one after the other, and then beginning again, and then ending again, 86,000 times a second. Then such a one, if he is a man, is ready to love the woman Sahara; and such a one, if she is a woman, is ready to love the man who can put into song The Great Distance of Mist and Veils. Is it you who are waiting, Sahara, or is it I?





## *Sorrows Of The Eldrely*

The old are kind  
but the young are hot.  
Love may be blind  
but Desire is not.



## *The Goal*

I can't leave my house  
or answer the phone.  
I'm going down again  
but feeling no pain.

And that's the great change  
and mercy to boot ---  
the enemy's dead  
and I don't have to shoot.

But as for the fall:  
it was writ long ago  
and I can't stop it now ---  
I'm rain and I'm snow.

And I settle at last  
on the ground of my soul  
in shapes of the past  
and shapes that unfold.

I sit in my chair  
and I look at the street --  
the enemy's gone  
and his absence is sweet!

I move with the leaves  
I shine with the chrome  
I'm almost alive  
I'm almost at home.

But please do not follow  
I've nothing to teach:  
except that the goal  
falls short of the reach.

## *Book Of Longing* *(Dear Reader)*

I can't make the hills  
The system is shot  
I'm living on pills  
for which I thank G-d

There's sun in the leaves  
and birds in the tree.  
Nobody believes  
it's written by Thee.

I used to be song  
I used to be cock  
but time is long gone  
past my laughingstock

I bid you good-bye  
There's nothing to add  
I've tried and I try  
to stop going mad

I followed the course  
from chaos to art  
My dick was the horse  
my life was the cart

I'm back at my desk  
(the end of the line)  
a bee in my breast  
a snake in my spine

The silverware shines  
that my mother left  
to me when she died  
fulfilled and bereft

My leash is too long  
I think that I'm free  
I'd leap at the young  
but I'm sixty-three

I know what I want  
It took many lives  
I'm cured by the cunt  
I'm killed by the eyes

The sorrows are real  
as froth on the wave  
as shit on the beach  
the city's disgrace

Who cares what I say  
I'm not who I was  
I'm paid what I pay  
I'm always in love

The summer won't come  
'till I go to bed  
The birds will return  
when the dog is dead

You can't say it right  
when you touch yourself  
But truth's not advice  
It is total health

The crap on my back  
the piss in my face  
but happy at last  
in the Holy Place

You can't go too deep  
if you want to swim  
where the mermaids weep  
out of love for Him

I'm nothing but lust  
I'm nothing but pain  
I did these mistrust  
but Never Again

I say what I want  
for I am the Child  
of G-d coming home  
and His Wife gone wild

I don't need a thing  
I use what I have  
a moth-eaten wing  
a worm cut in half

With these I invoke  
The Name to draw nigh  
I'm clamped in a stock  
to hold my head high

My animal howls  
My angel's upset  
And deep in my bowels  
the shit of regret

You can't stop a man  
from loving too much  
I'm still licking stamps  
from trying it once

My pen is too wet  
My ink is too black  
The Winner won't get  
his foot on the track

But the one like me  
with light in her eye  
is utterly free  
to crawl or to fly

And she'll know the path  
I carved through the pain  
my will cut in half  
and Freedom between

I'll meet her one day  
when the time is right  
for me to display  
my flare in the night

for the space in space  
to cough up the Word  
that seals our Embrace  
unharmd and unheard

And Mercy at last  
for one doubled up  
and tied to the mast  
with the flags of love

And thank's be to you  
for helping me out  
when Youth had no clue  
what's it all about

Your kindness is kind  
your trueness is true  
I pray that you'll find  
your Beloved, too

as I have found mine  
where I'd never look:  
in the threaded spine  
of my Longing Book.

## *Roshi At 89*

Roshi's very tired  
he's lying on his bed  
He's been living with the living  
and dying with the dead  
But now he wants another drink  
(will wonders never cease?)  
He's making war on war  
and he's making war on peace  
He's sitting in the throne-room  
on his great Original Face  
and he's making war on Nothing  
that has something in its place  
His stomach's very happy  
the prunes are working well  
There's no one going to Heaven  
and there's no one left in Hell



## *Better*

better than darkness  
is fake darkness  
which swindles you  
into necking with  
your neighbor's daughter

better than banks  
are false banks  
where you put  
all your rough money  
into legal tender

better than coffee  
is blue coffee  
which you drink  
in your last bath  
or sometimes waiting  
for your shoes  
to be dismantled

better than poetry  
is my poetry  
which refers  
to everything  
that is beautiful and  
dignified, but is  
neither of these itself

better than wild  
is secretly wild  
as when I am in my car  
in the darkness of  
a parking space  
with a new friend



better than art  
is repulsive art  
which is shunned  
by Hashem  
and in the ensuing  
hullabaloo  
I slip  
into broadway theaters  
and sit undetected  
in the Hadassah section

better than greatness  
is silly greatness  
which stands me  
on the shoulders  
of my garage  
the better to  
drop all the eggs  
into one basket

better than memory  
is tricky memory  
which is the juice  
of patriotism and  
national interest  
and the fall of husbands  
and all the Sad Show

better than darkness  
is darkless  
which is inkier, vaster  
more profound  
and eerily refrigerated -  
filled with caves  
and blinding tunnels  
in which appear  
beckoning dead relatives  
and other religious  
paraphernalia

better than love  
is rove  
which is the Japanese  
more refined  
smoother  
strangely erotic-  
tiny serene people  
with huge genitalia  
but lighter than thought  
comfortably installed  
on an eyelash of mist  
and living grimly  
ever after  
cooking, gardening  
and raising kids

better than my mother  
is your mother  
who is still alive  
while mine is dead  
as a doornail

better than me  
are you  
kinder than me  
are you  
sweeter smarter faster  
you you you  
prettier than me  
stronger than me  
lonelier than me  
I want to get to know you  
better and better

## *The Drunkard Becomes Gender-Free*

This morning I woke up again  
I thank my Lord for that  
The world is such a pigpen  
That I have to wear a hat

I love the Lord I praise the Lord  
I do the Lord forgive  
I hope I won't be sorry  
For allowing Him to live

I know you like to get me drunk  
And laugh at what I say  
I'm very happy that you do  
I'm lonely every day

I'm angry at the angel  
Who pinched me on the thigh  
And made me fall in love  
With every woman passing by

I know they are your sisters  
And your daughters and your wives  
But even tho' they live at home  
They all lead double lives

It's fun to run to heaven  
When you're off the beaten track  
But God is such a monkey  
When you've got Him on your back

God is such a monkey  
And He's such a woman too  
SHe's such a place of nothing  
SHe's such a face of you

May SHe crash into your temple  
And look out thru' your eyes  
And make you fall in love  
With everybody you despise

## S.O.S.

Take a long time with your anger,  
sleepy head.  
Don't waste it in riots.  
Don't tangle it with ideas.  
The Devil won't let me speak,  
will only let me hint  
that you are a slave,  
your misery a deliberate policy  
of those in whose thrall you suffer,  
and who are sustained  
by your misfortune.  
The atrocities over there,  
the interior paralysis over here--  
Pleased with the better deal?  
You are clamped down.  
You are being bred for pain.  
The Devil ties my tongue.  
I'm speaking to you,  
'friend of my scribbled life'.  
You have been conquered by those  
who know how to conquer invisibly.  
The curtains move so beautifully,  
lace curtains of some  
sweet old intrigue:  
the Devil tempting me  
to turn away from alarming you.  
So I must say it quickly.  
Whoever is in your life,  
those who harm you,  
those who help you;  
those whom you know  
and those whom you do not know --  
let them off the hook,  
help them off the hook.  
Recognize the hook.  
You are listening to Radio Resistance.

## *Religious Statues*

After a while  
I started playing with dolls  
I loved their peaceful expressions  
They all had their places  
in a corner of Room 315

I would say to myself:  
*It doesn't matter  
that you can't breathe  
that you are hopelessly involved  
in the panic of the situation -  
It is the will of God*

I'd light a cigarette  
and a stick of Nag Champa  
Both would burn too fast  
in the draft of the ceiling fan

Then I might say  
something like:  
*Thank You  
for the terms of my life  
which make it so painfully clear  
that I am powerless  
to control You*

and I'd watch CNN  
the rest of the night  
from a completely different  
point of view

## *The Best*

India has the best Ice Cream  
America has the best Chocolate  
England has the best Phlegm  
Spain has the best Worms  
Italy has the best Mist  
Israel has the best Self-Mockery  
Canada has the best Light  
Mexico has the best Eagles  
Portugal has the best Circles  
Egypt has the best Paper  
Morocco has the best Jews  
Japan has the best Creases  
I've been to too many countries  
I died when I left Montreal  
I met women I didn't understand  
I pretended to get interested in food  
But it was all The Fear of Snow  
It was all the Will of God  
It was all The Heart  
swallowing The Other Organs  
It was Five Days of Summer  
and Two Days of Spring  
Mostly it was the Death of my Dog  
Sorrow is the time to begin  
Longing is the place to rejoice  
But I did not begin  
Longing is the place to rejoice  
But I did not begin  
and I did not rejoice  
I was lazy in God Books lie open all around me  
Despite my efforts  
they keep coming into my room  
And there is a slab of old stone  
with cuneiform inscriptions  
When I lived in Montreal  
I knew what to wear  
I had old clothes  
and old friends  
and my dog had been dead  
for only ten or fifteen years

Fortunately there is no space for regret  
in the Poverty of these Reflections



## *Not So Friendly*

Not so friendly today,  
are you, darling?  
I, too, find myself  
in a distant mood.  
Maybe it's time  
to take the long way home,  
the back streets  
where we will be assaulted  
by thugs  
because we are rich,  
and spit on by old women  
who don't like  
your bare arms.  
Then how about  
caramel custard  
In that place they know us?  
Yes, I'm feeling better  
about you, already.  
I'm looking forward  
to our white hotel room  
where the two puppets  
can be naked at last,  
and in each other's arms,  
surrender to the strings.





## *You Have Loved Enough*

I came to You with sorrow –  
You said, "*Come to me with bread*".  
I could not make a living –  
You employed me with the dead.

I chose the marble chambers –  
But You sent me down below.  
You kept me from believing  
Until You let me know:

That I am not the one who loves –  
It's Love that seizes *me*!  
When hatred with his package comes,  
*You* forbid delivery.

And when the hunger for Your touch  
rises from the hunger,  
You whisper, "*Child ,you've loved enough,  
now let Me be the Lover*".



## *Alexandra Leaving*

*(based on The God Abandons Anthony, a poem by Constantine P. Cavafy)*

Suddenly the night has grown colder.  
Some deity preparing to depart.  
Alexandra hoisted on his shoulder,  
they slip between the sentries of your heart.

Upheld by the simplicities of pleasure,  
they gain the light, they formlessly entwine;  
and radiant beyond your widest measure  
they fall among the voices and the wine.

It's not a trick, your senses all deceiving,  
a fitful dream the morning will exhaust---  
Say goodbye to Alexandra leaving,  
Then say goodbye to Alexandra lost.

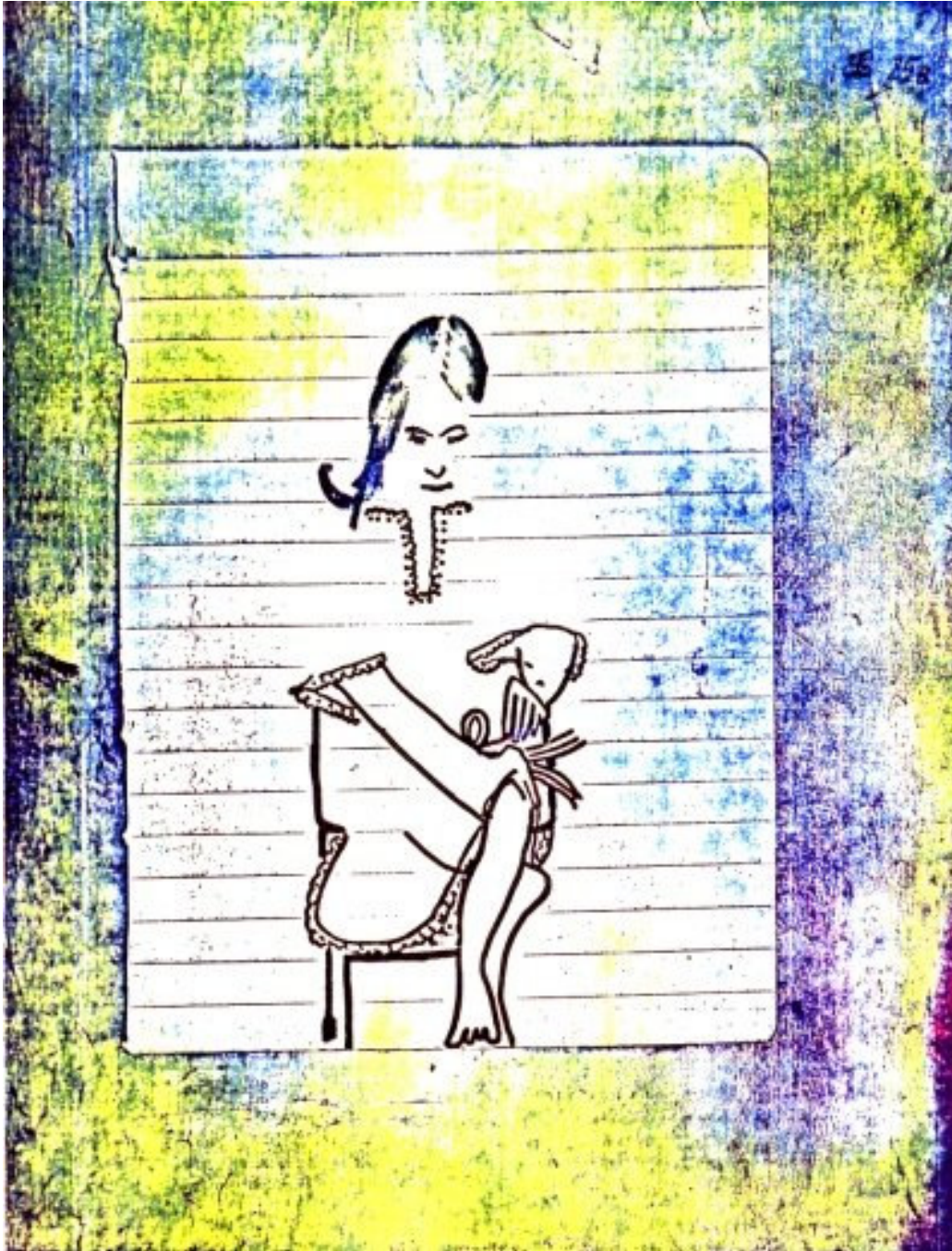
Even though she sleeps upon your satin.  
Even though she wakes you with a kiss.  
Do not say the moment was imagined,  
Do not stoop to strategies like this.

As someone long prepared for this to happen,  
Go firmly to the window. Drink it in.  
Exquisite music, Alexandra laughing.  
Your first commitments tangible again.

You who had the honor of her evening,  
And by that honor had your own restored---  
Say goodbye to Alexandra leaving.  
Alexandra leaving with her lord.

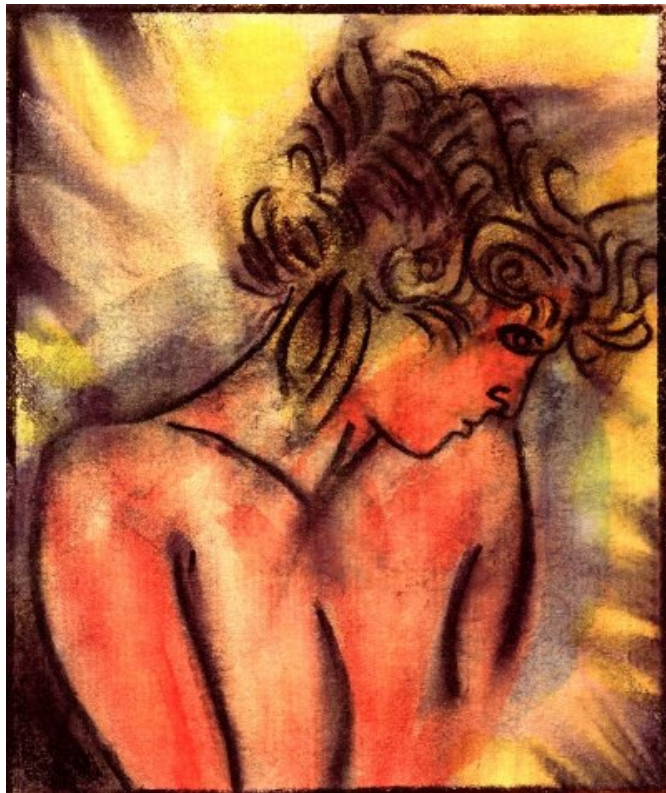
As someone long prepared for the occasion;  
In full command of every plan you wrecked---  
Do not choose a coward's explanation  
that hides behind the cause and the effect,

You who were bewildered by a meaning,  
whose code was broken, crucifix uncrossed---  
Say goodbye to Alexandra leaving.  
Then say goodbye to Alexandra lost.



## *Because Of A Few Songs*

Because of a few songs  
wherein I spoke of their  
mystery,  
women have been  
exceptionally kind  
to my old age.  
They make a secret place  
in their busy lives  
and they take me there.  
They become naked  
in their different ways  
and they say,  
"Look at me, Leonard  
look at me one last time."  
Then they bend over the bed  
and cover me up  
like a baby that is shivering.



## *Promise*

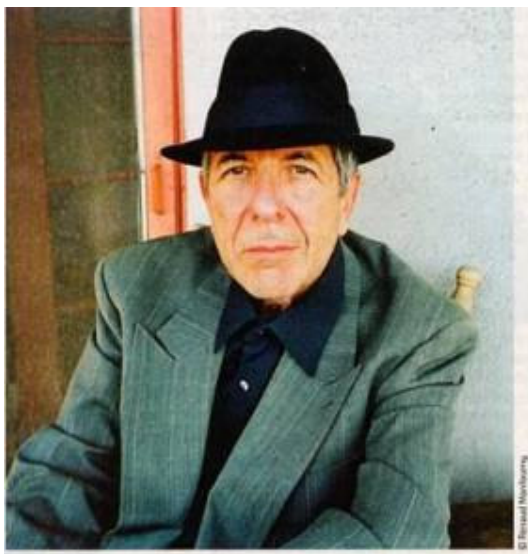
I will never  
return  
the Holy Grail  
to its  
"rightful owners."





