

story Of Isaac Bird On The Wire

Suzanne Partisan

Teachers

Master Song

Chelsea Hotel

Sisters Of Mercy

Snokey Life

Manly

So Long Marianne

The Butcher

Passing Tru

Famous Blue Raincoat

Joan Of Arc Old Revolution

Last Year's Man

Antics

Dress Rehearsal Rag

Tower Of Song

Hallelujah

The Law Democracy

Everybody Knows

Alexander Levyin

1000 Kisses Deep

The Future

The Guests
crossing The
border

Lover Lover Lover

In Your Man

First We Take Manhattan

Dance Me

Is It Be Your Will

Take This Waltz

Death Of A Ladies Man

Loneliness Fingerprints

paper Thin Hotel

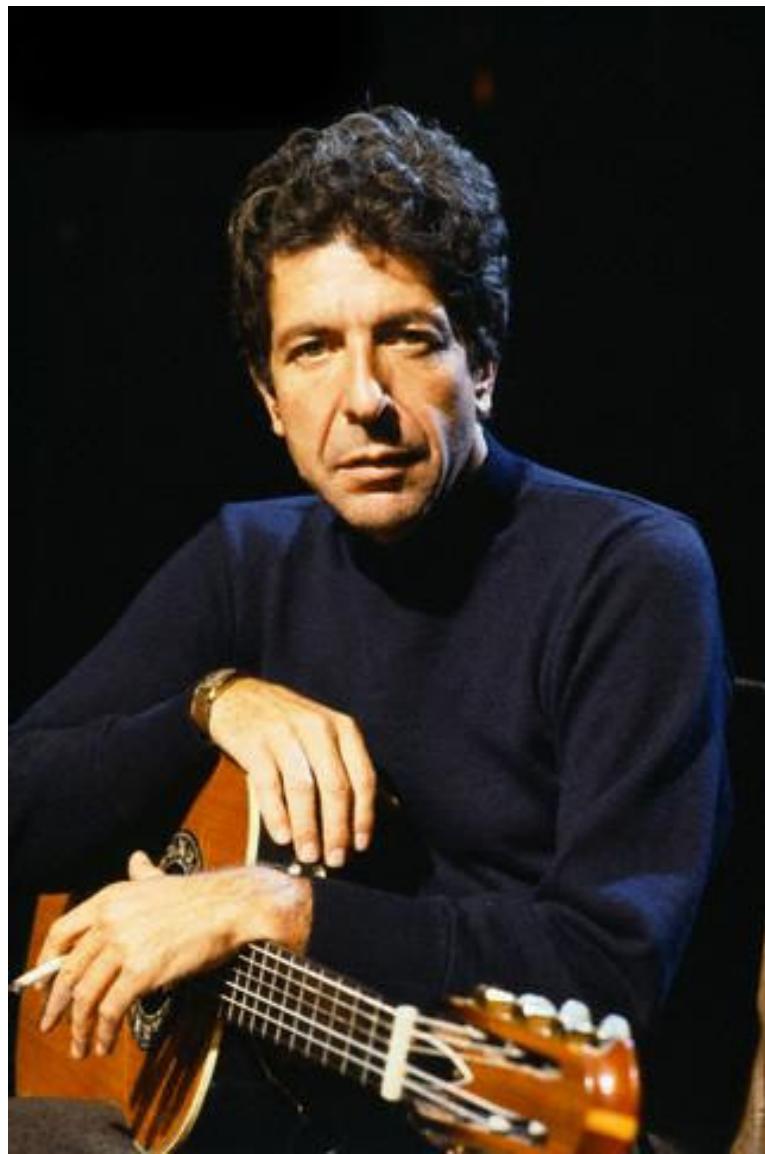
Take This Longing

Who By Fire

A Sinner 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 étrangers.
Parcourait en pleurant
Des pays étrangers.

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 à mes amis
Que je me souviens d'eux.
Va dire à mes amis
Que je me souviens d'eux.