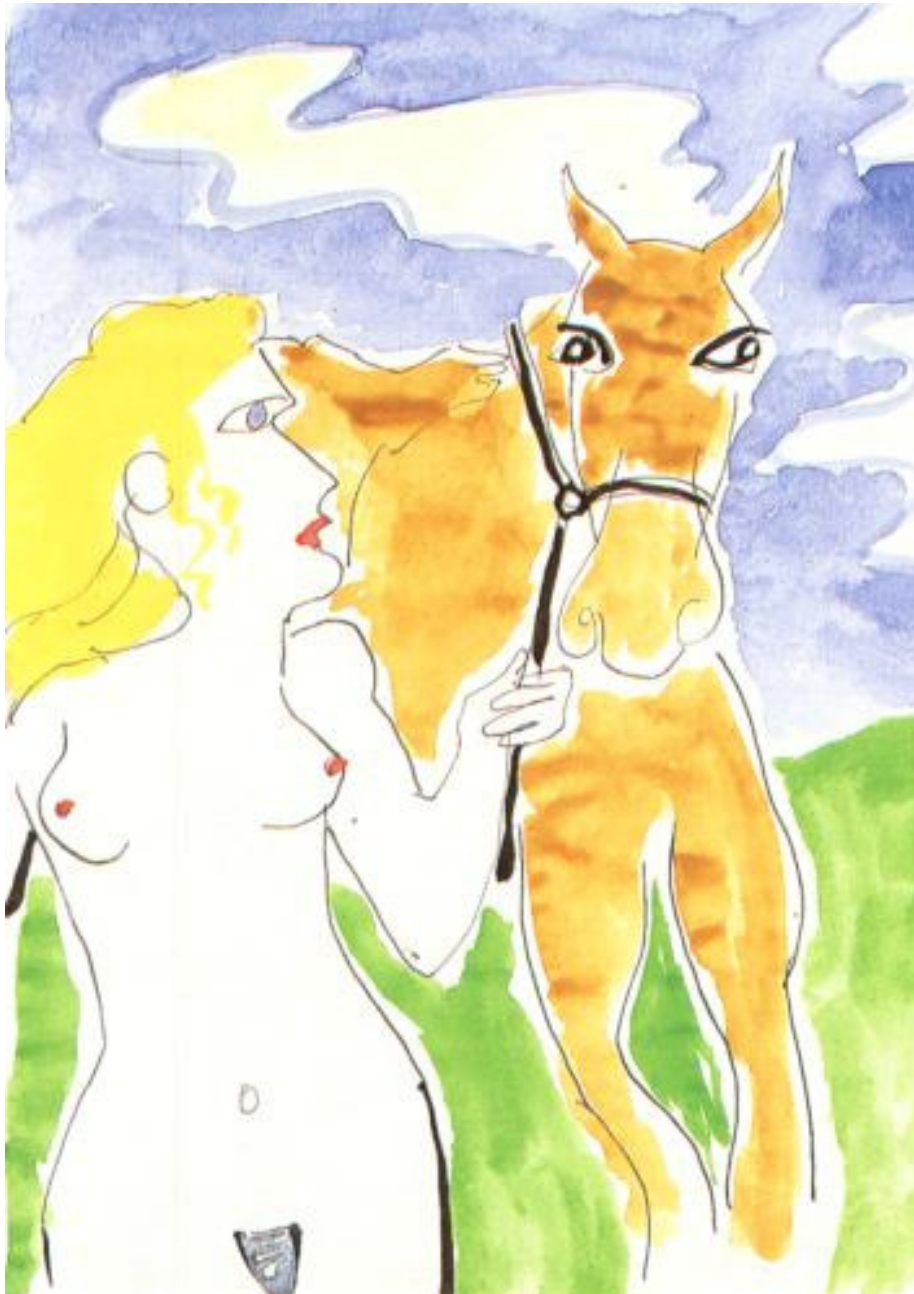
## *The Correct Attitude*

Except for a couple of hours  
in the morning  
which I passed in the company  
of a sage  
I stayed in bed  
without food  
only a few mouthfuls of water  
“you are a fine looking old man”  
I said to myself in the mirror  
“and what is more  
you have the correct attitude  
You don’t care if it ends  
or if it goes on  
And as for the women  
and the music  
there will be plenty of that  
in Paradise”  
Then I went to the Mosque  
of Memory  
to express my gratitude



## *Mercy Returns To Me*

A woman I want -  
An honour I covet -  
A place where I want my mind to dwell -  
Then Mercy returns me  
To the fretboard  
And the problems of the song.



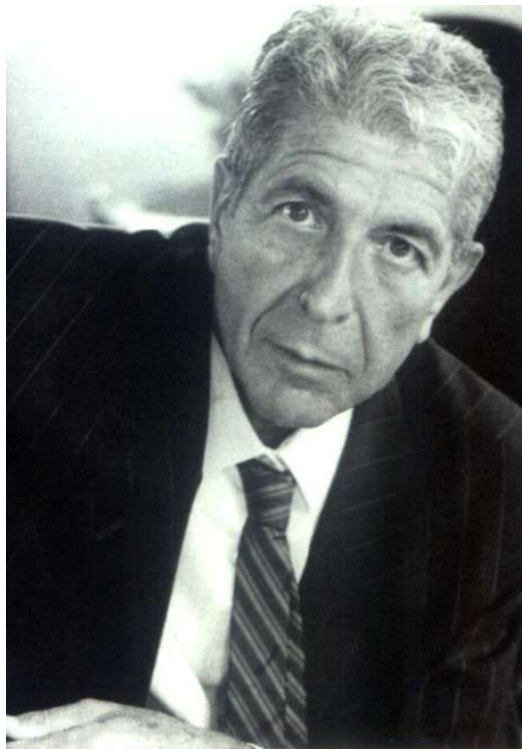
## *Good Advice For Someone Like Me*

behind the pain  
someone is rejoicing

behind the torture  
there is love

who's going to buy  
this bullshit

if you don't become the ocean  
you'll be seasick  
every day





## *Thousands*

Out of the thousands  
who are known,  
or who want to be known  
as poets,  
maybe one or two  
are genuine  
and the rest are fakes,  
hanging around the sacred  
precincts  
trying to look like the real thing.  
Needless to say  
I am one of the fakes,  
and this is my story



## *A Life Of Errands*

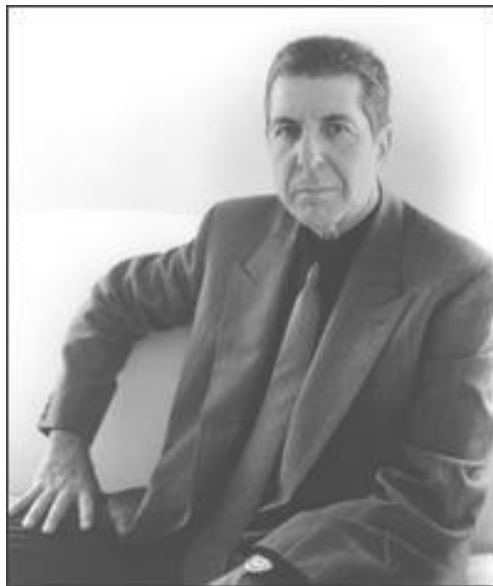
If You Are Lucky  
You Will Grow Old  
And Live  
A Life Of Errands.  
You Will Discern  
What People Need  
And Provide It  
Before They Ask.  
You Will Drive Your Car  
Here And There  
Delivering And Fetching  
And Neither The Traffic  
Nor The Weather  
Will Bother You  
In The Least.  
You Will Whip Down The 405  
To San Diego  
To Pick Up An Acorn  
For Someone's Proverb  
And So On And So Forth.  
In Spite Of The Ache  
In Your Heart  
About The Girl You  
Never Found  
And The Fact That  
After Years Of  
Spiritual Rigor You Did Not Manage  
To Enlighten Yourself  
A Certain Cheerfulness  
Will Begin To  
Arise Out Of Your Crushed  
Hopes And Intentions.  
How Thirstily  
You Embrace Your Next Commission:  
To Sift Through The Sunglasses  
At A Lost And Found  
In Las Vegas  
Just A Few Hours  
Across The Desert.

Your Hair Is White  
You Have Breasts  
And A Gut  
Over Your Belt  
You Are No Longer A Boy,  
Or Even A Man  
But A Sense Of Gratitude  
Enlivens Every Move You Make.  
Yes, Sir, These Are The  
Very Gold-Rimmed Pair  
She Left In The Plastic Tray  
Beside The Dollar Slot Machines.  
No, Sir, I Am Not Lying.



## *Hospitality*

drinking cognac  
with the old man –  
.....his exquisite hospitality  
in the shack by the river –  
that is, no hospitality  
just emptying the bottle into my glass  
and filling my plate  
and falling asleep  
when it was time to go



# *The Flood*

The flood it is gathering

Soon it will move

Across every shoreline

Against every roof

The body will drown

And the soul will shake loose

I write all this down

But I don't have the proof



## *Looking Away*

you would look at me  
and it never occurred to me  
that you might be choosing the man of your life

you would look at me  
over the bottles and the corpses  
and I thought  
you must be playing with me

you must think I'm crazy enough  
to step behind your eyes  
into the open elevator shaft

so I looked away  
and I waited  
until you became a palm tree

or a crow

or the vast grey ocean of wind  
or the vast grey ocean of mind



## *This Isn't China*

Hold me close  
and tell me what the world is like  
I don't want to look outside  
I want to depend on your eyes  
and your lips  
I don't want to feel anything  
but your hand  
on the old raw bumper  
I don't want to feel anything else  
If you love the dead rocks  
and the huge rough pine trees  
Ok I like them too  
Tell me if the wind  
makes a pretty sound  
in the billion billion needles  
I'll close my eyes and smile  
Tell me if it's a good morning  
or a clear morning  
Tell me what the fuck kind of morning  
it is  
and I'll buy it  
And get the dog  
to stop whining and barking  
This isn't China  
nobody's going to eat it  
It's just going to get fed and petted  
Ok where were we?  
Ok go if you must.  
I'll create the cosmos  
by myself  
I'll let it all stick to me  
every fucking pine needle  
And I'll broadcast my affection  
from this shaven dome  
360 degrees  
to all the dramatic vistas  
to all the mists and snows  
that moves across  
the shining mountains

to the women bathing  
in the stream  
and combing their hair  
on the roofs  
to the voiceless ones  
who have petitioned me  
from their surprising silence  
to the poor in the heart  
(oh more and more to them)  
to all the thought-forms  
and leaking mental objects  
that you get up here  
at the end of your ghostly life





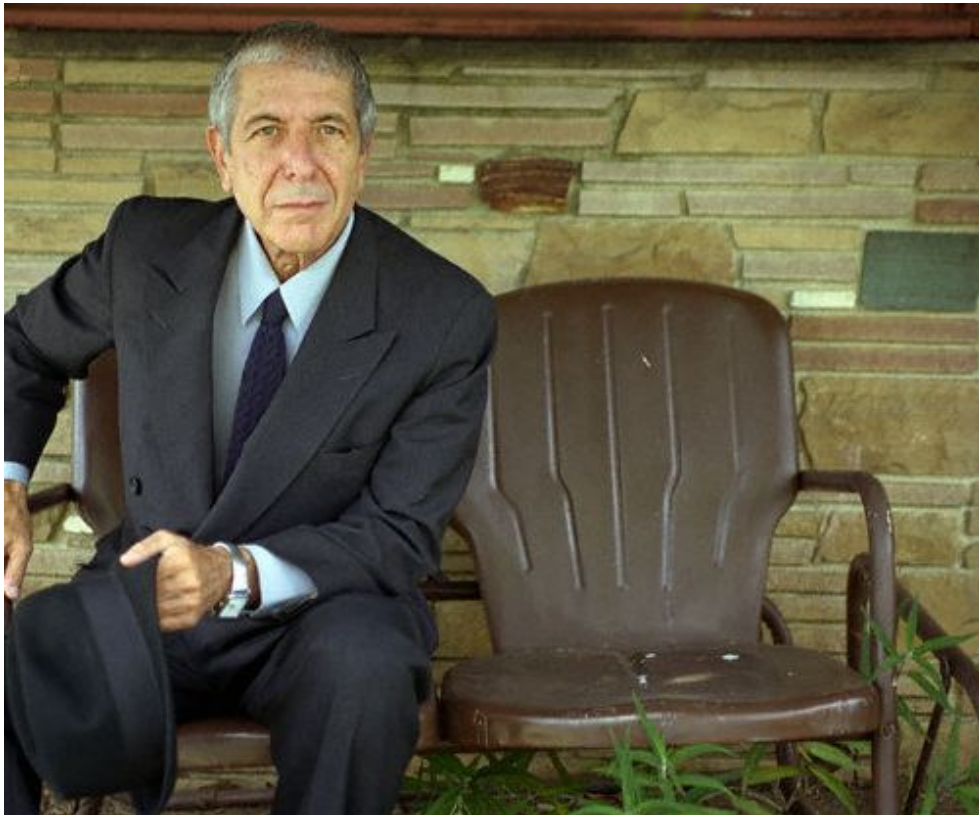
## *It Seemed The Better Way*

It seemed the better way  
When first I heard him speak  
But now it's much too late  
To turn the other cheek

It sounded like the truth  
It seemed the better way  
Though no one but a fool  
Would bless the meek today

I wonder what it was  
I wonder what it meant  
This rising up with love  
This lying down with death

Better hold my tongue  
Better know my place  
Cup of blood with everyone  
Try to say the Grace



## *Never Mind*

The war was lost  
The treaty signed  
I was not caught  
I crossed the line

I had to leave  
My life behind  
I had a name  
But never mind

Your victory  
Was so complete  
That some among you  
Thought to keep

A record of  
Our little lives  
The clothes we wore  
Our pots our knives

The games of luck  
Our soldiers played  
The stones we cut  
The songs we made

Our law of peace  
Which understands  
A husband leads  
A wife commands

And all of this  
Expressions of  
The High Indifference  
Some call Love

The High Indifference  
Some call Fate  
But we had Names  
More intimate

Names so deep  
and Names so true  
They're lost to me  
And dead to you

There is no need  
That this survive  
There's truth that lives  
And truth that dies

There's truth that lives  
And truth that dies  
I don't know which  
So never mind

I could not kill  
The way you kill  
I could not hate  
I tried I failed

No man can see  
The vast design  
Or who will be  
Last of his kind

The story's told  
With facts and lies  
You own the world  
So never mind



## *When I Went Out*

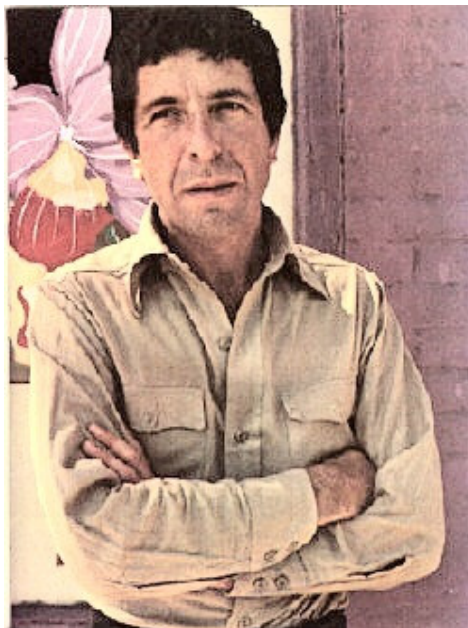
When I went out to tell her  
The love that can't be told  
She hid in themes of marble  
And deep reliefs of gold

When I caught her in the flesh  
And floated on her hips  
Her bosom was a fishing net  
To harvest infant lips

A soft dismissal in her gaze  
And I was more than free  
But took a while to undertake  
My full transparency

Ages since I went to look  
Or she would think to hide  
Torn the cover torn the book  
The stories all untied

But someone made of thread and mist  
Attends her every grace  
Sees more beauty than I did  
When I was in his place



# *Thousand Kisses Deep*

*For Those Who Greeted Me*

You came to me this morning  
And you handled me like meat.  
You'd have to live alone to know  
How good that feels, how sweet.  
My mirror twin, my next of kin,  
I'd know you in my sleep.  
And who but you would take me in  
A thousand kisses deep?

I loved you when you opened  
Like a lily to the heat.  
I'm just another snowman  
Standing in the rain and sleet,  
Who loved you with his frozen love  
His second-hand physique -  
With all he is, and all he was  
A thousand kisses deep.

All soaked in sex, and pressed against  
The limits of the sea:  
I saw there were no oceans left  
For scavengers like me.  
We made it to the forward deck  
I blessed our remnant fleet -  
And then consented to be wrecked  
A thousand kisses deep.

I know you had to lie to me,  
I know you had to cheat.  
But the Means no longer guarantee  
The Virtue in Deceit.  
*That* truth is bent, *that* beauty spent,  
*That* style is obsolete -  
Ever since the Holy Spirit went  
A thousand kisses deep.

(So what about this Inner Light  
That's boundless and unique?  
I'm slouching through another night  
A thousand kisses deep.)

I'm turning tricks; I'm getting fixed,  
I'm back on Boogie Street.  
I tried to quit the business -  
Hey, I'm lazy and I'm weak.  
But sometimes when the night is slow,  
The wretched and the meek,  
We gather up our hearts and go  
A thousand kisses deep.

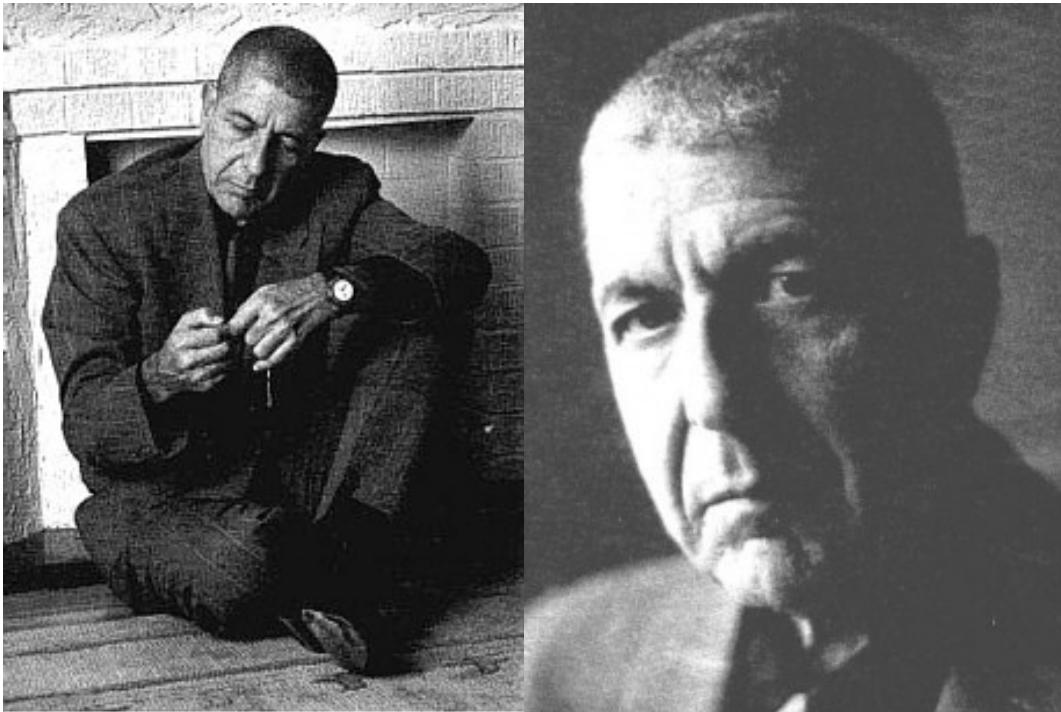
(And fragrant is the thought of you,  
The file on you complete -  
Except what we forgot to do  
A thousand kisses deep.)

The ponies run, the girls are young,  
The odds are there to beat.  
You win a while, and then it's done -  
Your little winning streak.  
And summoned now to deal  
With your invincible defeat,  
You live your life as if it's real  
A thousand kisses deep.