O jours si pleins d'appas,
Vous êtes 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

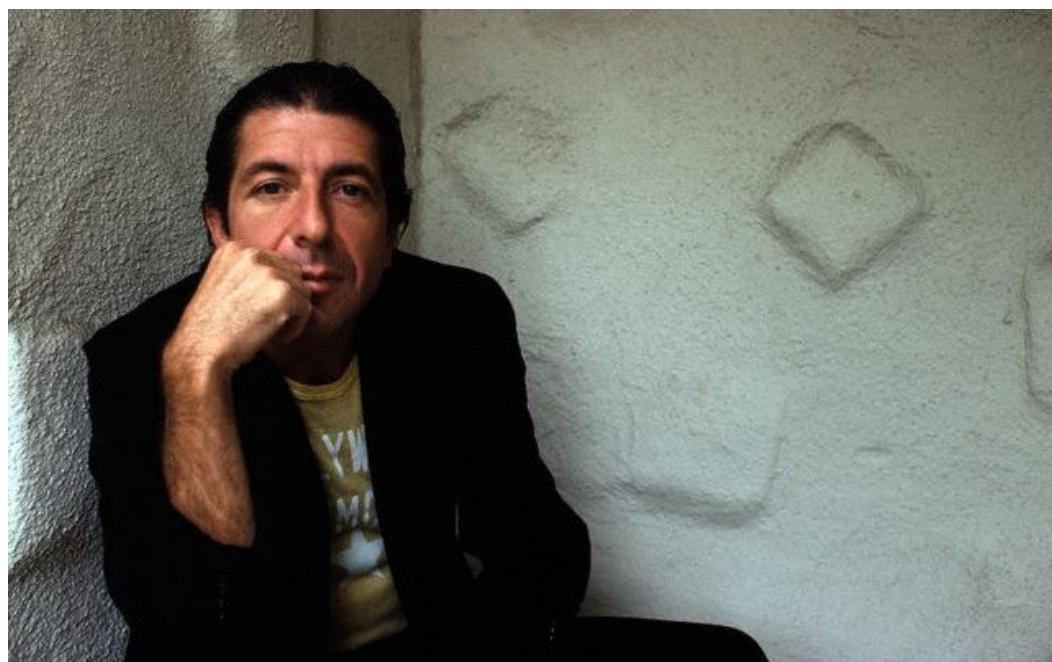
And where, where is my Gypsy wife tonight?
Where, where is my Gypsy wife tonight?

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

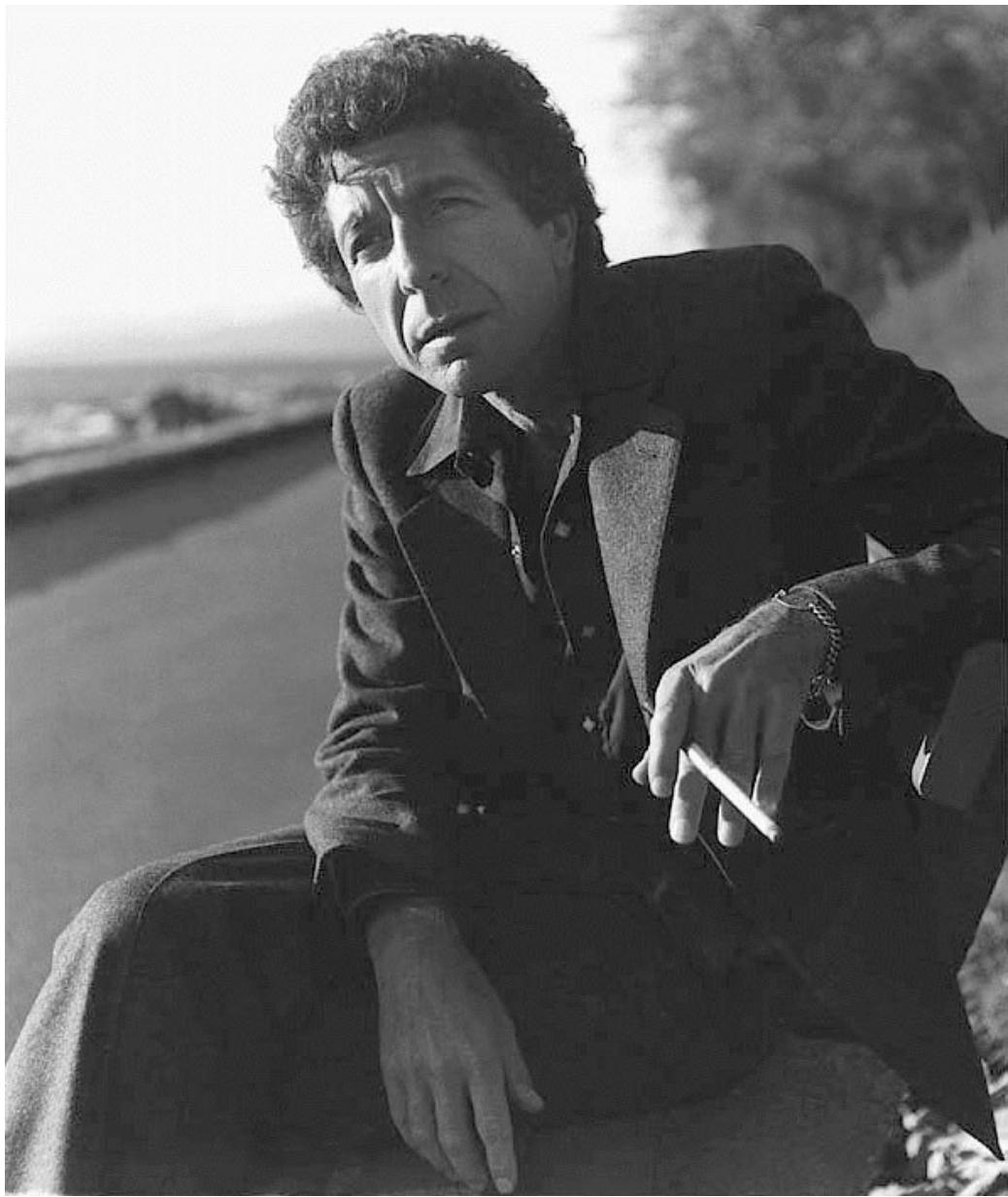
So set your restless heart at ease
Take a lesson from these Autumn leaves
They waste no time waiting for the snow
Don't argue now you'll be late
There is nothing to investigate