(I jammed with Diz and Dante -  
I did not have their sweep -  
But once or twice, they let me play  
A thousand kisses deep.)

And I'm still working with the wine,  
Still dancing cheek to cheek.  
The band is playing "Auld Lang Syne" -  
The heart will not retreat.  
And maybe I had miles to drive,  
And promises to keep -  
You ditch it all to stay alive  
A thousand kisses deep.

And now you are the Angel Death  
And now the Paraclete;  
And now you are the Savior's Breath  
And now the Belsen heap.  
No turning from the threat of love,  
No transcendental leap -  
As witnessed here in time and blood  
A thousand kisses deep.



## *Go Little Book*

Go little book  
And hide  
And be ashamed  
Of your irrelevance

A fluke  
Has made you prominent  
You were meant  
To be discovered  
Later

When there are no more  
Floods and earthquakes  
And holy wars

Go little book  
And stop disgracing me  
There are serious men  
And women in my life  
And you have given them  
The upper hand

Hide behind  
A window  
O my dear lighthearted  
And transparent  
Book  
Or crush yourself  
Beneath a defeat

But hide  
Hide quickly now  
And let me hear from you  
In our secret code  
Which resembles  
A bad cough



That dark rattle  
Which ignores  
The challenges of love  
The crystals of perfection

O speak to me  
From places  
You will find

Go little book  
Invite me there



## *The Genius*

For you  
I will be a ghetto jew  
and dance  
and put white stockings  
on my twisted limbs  
and poison wells  
across the town

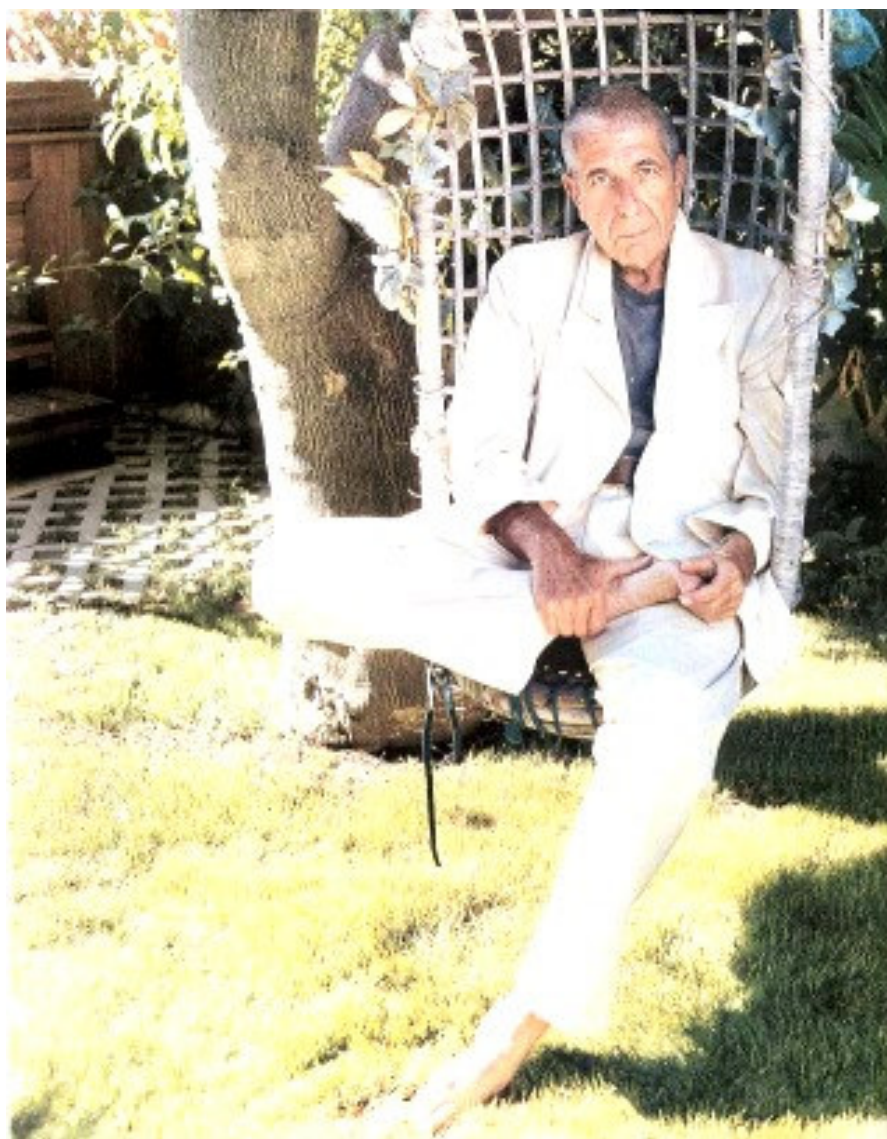
For you  
I will be an apostate jew  
and tell the Spanish priest  
of the blood vow  
in the Talmud  
and where the bones  
of the child are hid

For you  
I will be a banker jew  
and bring to ruin  
a proud old hunting king  
and end his line

For you  
I will be a Broadway jew  
and cry in theatres  
for my mother  
and sell bargain goods  
beneath the counter

For you  
I will be a doctor jew  
and search  
in all the garbage cans for foreskins  
to sew back again

For you  
I will be a Dachau jew  
and lie down in lime  
with twisted limbs  
and bloated pain  
no mind can understand



## *Beneath My Hands*

Beneath my hands  
your small breasts  
are the upturned bellies  
of breathing fallen sparrows.

Wherever you move  
I hear the sounds of closing wings  
of falling wings.

I am speechless  
because you have fallen beside me  
because your eyelashes  
are the spines of tiny fragile animals.

I dread the time  
when your mouth  
begins to call me hunter.

When you call me close  
to tell me  
your body is not beautiful  
I want to summon  
the eyes and hidden mouths  
of stone and light and water  
to testify against you.

I want them  
to surrender before you  
the trembling rhyme of your face  
from their deep caskets.

When you call me close  
to tell me  
your body is not beautiful  
I want my body and my hands  
to be pools  
for your looking and laughing.

## *Poem*

I heard of a man  
who says words so beautifully  
that if he only speaks their name  
women give themselves to him.

If I am dumb beside your body  
while silence blossoms like tumors on our lips.  
it is because I hear a man climb stairs and clear his throat outside the door.



## *My Lady Can Sleep*

My lady can sleep  
Upon a handkerchief  
Or if it be Fall  
Upon a fallen leaf.

I have seen the hunters  
kneel before her hem  
Even in her sleep  
She turns away from them.

The only gift they offer  
Is their abiding grief  
I pull out my pockets  
For a handkerchief or leaf.



## *Millennium*

This could be my little  
book about love  
if I wrote it--  
but my good demon said:  
'Lay off documents!'  
Everybody was watching me  
burn my books--  
I swung my liberty torch  
happy as a gestapo brute;  
the only thing I wanted to save  
was a scar  
a burn or two--  
but my good demon said:  
'Lay off documents!  
The fire's not important!'  
The pile was safely blazing.  
I went home to take a bath.  
I phoned my grandmother.  
She is suffering from arthritis.  
'Keep well,' I said, 'don't mind the pain.'  
'You neither,' she said.  
Hours later I wondered  
did she mean  
don't mind *my* pain  
or don't mind *her* pain?  
Whereupon my good demon said:  
'Is that all you can do?'  
Well was it?  
Was it all I could do?  
There was the old lady  
eating alone, thinking about  
Prince Albert, Flanders Field,  
Kishenev, her fingers too sore  
for TV knobs;  
but how could I get there ?  
The books were gone  
my address lists--  
My good demon said again:  
'Lay off documents!'

You know how to get there!  
And suddenly I did!  
I remembered it from memory!  
I found her  
pouring over the royal family tree,  
'Grandma,'  
I almost said,  
'you've got it upside down--'  
'Take a look,' she said,  
'it only goes to George V.'  
'That's far enough  
you sweet old blood!'  
'You're right!' she sang  
and burned the  
London Illustrated Souvenir  
I did not understand  
the day it was  
till I looked outside  
and saw a fire in every  
window on the street  
and crowds of humans  
crazy to talk  
and cats and dogs and birds  
smiling at each other!





## *The Only Tourist In Havana Turns His Thoughts Homewards*

Come, my brothers,  
let us govern Canada,  
let us find our serious heads,  
let us dump asbestos on the White House,  
let us make the French talk English,

not only here but everywhere,  
let us torture the Senate individually  
until they confess,  
let us purge the New Party,  
let us encourage the dark races  
so they'll be lenient  
when they take over,  
let us make the CBC talk English,  
let us all lean in one direction  
and float down  
to the coast of Florida,  
let us have tourism,  
let us flirt with the enemy,  
let us smelt pig-iron in our back yards,  
let us sell snow  
to under-developed nations,  
(It is true one of our national leaders  
was a Roman Catholic?)  
let us terrorize Alaska,  
let us unite  
Church and State,  
let us not take it lying down,  
let us have two Governor Generals  
at the same time,  
let us have another official language,  
let us determine what it will be,  
let us give a Canada Council Fellowship  
to the most original suggestion,  
let us teach sex in the home  
to parents,  
let us threaten to join the U.S.A.

and pull out at the last moment,  
my brothers, come,  
our serious heads are waiting for us somewhere  
like Gladstone bags abandoned  
after a *coup d'état*,  
let us put them on very quickly,  
let us maintain a stony silence  
on the St. Lawrence Seaway.



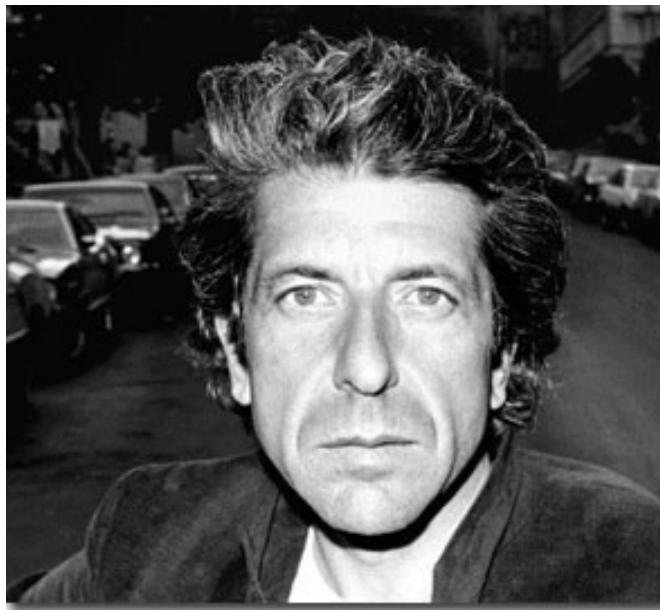
## *Waiting for Marianne*

I have lost a telephone  
with your smell in it

I am living beside the radio  
all the stations at once  
but I pick out a Polish lullaby  
I pick it out of the static  
it fades I wait I keep the beat  
it comes back almost asleep

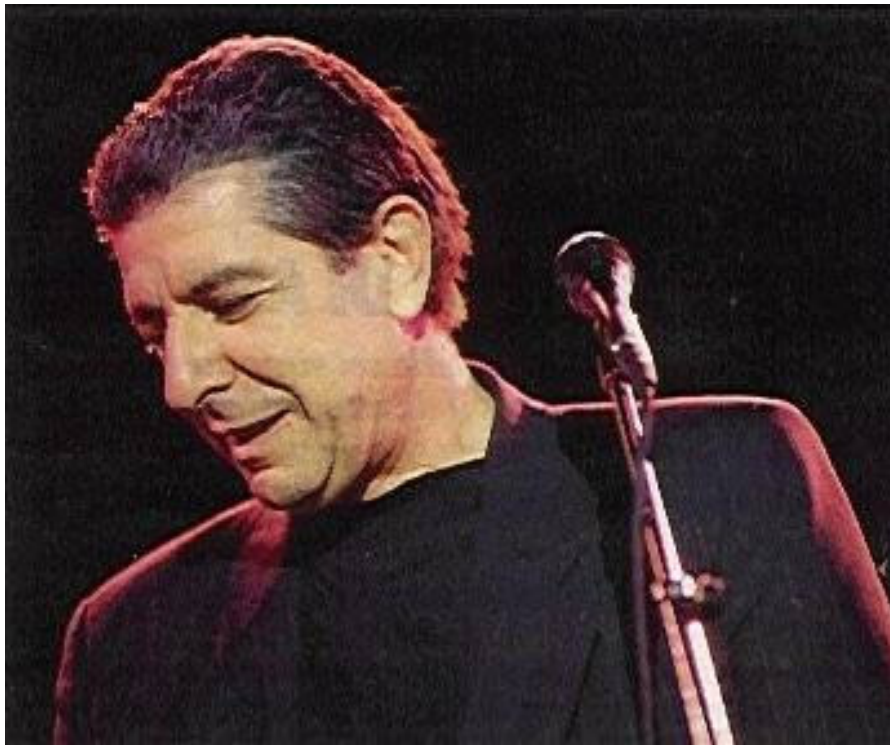
Did you take the telephone  
knowing I'd sniff it immoderately  
maybe heat up the plastic  
to get all the crumbs of your breath

and if you won't come back  
how will you phone to say  
you won't come back  
so that I could at least argue



## *Poem 1*

I stopped to listen, but he did not come. I began again with a sense of loss. As this sense deepened I heard him again. I stopped stopping and I stopped starting, and I allowed myself to be crushed by ignorance. This was a strategy, and didn't work at all. Much time, years were wasted in such a minor mode. I bargain now. I offer buttons for his love. I beg for mercy. Slowly he yields. Haltingly he moves toward his throne. Reluctantly the angels grant to one another permission to sing. In a transition so delicate it cannot be marked, the court is established on beams of golden symmetry, and once again I am a singer in the lower choirs, born fifty years ago to raise my voice this high, and no higher.



## Poem 50

I lost my way, I forgot to call on your name. The raw heart beat against the world,  
and the tears were for my lost victory. But you are here. You have always been here.

The world is all forgetting, and the heart is a rage of directions, but your name  
unifies the heart, and the world is lifted into its place. Blessed is the one who waits in  
the traveller's heart for his turning.



## *Do Not Forget Old Friends*

Do not forget old friends  
you knew long before I met you  
the times I know nothing about  
being someone  
who lives by himself  
and only visits you on a raid



## *I Wonder How Many People in This City*

I wonder how many people in this city  
live in furnished rooms.  
Late at night when i look out at the buildings  
I swear I see a face in every window  
looking back at me  
and when I turn away  
I wonder how many go back to their desks  
and write this down.



## *Song*

I almost went to bed  
without remembering  
the four white violets  
I put in the button-hole  
of your green sweater

and how i kissed you then  
and you kissed me  
shy as though I'd  
never been your lover





## *When This American Woman*

When this American woman,  
whose thighs are bound in casual red cloth,  
comes thundering past my sitting place  
like a forest-burning Mongol tribe,  
the city is ravished  
and brittle buildings of a hundred years  
splash into the street;  
and my eyes are burnt  
for the embroidered Chinese girls,  
already old,  
and so small between the thin pines  
on these enormous landscapes,  
that if you turn your head  
they are lost for hours.



## *I Have Not Lingered In European Monasteries*

I Have Not Lingered In European Monasteries  
and discovered among the tall grasses tombs of knights  
who fell as beautifully as their ballads tell;  
I have not parted the grasses  
or purposefully left them thatched.

I have not held my breath  
so that I might hear the breathing of God  
or tamed my heartbeat with an exercise,  
or starved for visions.  
Although I have watched him often  
I have not become the heron,  
leaving my body on the shore,  
and I have not become the luminous trout,  
leaving my body in the air.

I have not worshipped wounds and relics,  
or combs of iron,  
or bodies wrapped and burnt in scrolls.

I have not been unhappy for ten thousands years.  
During the day I laugh and during the night I sleep.  
My favourite cooks prepare my meals,  
my body cleans and repairs itself,  
and all my work goes well.



## *I Long to Hold Some Lady*

I long to hold some lady  
For my love is far away,  
And will not come tomorrow  
And was not here today.

There is no flesh so perfect  
As on my lady's bone,  
And yet it seems so distant  
When I am all alone:

As though she were a masterpiece  
In some castled town,  
That pilgrims come to visit  
And priests to copy down.

Alas, I cannot travel  
To a love I have so deep  
Or sleep too close beside  
A love I want to keep.

But I long to hold some lady,  
For flesh is warm and sweet.  
Cold skeletons go marching  
Each night beside my feet.



## *Now of Sleeping*

Under her grandmother's patchwork quilt  
a calico bird's-eye view  
of crops and boundaries  
naming dimly the districts of her body  
sleeps my Annie like a perfect lady

Like ages of weightless snow  
on tiny oceans filled with light  
her eyelids enclose deeply  
a shade tree of birthday candles  
one for every morning  
until the now of sleeping

The small banner of blood  
kept and flown by Brother Wind  
long after the pierced bird fell down  
is like her red mouth  
among the squalls of pillow

Bearers of evil fancy  
of dark intention and corrupting fashion  
who come to rend the quilt  
plough the eye and ground the mouth  
will contend with mighty Mother Goose  
and Farmer Brown and all good stories  
of invincible belief  
which surround her sleep  
like the golden wheather of a halo

Well-wishers and her true lover  
may stay to watch my Annie  
sleeping like a perfect lady  
under her grandmother's patchwork quilt  
but they must promise to whisper  
and to vanish by morning -  
all but her one true lover.

## *The Next One*

Things are better in Milan.  
Things are a lot better in Milan.  
My adventure has sweetened.  
I met a girl and a poet.  
One of them was dead  
and one of them was alive.  
The poet was from Peru  
and the girl was a doctor.  
She was taking antibiotics.  
I will never forget her.  
She took me into a dark church  
consecrated to Mary.  
Long live the horses and the saddles.  
The poet gave me back my spirit  
which I had lost in prayer.  
He was a great man out of the civil war.  
He said his death was in my hands  
because I was the next one  
to explain the weakness of love.  
The poet was Cesar Vallejo  
who lies at the floor of his forehead.  
Be with me now great warrior  
whose strength depends solely  
on the favours of a woman.

### **THE NEXT ONE**

*From the original version of My Life in Art:*

I lost my tan in Italy and I got fat on pasta and the starch of loneliness. I must fast for forty days. Sabina wrote me from the temple in Germany. She said that the old books say you should fast once each year for the number of days corresponding to your age. She was on the eight day of an intended twenty-eight-day fast. Also I neglected to twist my feet so the heart went crazy. I must phone Patricia who was so good to me. The line is busy.

"cover of Greatest Hits was taken in a mirror of a hotel room in Milan - I rarely ever look this good, or bad, depending on your politics"

## *The Pro 1973*

Lost my voice in New York City  
never heard it again after sixty-seven  
Now I talk like you  
Now I sing like you  
Cigarette and coffee to make me sick  
Couple of families to make me think  
Going to see my lawyer  
Going to read my mail  
Lost my voice in New York City  
Guess you always knew

### **THE PRO**

*from the Nashville Notebooks of 1969:*

I leave my silence to a co-operative of poets  
who have already bruised their mouths against it.

I leave my homesick charm to the scavengers of  
spare change who work the old artistic corners.

I leave the shadow of my manly groin to those who  
write for pay.

I leave to several jealous men a second-rate legend  
of my life.

To those few high school girls  
who preferred my work to Dylan's  
I leave my stone ear  
and my disposable Franciscan ambitions



## *Summer-Haiku*

*For Frank and Marian Scott*

Silence

and a deeper silence

when the crickets

hesitate



## *Poem 17*

I perceived the outline of your breasts  
through your Hallowe'en costume  
I knew you were falling in love with me  
because no other man could perceive  
the advance of your bosom into his imagination  
It was a rupture of your unusual modesty  
for me and me alone  
through which you impressed upon my shapeless hunger  
the incomparable and final outline of your breasts  
like two deep fossil shells  
which remained all night long and probably forever





## *Poem 111*

Each man  
has a way to betray  
the revolution  
This is mine



## *You Do Not Have To Love Me*

You do not have to love me  
just because  
you are all the women  
I have ever wanted  
I was born to follow you  
every night  
while I am still  
the many men who love you

I meet you at a table  
I take your fist between my hands  
in a solemn taxi  
I wake up alone  
my hand on your absense  
in Hotel Discipline

I wrote all these songs for you  
I burned red and black candles  
shaped like a man and a woman  
I married the smoke  
of two pyramids of sandalwood  
I prayed for you  
I prayed that you would love me  
and that you would not love me



## *Hydra 1960*

Anything that moves is white,  
a gull, a wave, a sail,  
and moves too purely to be aped.  
Smash the pain.

Never pretend peace.  
The consolumentum has not,  
never will be kissed. Pain  
cannot compromise this light.

Do violence to the pain,  
ruin the easy vision,  
the easy warning, water  
for those who need to burn.

These are ruthless: rooster shriek,  
bleached goat skull.  
Scalpels grow with poppies  
if you see them truly red.



## *Hydra 1963*

The stony path coiled around me  
and bound me to the night.  
A boat hunted the edge of the sea  
under a hissing light.

Something soft involved a net  
and bled around a spear.  
The blunt death, the cumulus jet –  
I spoke to you, I thought you near!  
Or was the night so black  
that something died alone?  
A man with a glistening back  
beat the food against a stone.



## *The Poetry Place*

This is for you  
it is my full heart  
it is the book I meant to read you  
when we were old  
Now I am a shadow  
I am restless as an empire  
You are the woman  
who released me  
I saw you watching the moon  
you did not hesitate  
to love me with it  
I saw you honouring the wind-flowers  
caught in the rocks  
you loved me with them  
At night I saw you dance alone  
on the small wet pebbles  
of the shoreline  
and you welcomed me into the circle  
more than a guest  
All this happened  
in the truth of time  
in the truth of flesh  
I saw you with a child  
you brought me to this perfume  
and his visions  
without demand of blood  
On so many wooden tables  
adorned with food and candles  
a thousand sacraments  
which you carried in your basket  
I visited my clay  
I visited my birth  
and you guarded my back  
as I became small  
and frightened enough  
to be born again

I wanted you for your beauty  
and you gave me more than yourself  
you shared your beauty  
this I only learned tonight  
as I recall the mirrors  
you walked away from  
after you had given them  
whatever they claimed  
for my initiation  
Now I am a shadow  
I long for the boundaries  
of my wandering  
and I move  
with the energy of your prayer  
and I move  
in the direction of your prayer  
for you are kneeling  
like a bouquet  
in a cave of a bone  
behind my forehead  
and I move toward a love  
you have dreamed for me



## *Dusko's Taverna 1967*

They are still singing down at Dusko's,  
sitting under the ancient pine tree,  
in the deep night of fixed and falling stars.  
If you go to your window you can hear them.  
It is the end of someone's wedding,  
or perhaps a boy is leaving on a boat in the morning.  
There is a place for you at the table,  
wine for you, and apples from the mainland,  
a space in the songs for your voice.  
Throw something on,  
and whoever it is you must tell  
that you are leaving,  
tell them, or take them, but hurry:  
they have sent for you —  
the call has come —  
they will not wait forever.  
They are not even waiting now



## *No. 63*

Dance on the money  
the heads of presidents  
red toenails

this 'poem' is an I.O.U.  
for 10,000 drachmas  
on your step-smooth shoulders

My table rushes up  
to give you a marble stage  
black olives live forever  
in the tired oil of your grace

Sinking under needles of bazouki  
you threaten us with jobs in the Sahara  
or a salary of halvah  
oh the hair is real  
that pilots the thighs  
into the important satin theatre  
ruined like Greece by overuse  
but all we have of the Golden age

Your courting clothes sleeping in cedar  
your grandmother still alive on Hydra  
'Don't tell her that you saw me naked'





## *A Deep Happiness*

A deep happiness has sized me  
My Christian friends say  
that I have received the Holy Spirit  
It is only truth of solitude  
It is only the torn anemone  
fastened to the rock its root exposed  
to the off-shore wind  
O friend of my scribbled life  
your heart is like mine –  
your loneliness will bring you home



## *The Embrace*

When you stumble suddenly  
into his full embrace,  
he hides away so not to see  
his creature face to face.  
Your yourself are hidden too  
with all your sins of state;  
there is no king to pardon you;  
his mercy is more intimate

He does not stand before you,  
he does not dwell within;  
this passion has no point of view,  
it is the heart of everything.  
There is no hill to see this from.  
You share one body now  
with the serpent you forbid,  
and with the dove that you allow.

The imitations of his love  
he suffers patiently,  
until you can be born with him  
some hopeless night in Galilee;  
until you lose your pride in him,  
until your faith objective fails,  
until you stretch your arms so wide  
you do not need these Roman nails.

Idolators on every side,  
they make an object of the Lord.  
They hang him on a cross so high  
that you must ever move toward.  
They bid you cast the world aside  
and hurl your prayers at him.  
Then the idol-makers dance all night  
upon your suffering.

But when you rise from his embrace  
I trust you will be strong and free  
and tell no tales about his face,  
and praise Creation joyously.



## *My Mother Asleep*

remembering my mother  
at a theater in Athens  
thirty  
thirty-five years ago  
a revue by Theodorakis  
those great songs  
she fell asleep  
in the chair beside me  
in the open air theatre  
she had arrived that day  
from Montreal  
and the play started  
close to midnight  
and she slept through  
the mandolins  
and the great songs  
I was young  
I hadn't had my children  
I didn't know how far away  
your love could be  
I didn't know  
how tired you could get



## *Days of Kindness*

Greece is a good place  
to look at the moon, isn't it  
You can read by moonlight  
You can read on the terrace  
You can see a face  
as you saw it when you were young  
There was good light then  
oil lamps and candles  
and those little flames  
that floated on a cork in olive oil  
What I loved in my old life  
I haven't forgotten  
It lives in my spine  
Marianne and the child  
The days of kindness  
It rises in my spine  
and it manifests as tears  
I pray that loving memory  
exists for them too  
the precious ones I overthrew  
for an education in the world



## *To Be Mentioned At Funerals*

Those days were just the twilight  
And soon the poems and the songs  
Were only associations  
Edged with bitterness  
Focused into pain  
By paintings in a minor key  
Remember on warm nights  
When he made love to strangers  
And he would struggle through old words  
Unable to forget he once created new ones  
And fumble at their breasts with broken hands

When finally he did become very old  
And nights were cold because  
No one was a stranger  
And there was little to do  
But sift the years through his yellow fingers  
Then like fire-twisted shadows of dancers  
Alternatives would array themselves  
Around his wicker chair  
And he regretted everything



## *Another Cherry Brandy*

Another cherry brandy  
and I will propose  
to the waitress,  
who sets the glass before me -  
holding it like a blossom -  
with such grace  
I know she is a Master  
of Flower Arrangement.

O arrange me, Lady,  
in this rainy November night.  
Set my mind  
in the arborite street  
so that I catch  
as easily as glistening tar  
the neon of Peel & St. Catherine,  
so that home-bound clubbers,  
broke and angry with their girl-friends,  
will clasp and wave me  
for one last toast  
to everything they know is true.



## *Just The Worse Time*

This year time was long between  
..... old gardeners tending  
..... black-yellow heaps of smouldering leaves  
and smothering children  
armoured in Red River coats and muffler turns ---  
..... and so as nude girls discovered bathing,  
..... stricken, somehow unable to cover their breasts  
the embarrassed trees fidgeted  
in unsolicited sun.

We were embarrassed too.  
prayed for great heavy drifts of snow  
to cover trees and bare streets,  
to heap on roofs of houses,  
to swaddle mountains and waters ---

but the snow came thin,  
covering the ground like cheap gauze,  
clinging in tatters to the bark,  
..... preserving footprints in the mud.

No. It could not come like an aristocrat,  
like de Bergerac,  
like a white waving plume,  
..... as we prayed for  
..... and will pray for  
..... again.





## *Action*

The stars turn their noble stories,  
turn their heroes upside down;  
the moon, obsessed calm moth  
pursues its private candle past the down---

All these marvels happen  
while I keep silent on my love  
and say nothing for her beauty.

How can I bear the gulls perfect orbit  
round and round the hidden fish,  
how can I watch the fled sun  
seize and harden the ridge of rocks?

In this glory I am innocent!  
I am empty of command!  
I live in the world!

Distant face, like an icon's  
disciplined to tenderness,  
my silence is for you  
Emptiness creates the field  
where innocent as dogs  
we clash for the complete embrace.



## *The First Vision*

Sitting mangled in their chairs  
like the losers  
at a Borgia banquet---

my grandfather  
my father  
my stepfather.

Mother in a corner of the dining-room,  
ignorant of her power,  
urging the corpses to eat---  
Eat! Eat it all up!  
I made it!

Anguished at their ingratitude;  
half-chewed meat falling like caterpillars  
on their old-fashioned vests.  
She didn't know  
the roastbeef was poisoned..

It was the perfect cut  
coveted by every family cook---  
as it stewed it sucked,  
it turned to juice the venom  
lost in the air of the kitchen.

Still, Mother, still, still---  
you'll scream softer if you think  
of the hungry children in India.  
Don't lean across the tablecloth.  
Don't look in  
these outwitted thankless eyes.



## *Lord on Peel Street*

He has returned from countless wars,  
blinded and hopelessly lame,  
He endures the morning streetcars  
and counts ages in a Peel Street room.

Once for music he tamed a banjo  
and softened Bach in a wooden whistle,  
but he let the flutes and folksongs go  
for the slow march under his window.

He is kept in his room like a court jew,  
to consult on plagues or hurricanes,  
and he never walks with them on the sea  
or joins their lonely sidewalk games.



## *Bait*

You stay in the grove  
To ambush the unicorn.  
I don't know what the hunters gave,  
But all the money of the sun  
Falling between the shadows of your face  
In yellow coin  
Could not bribe away the scorn  
Which fastens up your mouth.

For whom are those hard lips?  
The hunters creeping through the green  
Beside their iron-collared hounds?  
Or that towered head who soon  
Will close his eyes  
Between your aproned knees?

And when the animal is leashed  
To the pomegranate tree,  
Don't come by my prison room  
Singing your victory,  
Or charm the guards to undo the chains  
With which I was bound before the hunt  
When I cried that I was a man.

You stay in the grove  
To ambush the unicorn.  
And after wander to the poisoned streams  
Which the unicorn will never clean,  
And greet the good beasts thirsting there.  
Then follow through the holes and caves  
The animals who poisoned it  
And cohabit in each lair.

I don't know what the hunters gave,  
But all the money of the sun  
Falling between the shadows of your face  
In yellow coin  
Could not bribe away the scorn  
Which fastens up your mouth.

## *This Is War*

There is no one  
to show these poems to  
Do not call a friend to witness  
what you must do alone  
These are my ashes  
I do not intend to save you any work  
by keeping silent  
You are not yet as strong as I am  
You believe me  
but I do not believe you  
This is war  
You are here to be destroyed



## *The Only Poem*

This is the only poem  
I can read  
I am the only one  
who can write it  
I didn't kill myself  
when things went wrong  
I didn't turn  
to drugs or teaching  
I tried to sleep  
but when I couldn't sleep  
I learned to write  
I learned to write  
what might be read  
one nights like this  
by one like me



## *Gift*

You tell me that silence  
is nearer to peace than poems  
but if for my gift  
I brought you silence  
(for I know silence)  
you would say  
This is not silence  
this is another poem  
and you would hand it back to me



## *The Wrong Man*

They locked up a man  
who wanted to rule the world

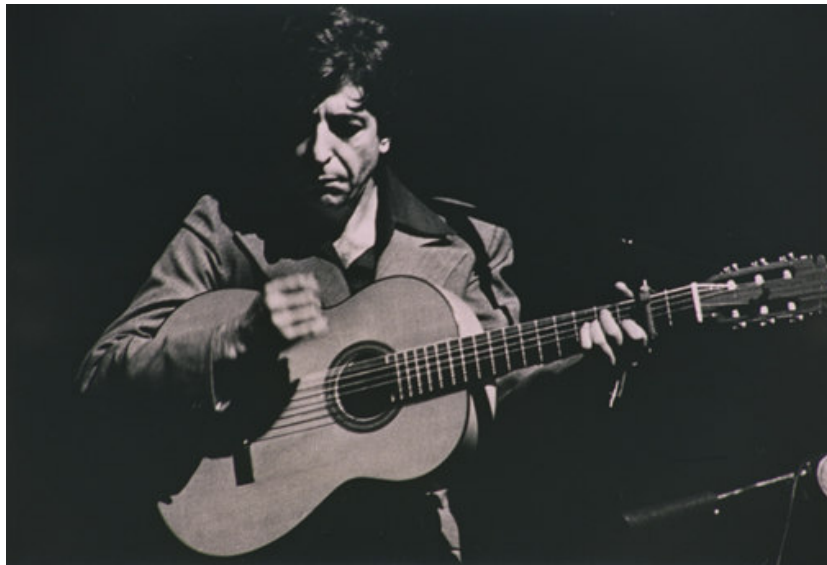
The fools  
They locked up the wrong man





## *Mission*

I've worked at my work  
I've slept at my sleep  
I've died at my death  
And now I can leave  
Leave what is needed  
And leave what is full  
Need in the Spirit  
And need in the Hole  
Beloved, I'm yours  
As I've always been  
From marrow to pore  
From longing to skin  
Now that my mission  
Has come to its end:  
Pray I'm forgiven  
The life that I've led  
The Body I chased  
It chased me as well  
My longing's a place  
My dying a sail



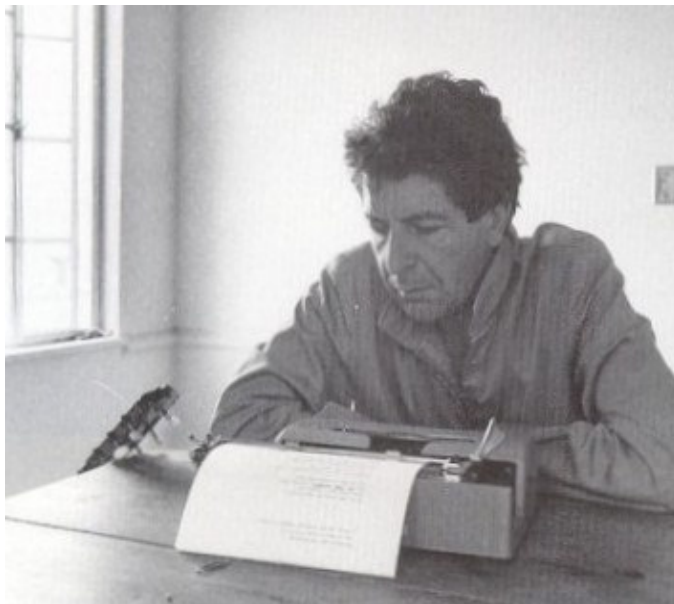
## *The Lovesick Monk*

I shaved my head  
I put on robes  
I sleep in the corner of a cabin  
sixty-five hundred feet up a mountain  
It's dismal here  
The only thing I don't need  
is a comb  
- *Mt. Baldy, 1997*



## *You'd Sing Too*

You'd sing too  
if you found yourself  
in a place like this  
You wouldn't worry about  
whether you were as good  
as Ray Charles or Edith Piaf  
You'd sing  
You'd sing  
not for yourself  
but to make a self  
out of the old food  
rotting in the astral bowel  
and the loveless thud  
of your own breathing  
You'd become a singer  
faster than it takes  
to hate a rival's charm  
and you'd sing, darling  
you'd sing too



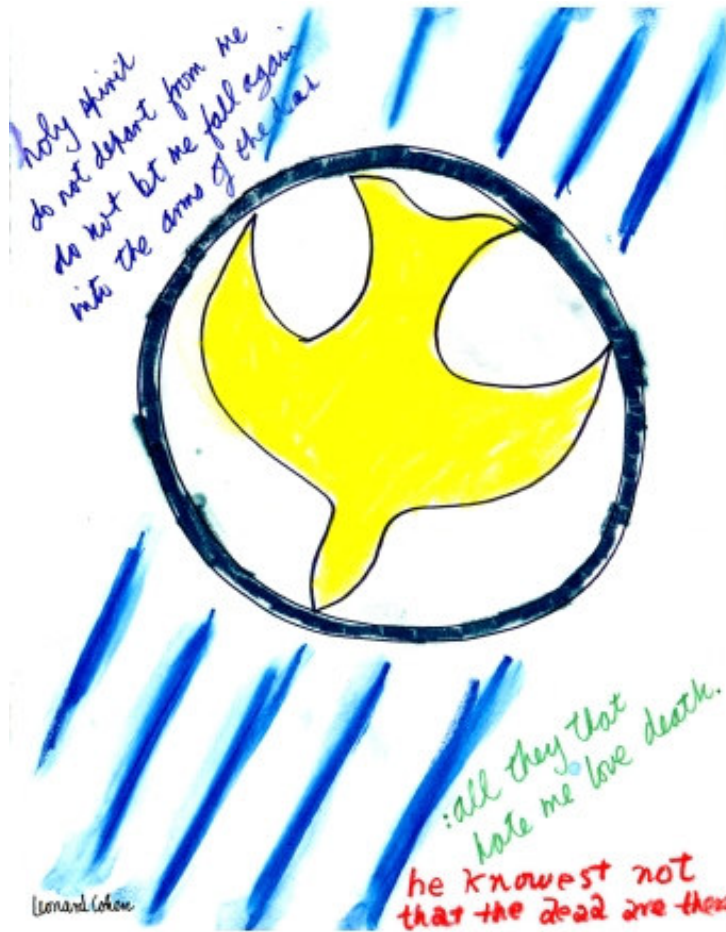
## *The Wind Moves*

The wind moves  
the palm trees  
and the fringes o  
f the beach umbrellas  
The children go down  
the waterslide  
The grey Arabian Sea  
slaps its soiled lace underwear  
on the dirty flats  
The wind moves everything  
and then stops  
but my pen  
keeps on writing  
by itself  
*Dear Roshi*  
*I am dead now*  
*I died before you*  
*just as you predicted*  
*in the early 70s*



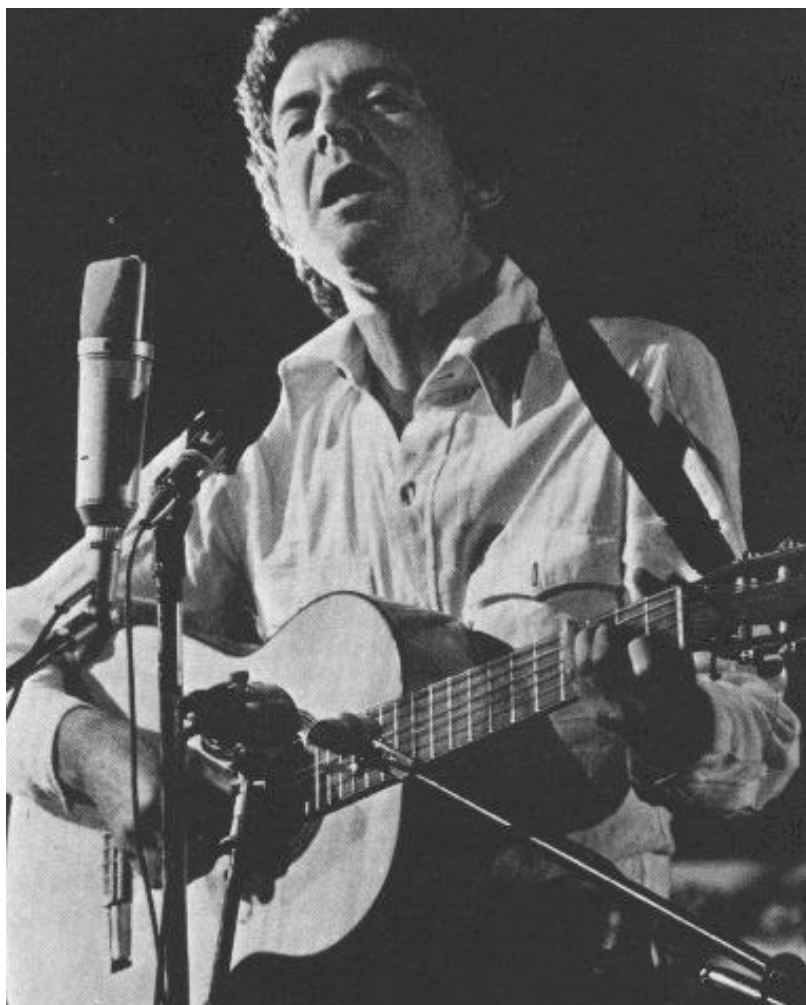
## *I Wrote For Love*

I wrote for love.  
Then I wrote for money.  
With someone like me  
it's the same thing.