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

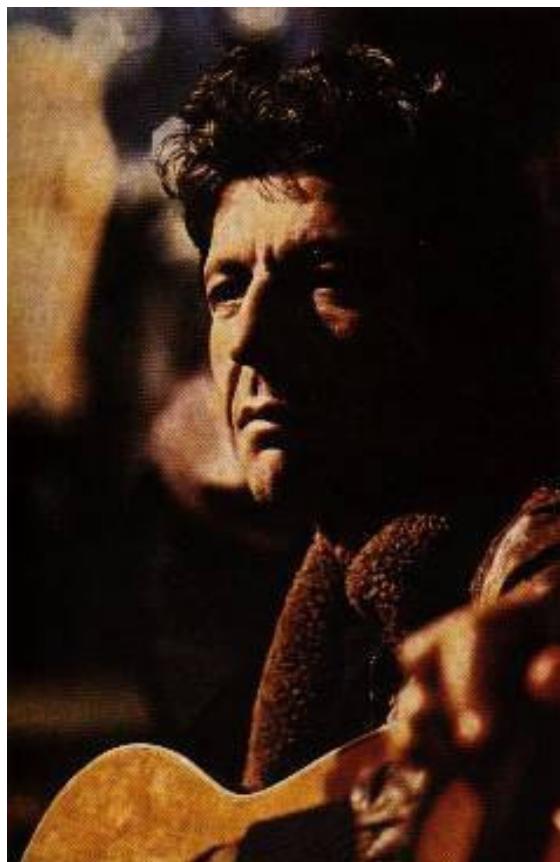
But my darling says
"Leonard, just let it go by
That old silhouette
on the great western sky"
So I pick out a tune
and they move right along
and they're gone like the smoke
and they're gone like this song

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.