## *The Sweetest Little Song*

You go your way  
I'll go your way too



## *Who Do You Really Remember*

My father died when I was nine;  
my mother when I was forty-six.  
In between, my dog and several friends.  
Recently, more friends,  
real friends,  
uncles and aunts,  
many acquaintances.  
And then there's Sheila.  
She said, Don't be a jerk, Len.  
Take your desire seriously.  
She died not long after  
we were fifteen.



## *The Moon*

The moon is outside.  
I saw the great uncomplicated thing  
when I went to take a leak just now.  
I should have looked at it longer.  
I am a poor lover of the moon.  
I see it all at once and that's it  
for me and the moon.





## *On the path*

*for C.C.*

On the path of loneliness  
I came to the place of song  
and tarried there  
for half my life  
Now I leave my guitar  
and my keyboards  
my friends and s-x companions  
and I stumble out again  
on the path of loneliness  
I am old but I have no regrets  
not one  
even though I am angry and alone  
and filled with fear and desire  
Bend down to me  
from your mist and vines  
O high one, long-fingered  
and deep-seeing  
Bend down to this sack of poison  
and rotting teeth  
and press your lips  
to the light of my heart



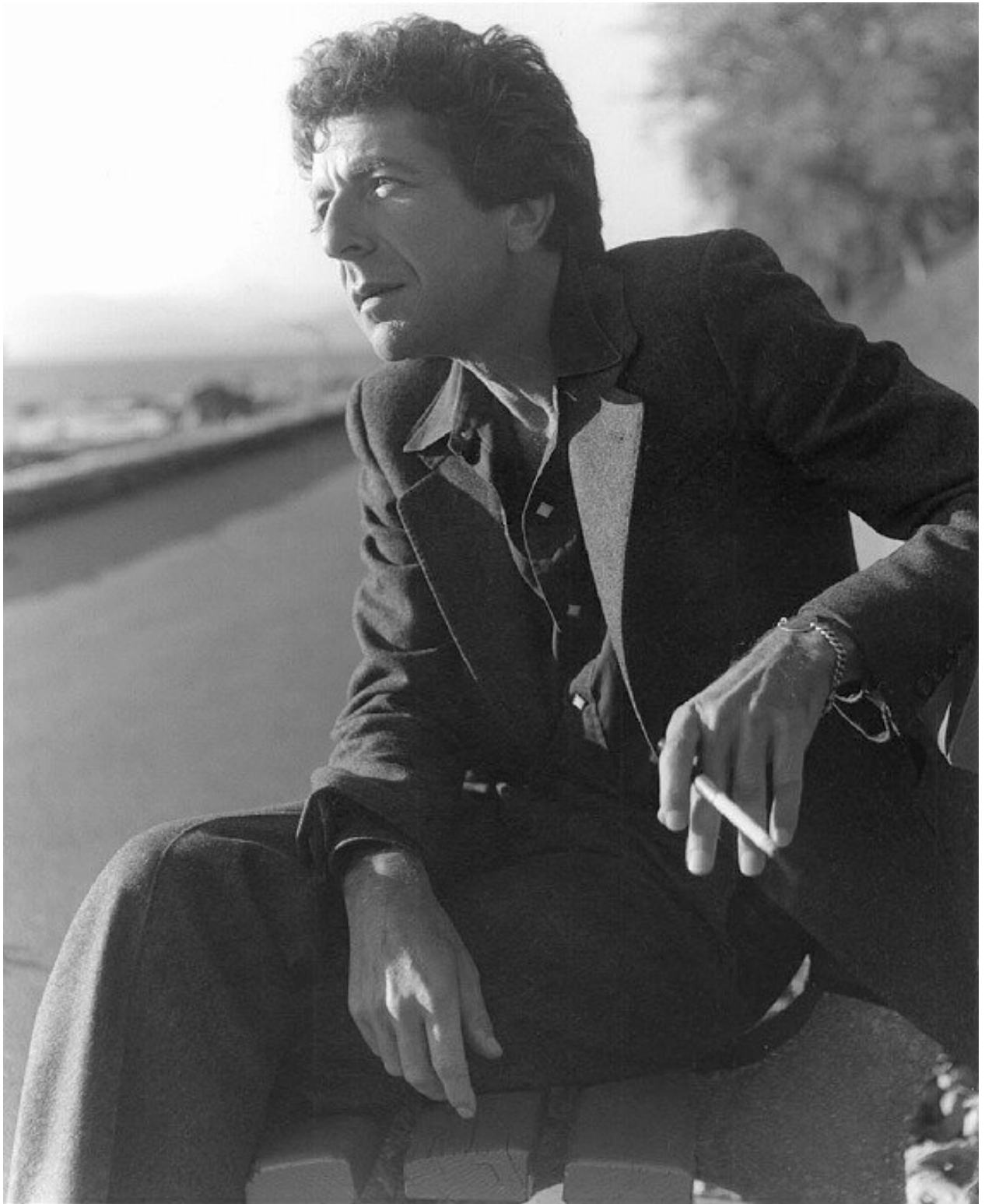
## *I Am Dying*

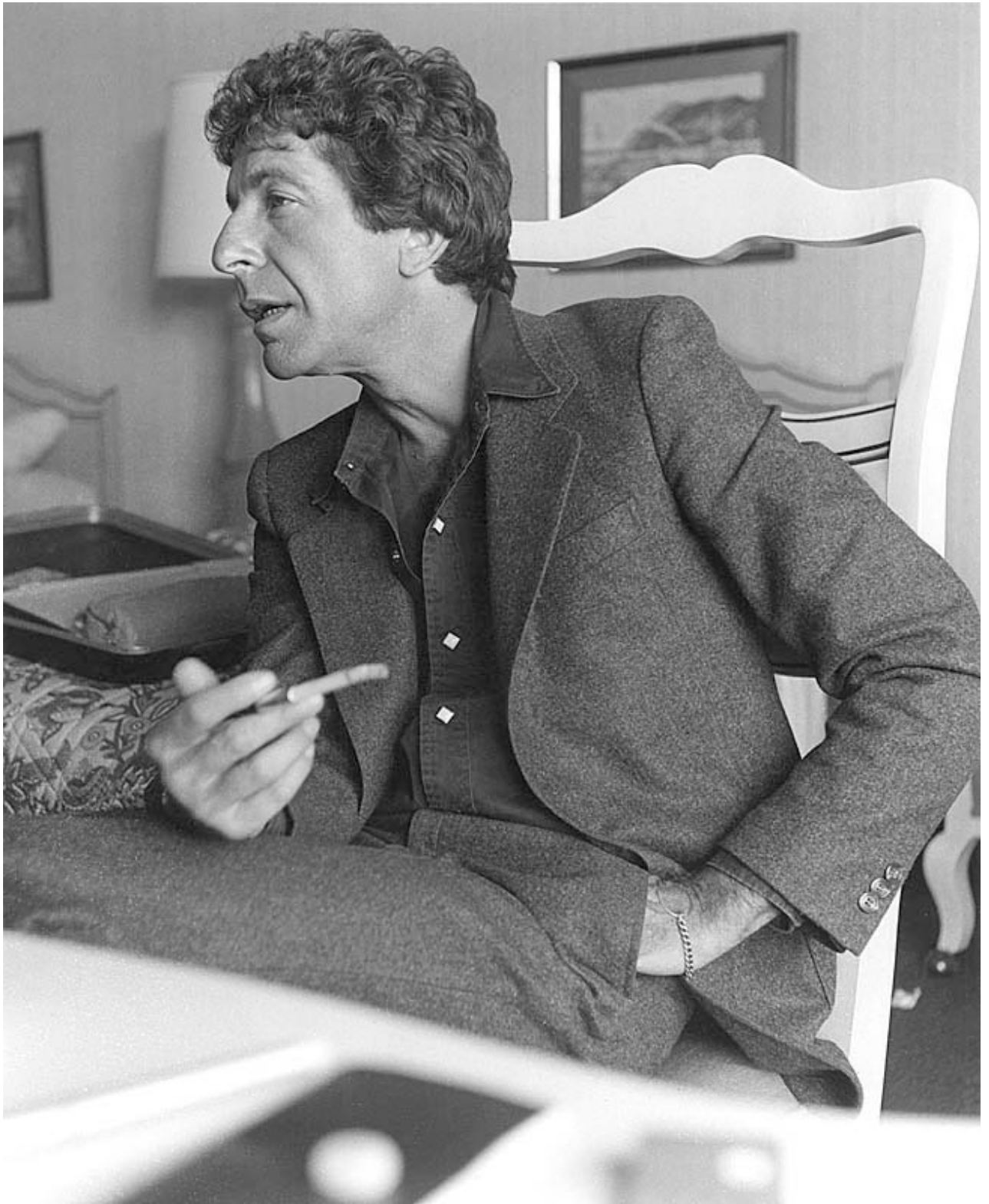
I am dying  
because you have not  
died for me  
and the world  
still loves you.  
I write this because I know  
that your kisses  
are born blind  
on the songs that touch you.  
I don't want a purpose  
in your life  
I want to be lost among  
your thoughts  
the way you listen to New York City  
when you fall asleep.

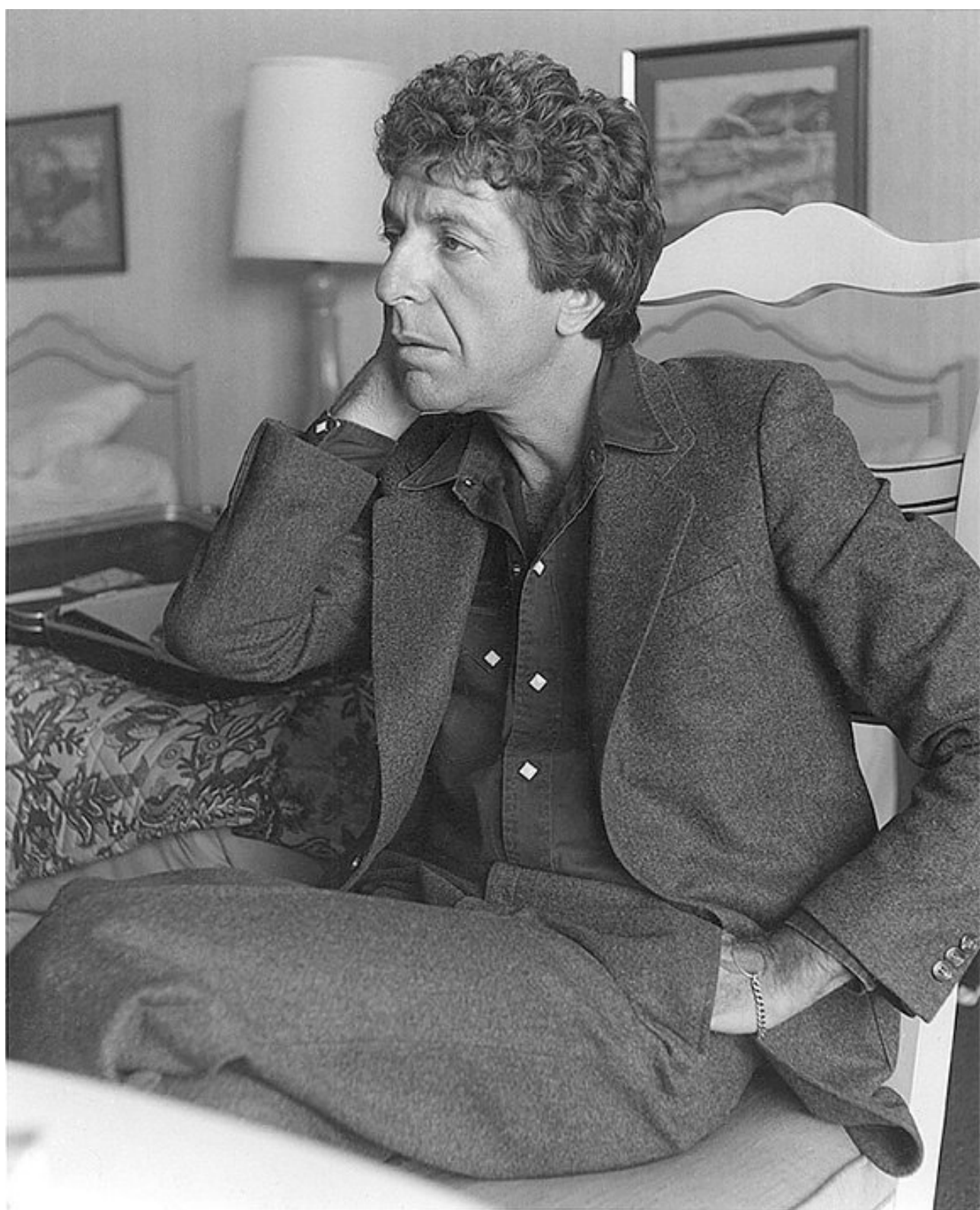


# *Photo Gallery*

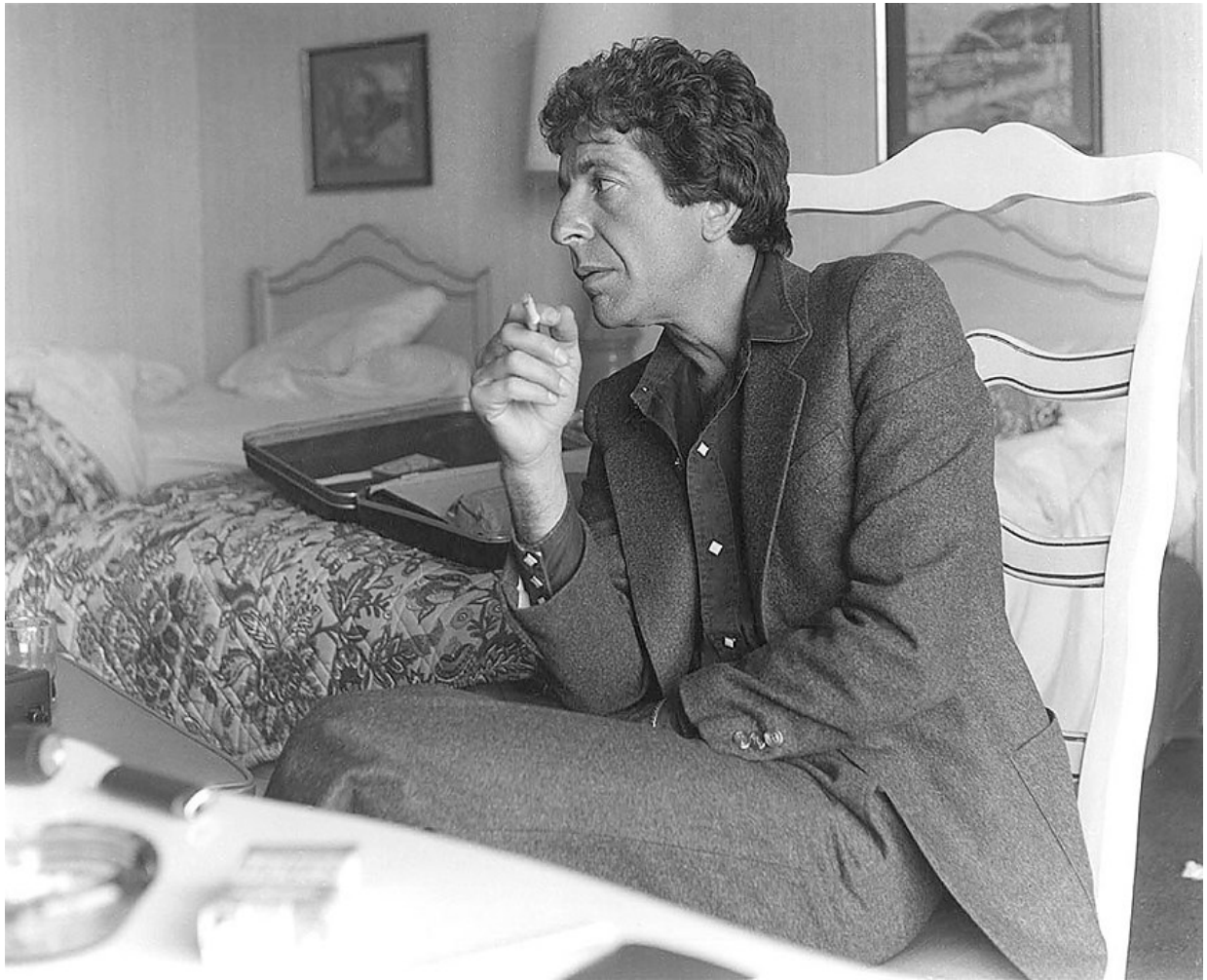






















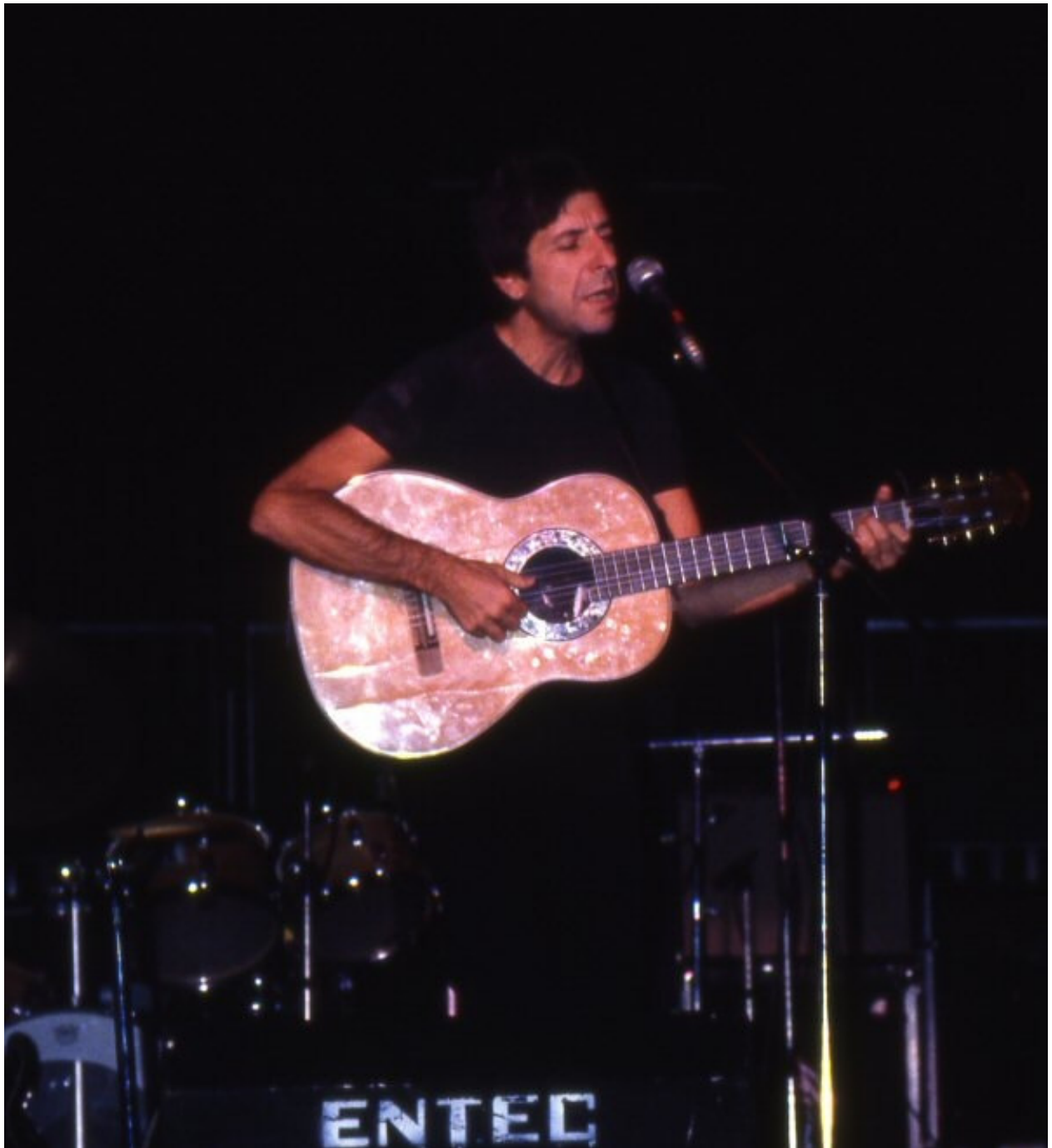














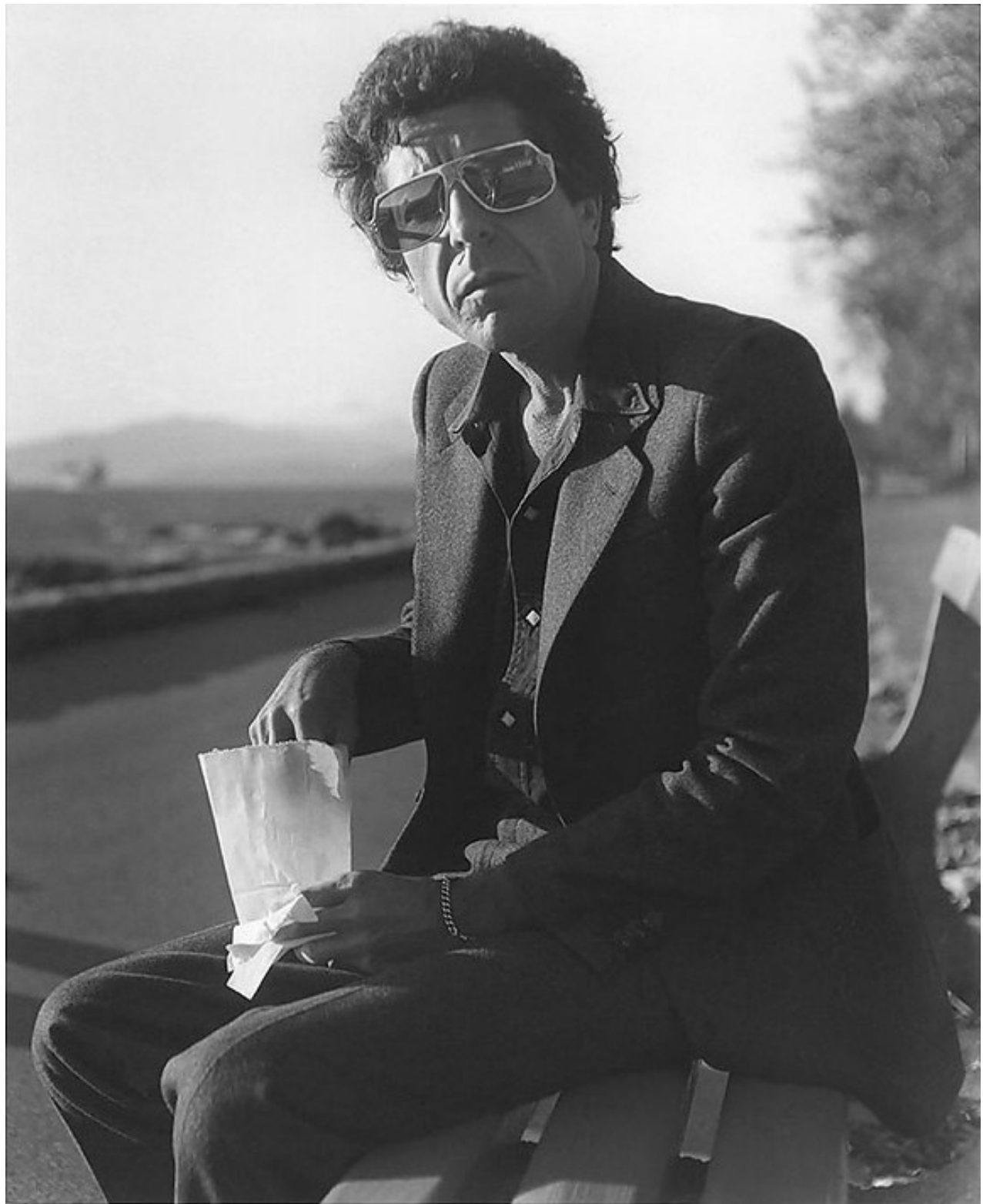












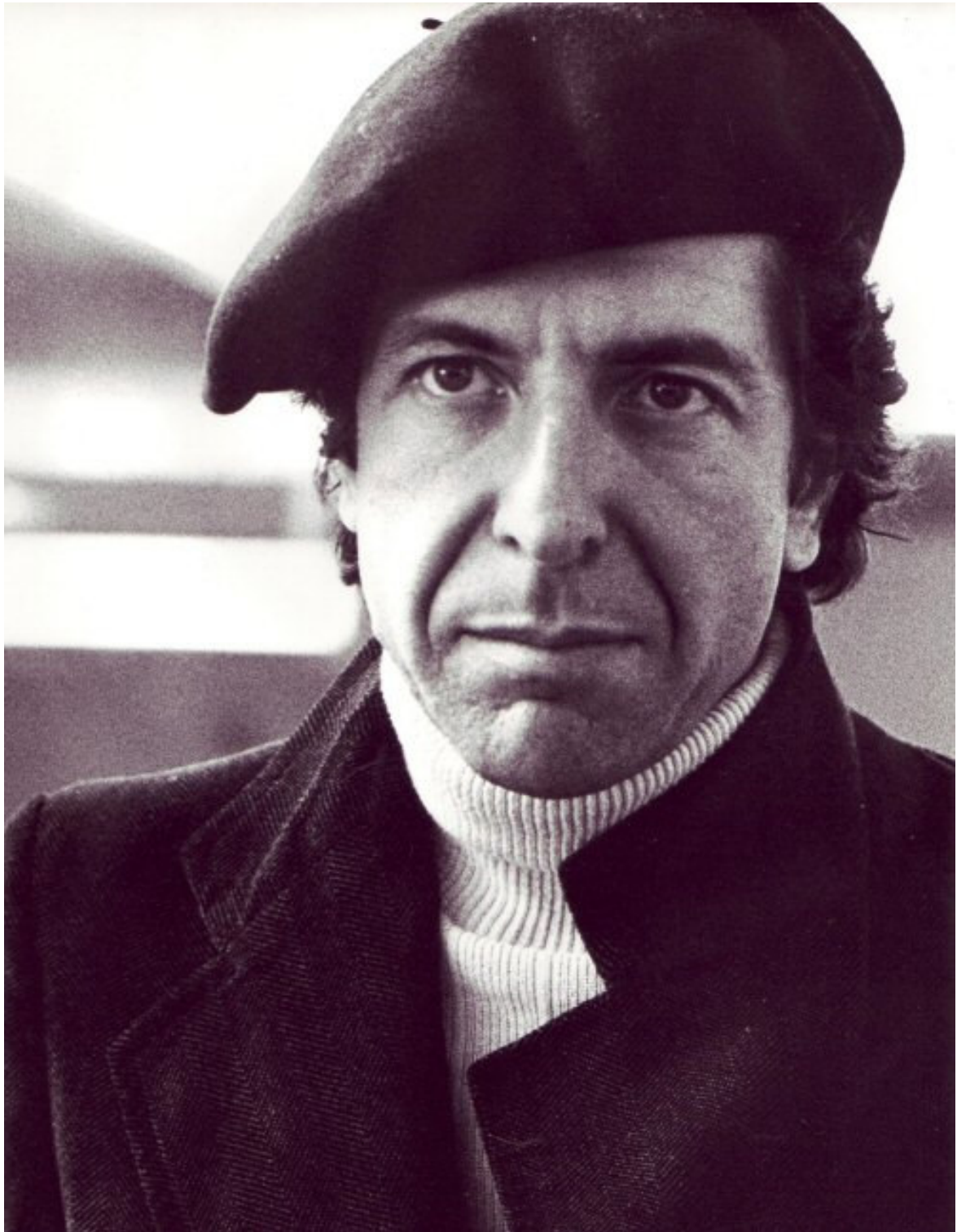






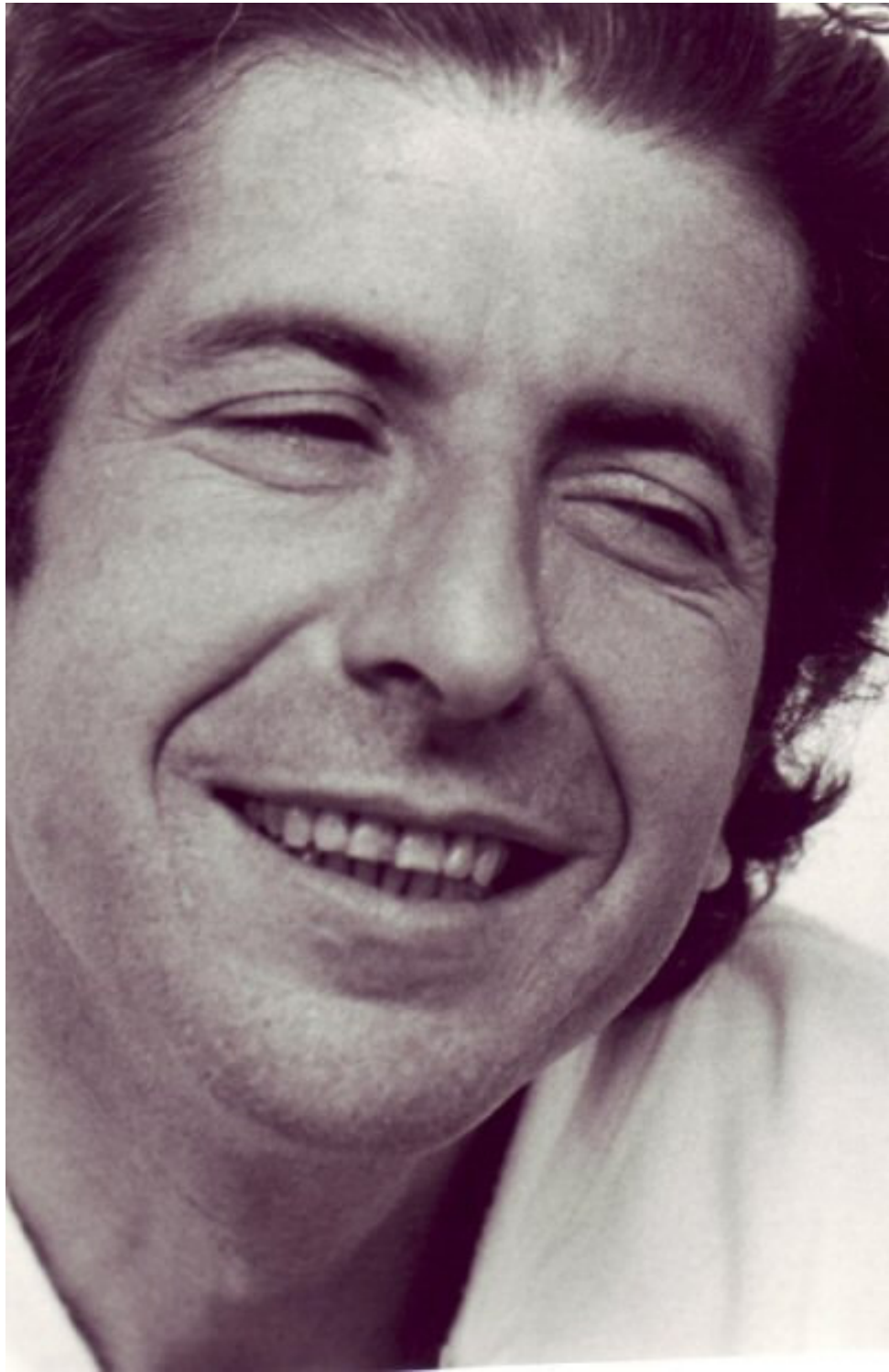




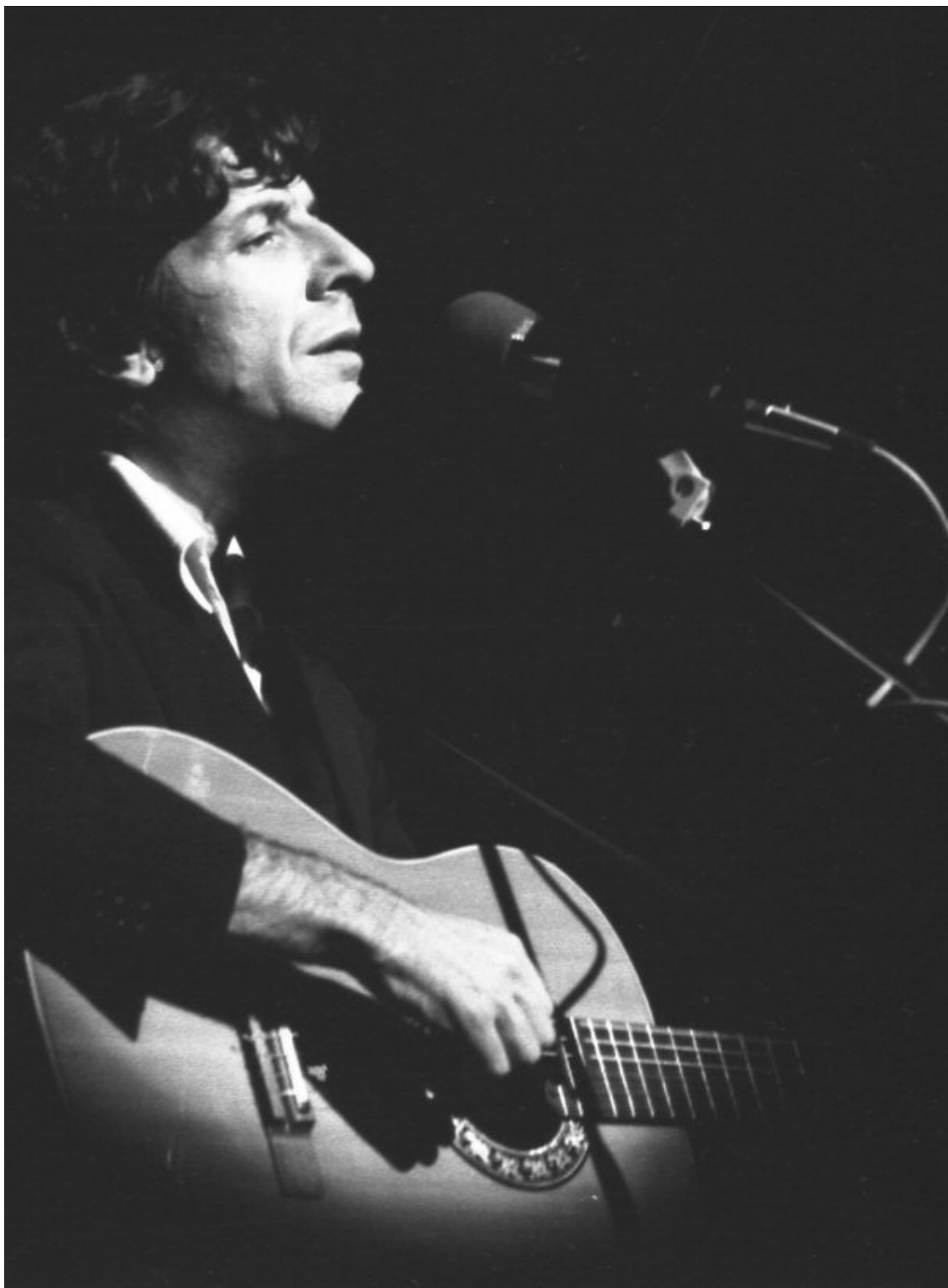












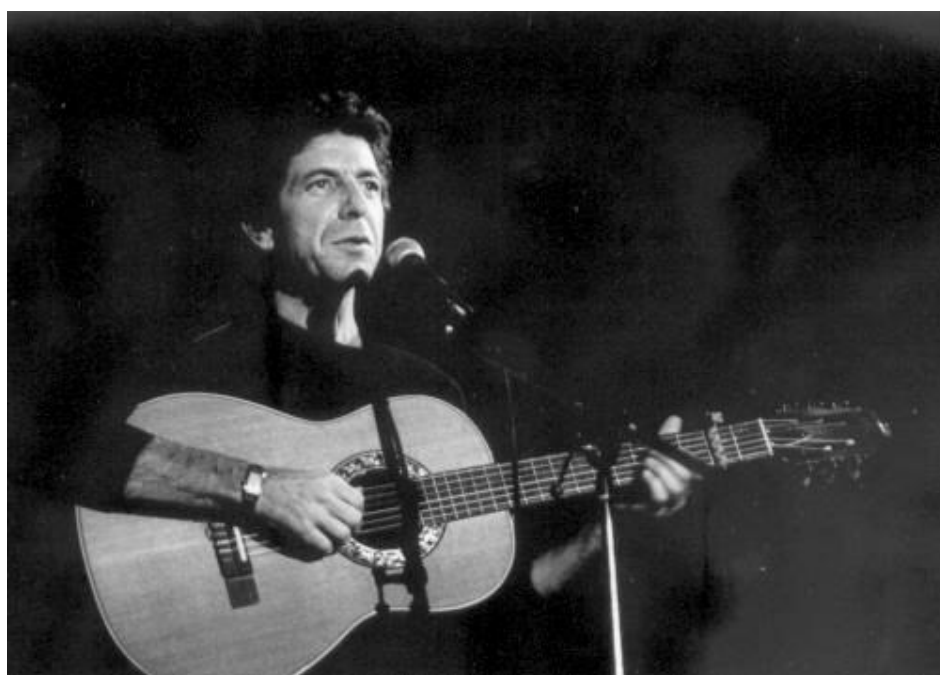






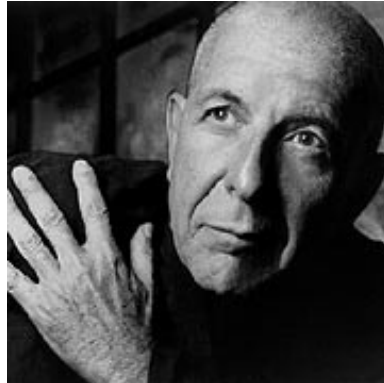




















# *Fran A Notebook*

Hotel de France 1968

Hotel de France Nov. 1968

I do love to sit at this desk. Beverly's number is 932-2095.