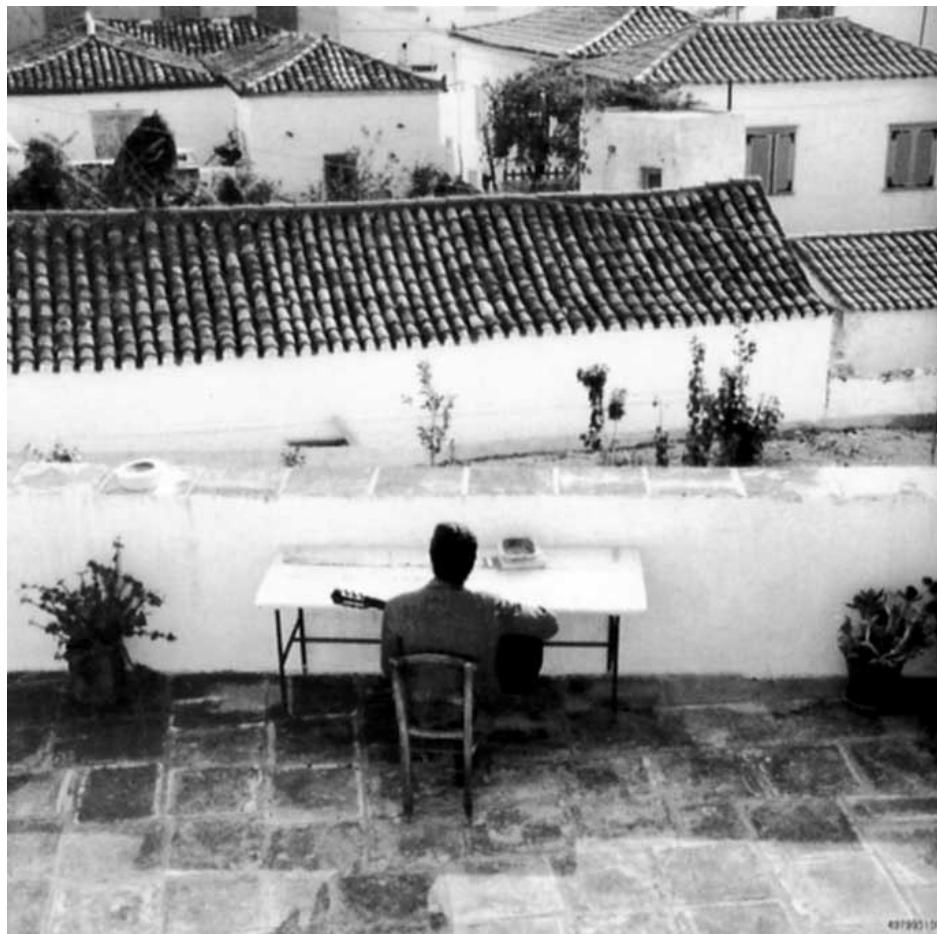
And now I hear your master sing,
you kneel for him to come.
His body is a golden string
that your body is hanging from.
His body is a golden string,
my body has grown numb.
Oh now you hear your master sing,
your shirt is all undone.

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?



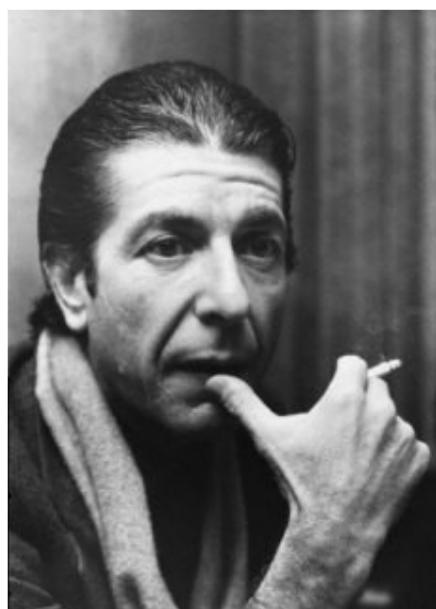
Winter Lady

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.

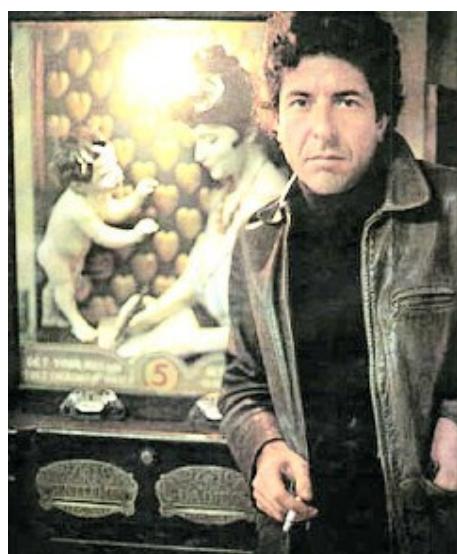
I spent my hatred everyplace,
on every work on every face,
someone gave me wishes
and I wished for an embrace.

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.