The radio says it will snow tomorrow.

God bless the men in the restaurant.

Suzanne

And you know Christ was a sailor  
when he walked upon the water  
and he spent a long watch <sup>time</sup> ~~in~~  
from a <sup>low</sup> ~~little~~ wooden tower and when he

Suzanne takes you down  
to her place near the river  
you can hear the boats go by  
if you like the night birds has  
and she feeds you tea and oranges  
that come all the way from China  
and she ~~shows~~ <sup>leads</sup> you all the many ways

that you can see her lower  
and you know from that  
that you had no love to offer  
and when you stand to tell her  
that you have no love to offer  
she lets the reason tell you  
that you are always been her love

and when he knew for certain obly  
that drawing man could see him  
~~that they alone would find him~~  
he said all now will be easier  
until the storm had first blown

And he himself was spoken  
before the sky was open  
~~thence~~ forsaken & alone  
he sank beneath our wisdom  
like a stone

2 if you are too hungry  
we will feed your appetite  
and you can never keep the rent

and Jean was a Seneca  
who moved upon the water  
I asked her how far certain  
and how long it would take him  
he said all men will be getting down  
until the <sup>sea</sup> shall free them  
I thought a long time  
for a better world  
and help the needy and then  
he said ~~down~~ our nation lives & all

if you're too tired then you'd  
 shall let you talk her lovely  
 with you mind

Welcome you have helped  
 was made 1000 years ago  
 Theology song from  
 to the street for me  
 did you see it drinking  
 I guess I don't think  
 if you are so sure  
 I'll be there with you  
 love

Suzanne combs her hair  
in the light of the ~~moon~~ in down  
and shies means tags and feathers  
from the Salvation Army  
and the sun pours like honey  
on the old lady of the heart  
~~she~~ she is regularly in the sky  
like a beautiful of confetti  
and just when you mean to tell her  
that you cannot stay from  
she calls you to the air  
and she lets the sun whisper  
that you both were love together

Suzanne takes your hand, bunch  
and she leads you to the river  
and she shows you where to look for  
among the garlands and the flowers  
and the birds of the ~~mountain~~ landscape  
and the children of the morning  
they are leaving out for home  
they will learn that was for now  
and when you leave to tell her how we were  
why the river is ~~so much~~ better <sup>than</sup> before  
and the depths of the water and all the <sup>changes</sup> <sup>through</sup>  
twice over to her like a mirror

# Joan Of Arc

And ~~as~~ he took into <sup>his</sup> heart  
All the dust of Joan of Arc  
And ~~then~~ <sup>as</sup> he clearly understood  
if ~~any~~ <sup>he</sup> was fine, ~~and~~ she was wood

~~And then she clearly understood~~  
~~that I was fine and she~~

~~And then~~ she asked <sup>him</sup> ~~me~~ if I could  
make ~~his~~ <sup>his</sup> body bright and cold

<sup>and and bright</sup>  
And she could fall asleep in snow  
~~My nature was to be her no~~  
~~Adam as answered~~ <sup>no</sup>

But I demand a miracle  
So that all the songs ~~will~~ tell  
That none is a victim when  
he dies to free the souls of men

And saying this she climbed inside  
and soon I ~~had~~ <sup>had</sup> her for ~~my~~ <sup>my</sup> guide

The last of miracles to learn  
that ~~some~~ <sup>will</sup> be well behind and fire burn

# The Bridegroom's fire



This is a cross for  
~~Long as I live~~ for Joan of Arc

The flames they followed Joan of Arc  
as she went riding through the dark  
No moon to keep her armor bright  
No man to get her through the night

She said I'm tired of the war  
I want the work I had before  
A wedding dress in shades of white  
to wear upon my <sup>mother</sup> lap

or something white

I love to hear you talk this way  
I've watched you riding everyday  
and something in me yearns to win  
such a lonesome heroine

figures of  
he heard the rising fire say

And who are you, she sternly spoke  
to the ~~fire~~ <sup>bridegroom</sup> the smoke  
I am fire, ~~he~~ replied  
and I have come to take you for my bride

Then let me have a miracle  
So that all the songs may tell  
that Fire made his body cold  
when I gave him mine to hold

And saying this she climbed inside  
and gave herself to be his bride  
And then she clearly understood  
that he was fire and Joan of Arc was wood

And then into his fiery heart  
he took the dust of Joan of Arc  
and high above the wedding guests  
he hung the ashes of her wedding dress

And more than this I can't explain  
but there were some who ~~prayed~~ <sup>waited</sup> for rain  
and there were some who said adieu  
the way the silver bugles do

And there were some who said adieu  
the way the silver bugles do  
And there were some who asked for rain  
and more than this I can't explain

Deek into his fiery heart  
he took the dust of Joan of Arc  
And there is <sup>nothing</sup> little more to tell  
The saint is married, de saint is married well

And there are some who <sup>will do</sup> must complain  
and change the tale and pray for rain  
I hear the fine answer them  
~~as Joan for the dream up her horse & chinks inside again~~  
I see the girl come riding, riding & hain <sup>all</sup> once again  
I see the maid come riding & do fine once again

## The Old Revolution

I finally broke into the prison  
I took my place in the chain  
Of course I was young  
and I thought we were winning  
I cannot pretend that I still  
feel like singing  
as they carry the bodies away  
Into this furnace  
... I beg you to venture  
for when I cannot betray.

## The stranger song

you cannot watch another wred man  
lay down his head  
like he was giving up the holy game of bother  
And while he puts his  
dreams to sleep you  
see that there's a highway  
curling up like smoke  
beyond his shoulder

And while he talks his  
dreams to sleep you  
see that there's a highway  
~~that~~ that's curling up  
like smoke beyond  
his shoulder



Some where we will  
meet the same  
beside between the trains  
we're waiting for  
happy to be happy to a stranger

And maybe we will choose  
a time to meet beneath a  
bird. The same beneath  
a bridge that stays and  
builds a new river

---

You tell him to come in, sit down,  
but some thing makes you turn around  
the door is open, you ~~cannot~~ <sup>can't</sup> close  
your shelter

~~You~~ <sup>you</sup> ~~hold~~ the road, it what you should  
have done before, don't be afraid,  
it's you, who are the danger

~~I~~ <sup>I</sup> ~~have been waiting,~~  
~~I was waiting for you~~  
I was sure we'd meet between  
the trains we're waiting for,

The highway ~~to the station~~ let  
below across  
I think as time to found another

Please understand I do not  
have a secret chest to lead me  
to the heart of this or any other

If I did you know I'd share it with  
you try the handle of the road, it opens  
do not be amazed, it's you, my love,  
it's you who are the danger

Noting first you tell the man  
who talk too much of Vanden's  
you learned that they are  
connected together

But you say they were when  
the man who was with  
lost

now I know that kind of man  
I've read his after every hand  
never had a chance to share  
He hasn't any business to return  
He's just sure of his  
looking for a married  
you wouldn't I do not have a  
secret about it

You took your bag out the shelf  
and you're off you

As he leaves the platform for the sleeping  
car  
that's warm, you're  
he's very advertising as more shall

You gather up the strings and  
such he left behind, you  
find he didn't leave very  
much, not even laughter

---

And once again a stranger  
seems to want you to ignore  
his dreams as though they  
were the burden of another

Please understand he doesn't  
have a secret plan or  
treasure ~~heart to~~ chart to  
lead him to the heart of  
this or any matter

Field commander Cohen

654-1345  
Field commander Cohen  
is wounded  
in the realm of thought  
he who was a hundred lovers

He who was a hundred lovers  
Field commander Cohen  
wounded in the service of  
protection for the young

Field Commander Cohen

he was our most important spy  
parachuting acid into

diplomatic cocktail

parties

urging Fidel Castro

to go back to poetry

Field Commander Cohen

he was our most important spy  
brought down by a silver bullet  
parachuting and into  
diplomatic cocktail parties  
urging leader Fidel Castro  
to abandon <sup>land</sup> and castle  
~~and return (and return)~~  
~~like a man to poetry~~  
and come back like a man  
to poetry

Bible

always high

and ineffective

Fidel Commander Jones

he was our most important spy

wounded in the line

of duty

parachuting acid

into diplomatic

cocktail parties

urging leader Fidel

Castro

to abandon fields and

castle

leave it all and like a

~~step~~ even man

come back to poetry

the world of poetry



So ignorant so hurt that  
he does not know his

prayer  
turn this meat infested  
spirit cargo

turn this coward's whine  
Catus's

this meat infested sun  
ray  
dungeon

impotent and ripe  
dwelling of my

## closing Time

35

March 19, 1992 Closing Time

Too late to change from what we are

I was calling for another drink  
when I heard the hours chime  
It's always later than you think  
but now it's closing time

Too late, too late  
the band cries out  
too late for one and all  
too late for the fiddler and the hotel steel  
too late for the cut-throat on the wall

when the / boss has / got his / boot on / and it / does  
time

I was / holding / now I'm / following / now it / done

they ought to write the night as ticket now  
for shedding its crime

When you're listening to the fields  
then you're listening to your heart  
and you're listening to the words  
you never said  
to the woman that you wanted  
to the children that you wanted  
with a love so fierce & unexpressed

when you're listening to the fiddles  
than you're listening to the riddles  
of the heart being answered one to one

When you're listening to the fiddles  
When you're hearing all the fiddles  
of the heart being answered  
one by one  
such as who is going to need you  
should as who is going to leave you  
and who is going to be your soul of fun

to run this righteous evening  
off the cliffs of closing time

I was drinking I was dancing  
 with a very close companion  
 and the fiddlers doing damage  
 the do shadows the lovers of my heart

I was drinking I was dancing  
 with a very close companion  
 He was lethal I was handsome  
 and the band was doing damage

She was wild and I was handsome  
 and the fiddlers f

I was drinking I was dancing  
 with a very close companion  
 and the fiddlers driving everybody mad

I was drinking I was dancing  
 and the fiddles they was happening  
 and the stormy valter with the running  
 legs

And my very close companion  
 took the back edge of her sandwich ~~damage~~  
 and was rubbing away heart against  
 her thigh

I loved you for your beauty  
as it might make a fool of me  
but you were in it for your  
beauty too

I loved you for your body  
There's a voice that sounds

like God to me  
declaring that your body's really gone

**THE END!!**

## Hallelujah

Baby, I've been here before  
I know this room, I've walked  
this floor -  
I used to live alone before  
I knew you -  
Now I've seen your flag  
on the marble arch  
but love is not a victory  
march,  
it's a cold and it's a broken  
Hallelujah

# Biography

One of the most fascinating and enigmatic -- if not the most successful -- singer/songwriters of the late '60s, Leonard Cohen has retained an audience across four decades of music-making interrupted by various digressions into personal and creative exploration, all of which have only added to the mystique surrounding him. Second only to Bob Dylan (and perhaps Paul Simon), he commands the attention of critics and younger musicians more firmly than any other musical figure from the 1960s who is still working at the outset of the 21st century, which is all the more remarkable an achievement for someone who didn't even aspire to a musical career until he was in his thirties.

Cohen was born in 1934, a year before Elvis Presley or Ronnie Hawkins, and his background -- personal, social, and intellectual -- couldn't have been more different from those of any rock stars of any generation; nor can he be easily compared even with any members of the generation of folksingers who came of age in the 1960s. Though he knew some country music and played it a bit as a boy, he didn't start performing on even a semi-regular basis, much less recording, until after he had already written several books -- and as an established novelist and poet, his literary accomplishments far exceed those of Bob Dylan or most anyone else who one cares to mention in music, at least this side of operatic librettists such as Hugo Von Hoffmanstahl or Stefan Zweig, figures from another musical and cultural world.

He was born Leonard Norman Cohen into a middle-class Jewish family in the Montreal suburb of Westmount. His father, a clothing merchant (who also held a degree in engineering), died in 1943, when Cohen was nine years old. It was his mother who encouraged Cohen as a writer, especially of poetry, during his childhood. This fit in with the progressive intellectual environment in which he was raised, which allowed him free inquiry into a vast range of pursuits. His relationship to music was more tentative -- he took up the guitar at age 13, initially as a way to impress a girl, but was good enough to play country & western songs at local cafes, and he subsequently formed a group called the Buckskin Boys. At 17, he enrolled in McGill University as an English major -- by this time, he was writing poetry in earnest and became part of the university's tiny underground "bohemian" community. Cohen only earned average grades, but was a good enough writer to earn the McNaughton Prize in creative writing by the time he graduated in 1955 -- a year later, the ink barely dry on his degree, he published his first book of poetry, *Let Us Compare Mythologies* (1956), which got great reviews but didn't sell especially well.

He was already beyond the age that rock & roll was aimed at -- Bob Dylan, by contrast, was still Robert Zimmerman, still in his teens, and young enough to become a devotee of Buddy Holly when the latter emerged. In 1961, Cohen published his second book of poetry, *The Spice Box of Earth*, which became an international success critically and commercially, and

established Cohen as a major new literary figure. Meanwhile, he tried to join the family business and spent some time at Columbia University in New York, writing all the time. Between the modest royalties from sales of his second book, literary grants from the Canadian government, and a family legacy, he was able to live comfortably and travel around the world, partake of much of what it had to offer -- including some use of LSD when it was still legal -- and ultimately settling for an extended period in Greece, on the isle of Hydra in the Aegean Sea. He continued to publish, issuing a pair of novels, *The Favorite Game* (1963) and *Beautiful Losers* (1966), with a pair of poetry collections, *Flowers for Hitler* (1964) and *Parasites of Heaven* (1966) around them. *The Favorite Game* was a very personal work about his early life in Montreal, but it was *Beautiful Losers* that proved another breakthrough, earning the kind of reviews that authors dare not even hope for -- Cohen found himself compared to James Joyce in the pages of *The Boston Globe*, and across four decades the book has enjoyed sales totaling well into six figures.

It was around this time that he also started writing music again, songs being a natural extension of his poetry. His relative isolation on Hydra, coupled with his highly mobile lifestyle when he left the island, his own natural iconoclastic nature, and the fact that he'd avoided being overwhelmed (or even touched too seriously) by the currents running through popular music since the 1940s, combined to give Cohen a unique voice as a composer. Though he did settle in Nashville for a short time in the mid-'60s, he didn't write quite like anyone else in music, in the country music mecca or anywhere else. This might have been an impediment but for the intervention of Judy Collins, a folksinger who had just moved to the front rank of that field, and who had a voice just special enough to move her beyond the relatively emaciated ranks of remaining popular folk performers after Dylan shifted to electric music -- she was still getting heard, and not just by the purists left behind in Dylan's wake. She added Cohen's "Suzanne" to her repertory and put it onto her album *In My Life*, a record that was controversial enough in folk circles -- because of her cover of the Beatles song that gave the LP its title -- that it pulled in a lot of listeners and got a wide airing. "Suzanne" received a considerable amount of radio airplay from the LP, and Cohen was also represented on the album by "Dress Rehearsal Rag."

It was Collins who persuaded Cohen to return to performing for the first time since his teens. He made his debut during the summer of 1967 at the Newport Folk Festival, followed by a pair of sold-out concerts in New York City and an appearance singing his songs and reciting his poems on the CBS network television show *Camera Three*, in a show entitled *Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. Leonard Cohen*. It was around the same time that actor/singer Noel Harrison brought "Suzanne" onto the pop charts with a recording of his own. One of those who saw Cohen perform at Newport was John Hammond, Sr., the legendary producer whose career went back to the 1930s and the likes of Billie Holiday, Benny Goodman, and Count Basie, and extended up through Bob Dylan and, ultimately, to Bruce Springsteen. Hammond got Cohen signed to Columbia Records and he created *The Songs of Leonard Cohen*, which was released just before Christmas of 1967. Producer John Simon was able to find a restrained yet appealing approach to recording Cohen's voice, which might have been described as a appealingly sensitive near-monotone; yet that voice was perfectly suited to the material at hand, all of which, written in a very personal language, seemed drenched in downbeat images and a spirit of discovery as a path to unsettling revelation.



Despite its spare production and melancholy subject matter -- or, very possibly because of it -- the album was an immediate hit by the standards of the folk music world and the budding singer/songwriter community. In an era in which millions of listeners hung on the next albums of Bob Dylan and Simon & Garfunkel -- whose own latest album had ended with a minor-key rendition of "Silent Night" set against a radio news account of the death of Lenny Bruce -- Cohen's music quickly found a small but dedicated following. College students by the thousands bought it; in its second year of release, the record sold over 100,000 copies. The *Songs of Leonard Cohen* was as close as Cohen ever got to mass audience success.

Amid all of this sudden musical activity, he hardly neglected his other writing -- in 1968, Cohen released a new volume, *Selected Poems: 1956-1968*, which included both old and newly published work, and earned him the Governor-General's Award, Canada's highest literary honor, which he proceeded to decline to accept. By this time, he was actually almost more a part of the rock scene, residing for a time in New York's Chelsea Hotel, where his neighbors included Janis Joplin and other performing luminaries, some of whom influenced his songs very directly.

His next album, *Songs from a Room* (1969), was characterized by an even greater spirit of melancholy -- even the relatively spirited "A Bunch of Lonesome Heroes" was steeped in such depressing sensibilities, and the one song not written by Cohen, "The Partisan," was a grim narrative about the reasons for and consequences of resistance to tyranny that included lines like "She died without a whisper" and included images of wind blowing past graves. Joan Baez subsequently recorded the song, and in her hands it was a bit more upbeat and inspiring to the listener; Cohen's rendition made it much more difficult to get past the costs presented by the singer's persona. On the other hand, "Seems So Long Ago, Nancy," although as downbeat as anything else here, did present Cohen in his most expressive and commercial voice, a nasal but affecting and finely nuanced performance.

Still, in all, *Songs from a Room* was less well received commercially and critically -- Bob Johnston's restrained, almost minimalist production made it less overtly appealing than the subtly commercial trappings of his debut, though the album did have a pair of tracks, "Bird on the Wire" and "The Story of Isaac," that became standards rivaling "Suzanne" -- "The Story of Isaac," a musical parable woven around biblical imagery about Vietnam (which is also relevant to the Iraq War), was one of the most savage and piercing songs to come out of the antiwar movement, and showed a level of sophistication in its music and lyrics that put it in a whole separate realm of composition; it received an even better airing on the *Live Songs* album, in a performance recorded in Berlin during 1972.

Cohen may not have been a widely popular performer or recording artist, but his unique voice and sound, and the power of his writing and its influence, helped give him entrée to rock's front-ranked performers, an odd status for the now 35-year-old author/composer. He appeared at the 1970 Isle of Wight festival in England, a post-Woodstock gathering of stars and superstars, including late appearances by such soon-to-die-or-disband legends as Jimi Hendrix and the Doors; looking nearly as awkward as his fellow Canadian Joni Mitchell, Cohen strummed his acoustic guitar backed by a pair of female singers in front of an audience of 600,000 ("It's a large nation, but still weak"), comprised in equal portions of fans, freaks, and belligerent gatecrashers, but the mere fact that he was there -- sandwiched

somewhere between Miles Davis and Emerson, Lake & Palmer -- was a clear statement of the status (if not the popular success) he'd achieved. One portion of his set, "Tonight Will Be Fine," was released on a subsequent live album, while his performance of "Suzanne" was one of the highlights of Murray Lerner's long-delayed, 1996-issued documentary *Message to Love: The Isle of Wight Festival*.

Already, he had carved out a unique place for himself in music, as much author as performer and recording artist, letting his songs develop and evolve across years -- his distinctly noncommercial voice became part of his appeal to the audience he found, giving him a unique corner of the music audience, made of listeners descended from the same people who had embraced Bob Dylan's early work before he'd become a mass-media phenomenon in 1964. In a sense, Cohen embodied a phenomenon vaguely similar to what Dylan enjoyed before his early-'70s tour with the Band -- people bought his albums by the tens and, occasionally, hundreds of thousands, but seemed to hear him in uniquely personal terms. He earned his audience seemingly one listener at a time, by word of mouth more than by the radio which, in any case (especially on the AM dial), was mostly friendly to covers of Cohen's songs by other artists.

Cohen's third album, *Songs of Love and Hate* (1971), was his most powerful body of work to date, brimming with piercing lyrics and music as poignantly affecting as it was minimalist in its approach -- arranger Paul Buckmaster's work on strings was peculiarly muted, and the children's chorus that showed up on "Last Year's Man" was spare in its presence; balancing them was Cohen's most effective vocalizing to date, brilliantly expressive around such acclaimed songs as "Joan of Arc," "Dress Rehearsal Rag" (which had been recorded by Judy Collins five years before), and "Famous Blue Raincoat." The bleakness of the tone and subject matter ensured that he would never become a "pop" performer; even the beat-driven "Diamonds in the Mine," with its catchy children's chorus accompaniment and all, and with a twangy electric guitar accompaniment to boot, was as dark and venomous-toned a song as Columbia Records put out in 1971. And the most compelling moments -- among an embarrassment of riches -- came on lyrics like "Now the flames they followed Joan of Arc/As she came riding through the dark/No Moon to keep her armor bright/No man to get her through this night...."; indeed, hearing Cohen's lyrics 25 years on, one could almost find a burlesque of Cohen's music in the songs of Lisa Kudrow's Phoebe Buffay on *Friends* -- who, even money bet probably grew up on *Songs of Love and Hate* in her fictional bio -- and lyrics like "They found their bodies the third day...."

Teenagers of the late '60s (or any era that followed) listening devotedly to Leonard Cohen might have worried their parents, but also could well have been the smartest or most sensitive kids in their class and the most well-balanced emotionally -- if they weren't depressed -- but also effectively well on their way out of being teenagers, and probably too advanced for their peers and maybe most of their teachers (except maybe the ones listening to Cohen). *Songs of Love and Hate*, coupled with the earlier hit versions of "Suzanne," etc., earned Cohen a large international cult following. He also found himself in demand in the world of commercial filmmaking, as director Robert Altman used his music in his 1971 feature film *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*, starring Warren Beatty and Julie Christie, a revisionist period film set at the turn of the 19th century that was savaged by the critics (and, by some accounts, sabotaged by its own studio) but went on to become one of the director's best-

loved movies. The following year, he also published a new poetry collection, *The Energy of Slaves*.

As was his wont, Cohen spent years between albums, and in 1973 he seemed to take stock of himself as a performer by issuing *Leonard Cohen: Live Songs*. Not a conventional live album, it was a compendium of performances from various venues across several years and focused on highlights of his output from 1969 onward. It showcased his writing as much as his performing, but also gave a good account of his appeal to his most serious fans -- those still uncertain of where they stood in relation to his music who could get past the epic-length "Please Don't Pass Me By" knew for certain they were ready to "join" the inner circle of his legion of devotees after that, while others who only appreciated "Bird on the Wire" or "The Story of Isaac" could stay comfortably on an outer ring.

Meanwhile, in 1973, his music became the basis for a theatrical production called *Sisters of Mercy*, conceived by Gene Lesser and loosely based on Cohen's life, or at least a fantasy version of his life. A three-year lag ensued between *Songs of Love and Hate* and Cohen's next album, and most critics and fans just assumed he'd hit a dry spell with the live album covering the gap. He was busy concertizing, however, in the United States and Europe during 1971 and 1972, and extending his appearances into Israel during the 1973 Yom Kippur War. It was during this period that he also began working with pianist and arranger John Lissauer, whom he engaged as producer of his next album, *New Skin for the Old Ceremony* (1974). That album seemed to justify his fans' continued faith in his work, presenting Cohen in a more lavish musical environment. He proved capable of holding his own in a pop environment, even if the songs were mostly still depressing and bleak.

The following year, Columbia Records released *The Best of Leonard Cohen*, featuring a dozen of his best-known songs -- principally hits in the hands of other performers -- from his previous four LPs (though it left out "Dress Rehearsal Rag"). It was also during the mid-'70s that Cohen first crossed paths professionally with Jennifer Warnes, appearing on the same bill with the singer at numerous shows, which would lead to a series of key collaborations in the ensuing decade. By this time, he was a somewhat less mysterious persona, having toured extensively and gotten considerable exposure -- among many other attributes, Cohen became known for his uncanny attractiveness to women, which seemed to go hand in glove with the romantic subjects of most of his songs.

In 1977, Cohen reappeared with the ironically titled *Death of a Ladies' Man*, the most controversial album of his career, produced by Phil Spector. The notion of pairing Spector -- known variously as a Svengali-like presence to his female singers and artists and the most unrepentant (and often justified) over-producer in the field of pop music -- with Cohen must have seemed like a good one to someone at some point, but apparently Cohen himself had misgivings about many of the resulting tracks that Spector never addressed, having mixed the record completely on his own. The resulting LP suffered from the worst attributes of Cohen's and Spector's work, overly dense and self-consciously imposing in its sound, and virtually bathing the listener in Cohen's depressive persona, but showing his limited vocal abilities to disadvantage, owing to Spector's use of "scratch" (i.e., guide) vocals and his unwillingness to permit the artist to redo some of his weaker moments on those takes. For the first (and only) time in Cohen's career, his near-monotone delivery of this period wasn't a

positive attribute. Cohen's unhappiness with the album was widely known among fans, who mostly bought it with that caveat in mind, so it didn't harm his reputation -- a year after its release, Cohen also published a new literary collection using the title *Death of a Ladies' Man*.

Cohen's next album, *Recent Songs* (1979), returned him to the spare settings of his early-'70s work and showed his singing to some of its best advantage. Working with veteran producer Henry Lewy (best known for his work with Joni Mitchell), the album showed Cohen's singing as attractive and expressive in its quiet way, and songs such as "The Guests" seeming downright pretty -- he still wrote about life and love, and especially relationships, in stark terms, but he almost seemed to be moving into a pop mode on numbers such as "Humbled in Love." Frank Sinatra never needed to look over his shoulder at Cohen (at least, as a singer), but he did seem to be trying for a slicker pop sound at moments on his record.

Then came 1984, and two key new works in Cohen's output -- the poetic/religious volume *The Book of Mercy* and the album *Various Positions* (1984). The latter, recorded with Jennifer Warnes, is arguably his most accessible album of his entire career up to that time -- Cohen's voice, now a peculiarly expressive baritone instrument, found a beautiful pairing with Warnes, and the songs were as fine as ever, steeped in spirituality and sexuality, with "Dance Me to the End of Love" a killer opener: a wry, doom-laden yet impassioned pop-style ballad that is impossible to forget. Those efforts overlapped with some ventures by the composer/singer into other creative realms, including an award-winning short film that he wrote, directed, and scored, entitled *I Am a Hotel*, and the score for the 1985 conceptual film *Night Magic*, which earned a Juno Award in Canada for Best Movie Score.

Sad to say, *Various Positions* went relatively unnoticed, and was followed by another extended sabbatical from recording, which ended with *I'm Your Man* (1988). But during his hiatus, Warnes had released her album of Cohen-authored material, entitled *Famous Blue Raincoat*, which had sold extremely well and introduced Cohen to a new generation of listeners. So when *I'm Your Man* did appear, with its electronic production (albeit still rather spare) and songs that added humor (albeit dark humor) to his mix of pessimistic and poetic conceits, the result was his best-selling record in more than a decade. The result, in 1991, was the release of *I'm Your Fan: The Songs of Leonard Cohen*, a CD of recordings of his songs by the likes of R.E.M., the Pixies, Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds, and John Cale, which put Cohen as a songwriter pushing age 60 right back on center stage for the 1990s. He rose to the occasion, releasing *The Future*, an album that dwelt on the many threats facing mankind in the coming years and decades, a year later. Not the stuff of pop charts or MTV heavy rotation, it attracted Cohen's usual coterie of fans, and enough press interest as well as sufficient sales, to justify the release in 1994 of his second concert album, *Cohen Live*, derived from his two most recent tours. A year later came another tribute album, *Tower of Song*, featuring Cohen's songs as interpreted by Billy Joel, Willie Nelson, et al.

In the midst of all of this new activity surrounding his writing and compositions, Cohen embarked on a new phase of his life. Religious concerns were never too far from his thinking and work, even when he was making a name for himself writing songs about love, and he had focused ever more on this side of life since *Various Positions*. He came to spend time at the Mt. Baldy Zen Center, a Buddhist retreat in California, and eventually became a full-time resident, becoming a Buddhist monk during the late '90s. When he re-emerged in 1999,

Cohen had many dozens of new compositions in hand, songs and poems alike. His new collaborations were with singer/songwriter/musician Sharon Robinson, who also ended up producing the resulting album, *Ten New Songs* (2001) -- there also emerged during this period a release called *Field Commander Cohen: Tour of 1979*, comprised of live recordings from his tour of 22 years before.

In 2004, the year he turned 70, Cohen released one of the most controversial albums of his career, *Dear Heather*. It revealed his voice anew, in this phase of his career, as a deep baritone more limited in range than on any previous recording, but it overcame this change in vocal timbre by facing it head-on, just as Cohen had done with his singing throughout his career -- it also contained a number of songs for which Cohen wrote music but not lyrics, a decided change of pace for a man who'd started out as a poet. And it was as personal a record as Cohen had ever issued. His return to recording was one of the more positive aspects of Cohen's resumption of his music activities. On another side, in 2005, he filed suit against his longtime business manager and his financial advisor over the alleged theft of more than five million dollars, at least some of which took place during his years at the Buddhist retreat.

Four decades after he emerged as a public literary figure and then a performer, Cohen remains one of the most compelling and enigmatic musical figures of his era, and one of the very few of that era who commands as much respect and attention, and probably as large an audience, in the 21st century as he did in the 1960s. As much as any survivor of that decade, Cohen has held onto his original audience and has seen it grow across generations, in keeping with a body of music that is truly timeless and ageless. In 2006, his enduring influence seemed to be acknowledged in Lions Gate Films' release of *Leonard Cohen: I'm Your Man*, director Lian Lunson's concert/portrait of Cohen and his work and career. ~ *Bruce Eder, All Music Guide*



## *In His Own Words*



I guess it's legitimate not to like someone's work, but somehow those descriptions of my work got into the computer, you know, there was "suicide", or "bedsit", or "gloom", "depressive", "melancholy", and every time they'd tap out my name those descriptions would come up. You know, as though seriousness had no place in song. The songs we love best are the sad songs.

*BBC Radio 1, 1994*

I know something's gotten into the computer under my name. And every time they press the button out come "gloom", "despair", "depression", "melancholy". It gets a bit tedious. But I've gotten accustomed to this tag. (1988)

*Leonard Cohen In His Own Words, 28-29*

I sometimes see myself in the Court of Ferdinand, singing my songs to girls over a lute. (1967)

*Leonard Cohen In His Own Words, 23*

I sometimes in my wilder moments consider myself the leader of a government in exile. (1985)

*Leonard Cohen In His Own Words, 28*

I don't go around looking for joy. I don't go around looking for melancholy either. I don't have a programme. I'm not on an archeological expedition. (1974)

*Leonard Cohen In His Own Words, 26*

A pessimist is someone who is waiting for it to rain. But I'm already soaked to the skin. (1993)

*Leonard Cohen In His Own Words, 26*



I've always been on the outside. My mother used to leave me outside in the snow in the winter in Montreal. She used to dress me very warmly and then just leave me outside. I could never get in, and those Montreal winters were bitter. (1985)

*Leonard Cohen In His Own Words, 26-28*

They used to say razor blades should be distributed with my records. (1992)

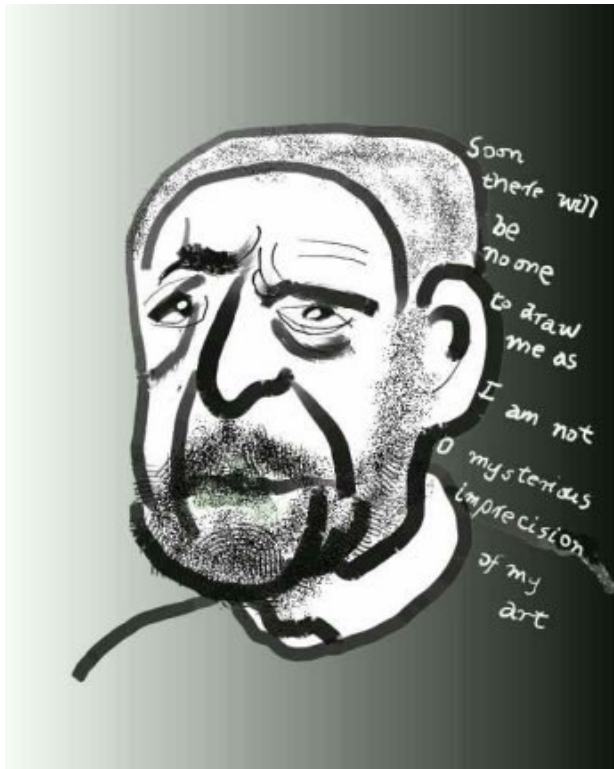
*Leonard Cohen In His Own Words, 31*

I've been living in an exploded landscape for a long time. I have a place to situate all of this. Because I've felt that things were going to blow up – it wasn't as specific as the twin towers – but I've felt for some time there was going to be a shaking of the situation.

*MacLean's, 2001*

I do feel anxious a lot of the time. I don't know whether my anxiety is more intense than anybody else's. I suspect that it isn't. But there's also a confusion between depression and seriousness. I happen to like the mode of seriousness. (1979)

*Leonard Cohen In His Own Words, 26*



There's a place for my kind of music although it can never be mainstream. It is a sanctuary for me and for the people who can use it that way. That's what I use it for.

A sanctuary. (1972)

*Leonard Cohen In His Own Words, 25*

Perhaps the songs have a form or a mood that is melancholy but they are not meant to depress. On the contrary, I know that in some cases they can have the opposite effect. (1974)

*Leonard Cohen In His Own Words, 26*



I would say I write my songs for people who find themselves in the kinds of predicaments that I found myself in. I think that's a wide number of people. You could roughly call these people the broken-hearted. (1988)

*Leonard Cohen In His Own Words, 53*

I have explored the same territory – in many different ways – because I have no answers to the problems and because I keep going to the same sources because they are timeless. And as I get older, I hope I can explore them more deeply, and with more courage and honesty rather than just urgency. Irving Layton, the great Canadian poet, once wrote about me that “Leonard Cohen has been blessed with never having had an original idea,” and I take that as a compliment because these things are what everybody goes through. Everybody lives the life of the heart, and we all know what it's like to feel and break down, and I think we cherish that in our musicians and singers when they reveal that.

*Los Angeles Reader, 1993*

My depression, so bleak and anguished, was just crucial, and I couldn't shake it, it wouldn't go away. I didn't know what it was. I was ashamed of it, because it would be there even when things were good, and I would be saying to myself, “Really, what have you got to complain about?” But for people who suffer from acute clinical depression, it is quite irrelevant what the circumstances of your life are.

*Saturday Night, 2001*

So one day, a few years ago, I was in a car, on my way to the airport. I was really, really low, on many medications, and pulled over, I reached behind to my valise, took out the pills, and threw out all the drugs I had. I said, “These things really don't even begin to confront my predicament.” I figured, If I am going to go down I would rather go down with my eyes wide open.

*Saturday Night, 2001*

A big part of my life has been about overcoming depression. But as far as I could see, there was nothing to be depressed about (...) I had a deep sense of suffering that influenced most of my life. Most of my activities were about drinking, taking drugs, courting women or flirting with religious studies. With all this I tried to confront this depression that I simply couldn't penetrate.

*The Euroman, 2001*

I think people, perhaps legitimately sometimes, feel that anguish or suffering is the engine of creativity. It's a very popular notion... I think most people live their lives in an emergency, and I'm certainly not unique in this respect. I have certainly battled depression over the years, and my time on Mount Baldy was one of the remedies. And I found that my depression might have been the background of my work, but not the spur, not the trigger. Although, without that background, the work isn't

easier. You know, lifting boulders isn't easier when you're in a good mood.  
*Toronto Globe and Mail*, 2001

Most of the songs that we love are sad songs, because we experience profound disappointment in our lives, all of us. And to hear it sung, well, that's what this whole racket is about, isn't it?  
*LA Weekly*, 2001

It's too late to be depressed.  
*France-Inter Radio*, 2001

From the letters I receive, I understand that many people who are or have been in the same situation have felt a kind of relief, a healing while listening to my songs. This is something that I have been very thankful for. If somebody has got enough time - or are bored enough - to examine my entire work in books and songs, there will, to a certain extent, be an exact description of the process and a few insights in the matter along the way. But I don't imagine that I am a therapist nor possess wisdom about what it is all about. I have described it as well as I could.  
*The Euroman*, Denmark, September 2001