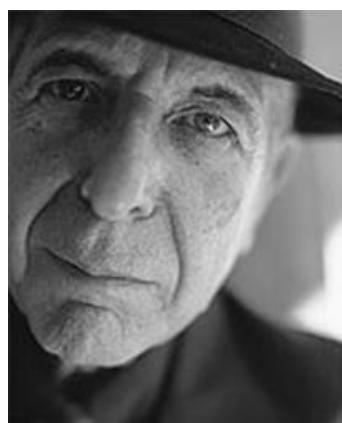
A Bunch Of Lonesome Heroes

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 ate 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

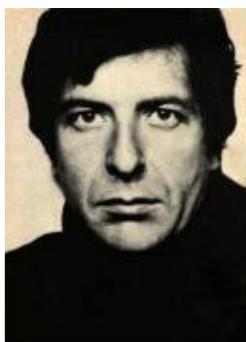
I finally broke into the prison,
I found my place in the chain.
Even damnation is poisoned with rainbows,
all the brave young men
they're waiting now to see a signal
which some killer will be lighting for pay.

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

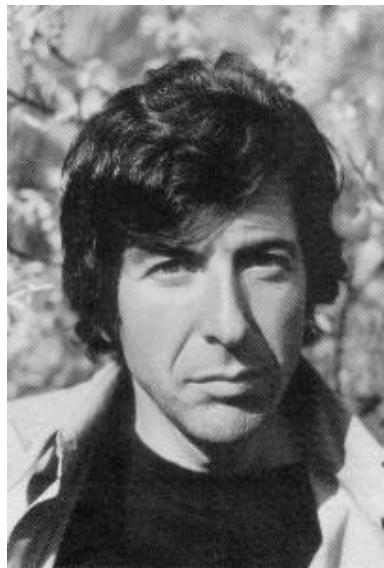
I cannot follow you, my love,
you cannot follow me.
I am the distance you put between
all of the moments that we will be.

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.

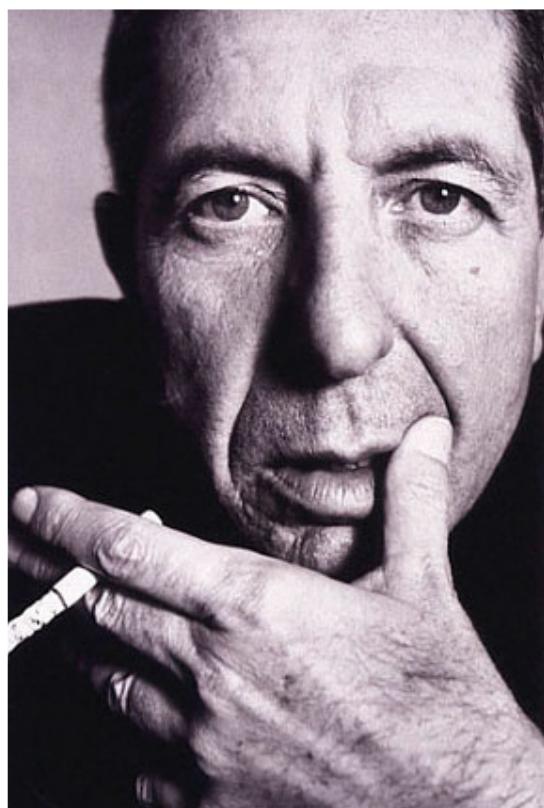
And I take the one who finds me back to where it all began
when Jesus was the honeymoon
and Cain was just the man.

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?

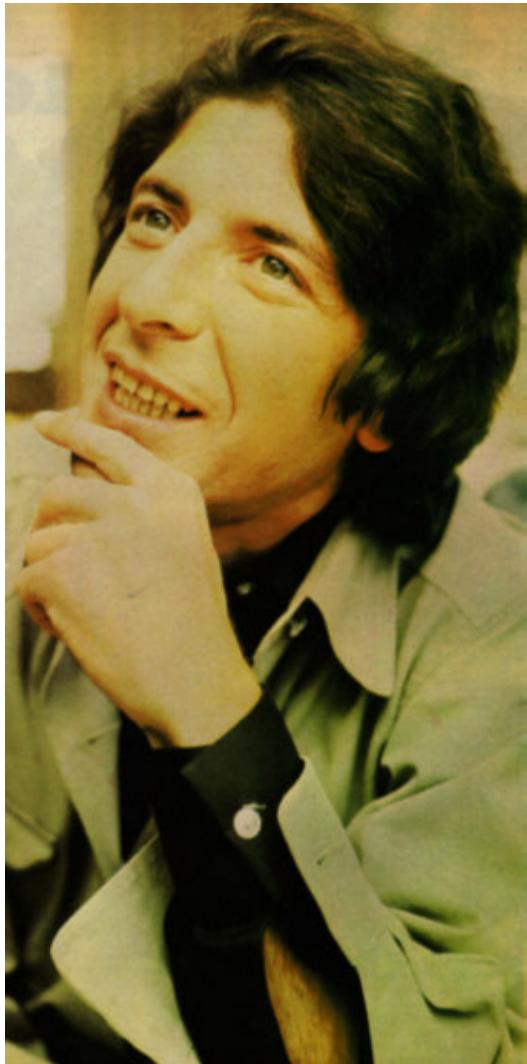
There's no hot water
and the cold is running thin.
Well, what do you expect from
the kind of places you've been living in?
Don't drink from that cup,
it's all caked and cracked along the rim.
That's not the electric light, my friend,
that is your vision growing dim.
Cover up your face with soap, there,
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 lets 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."

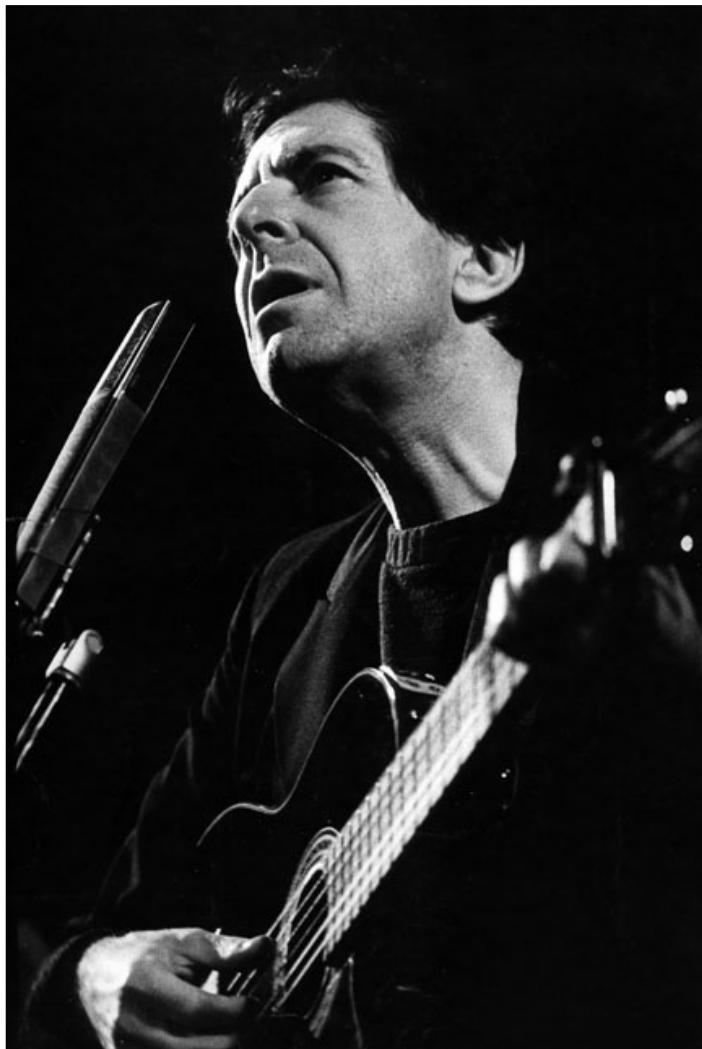
Well, I'm glad to hear you talk this way,
you know I've watched you riding every day
and something in me yearns to win
such a cold and lonesome heroine.
"And who are you?" she sternly spoke
to the one beneath the smoke.
"Why, I'm fire," he replied,
"And I love your solitude, I love your pride."

"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 ..

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

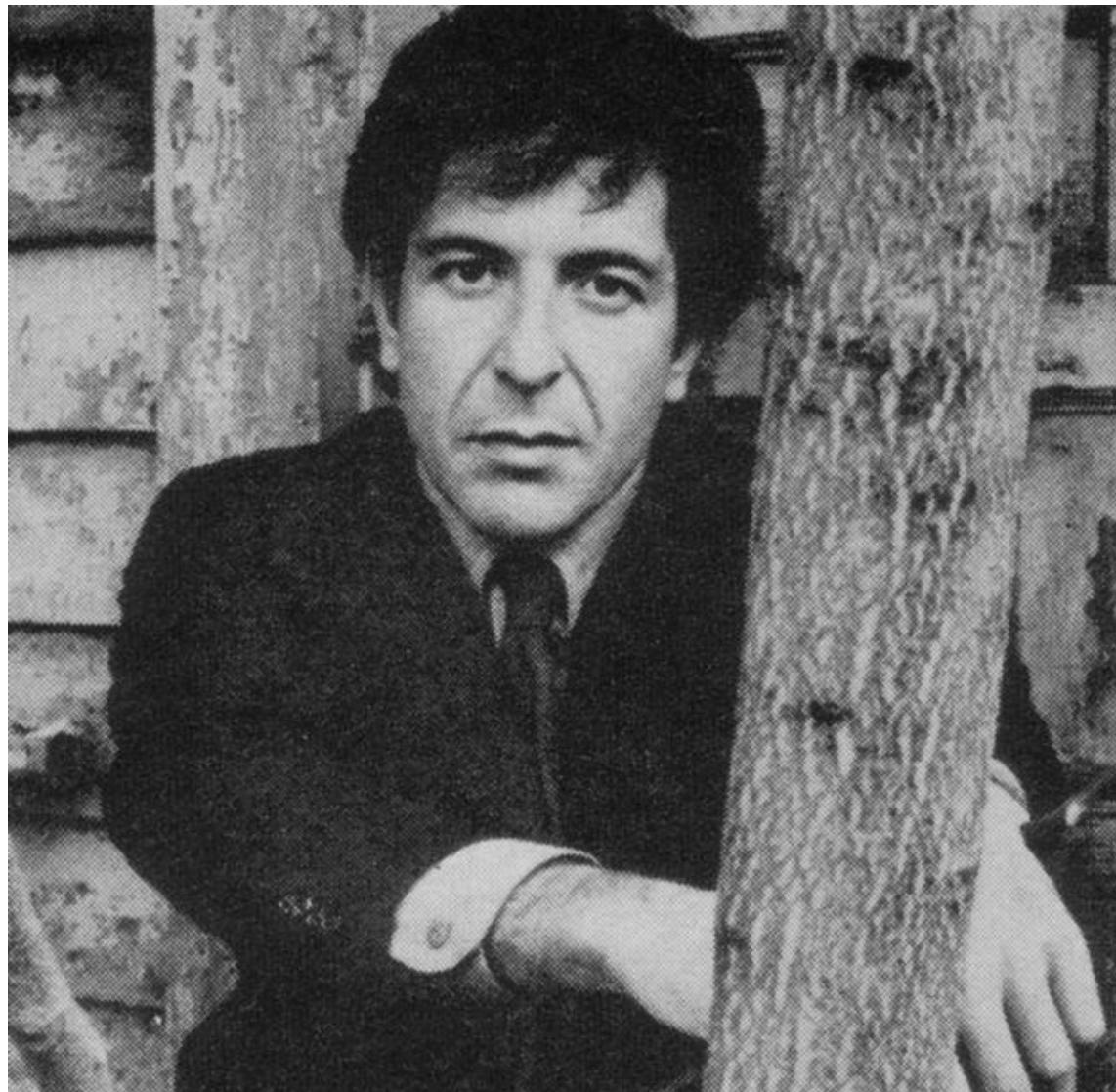
"I never never turned aside," he said,
"I never walked away.
It was you who built the temple,
it was you who covered up my face."

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

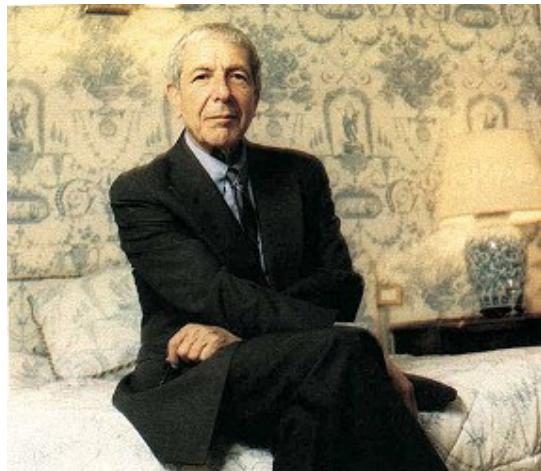
Ah, lover come and lie with me, if my lover is who you are,
and be your sweetest self awhile until I ask for more, my child.
Then let the other selves be wrong, yeah, let them manifest and come
till every taste is on the tongue,
till love is pierced and love is hung,
and every kind of freedom done, then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

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.

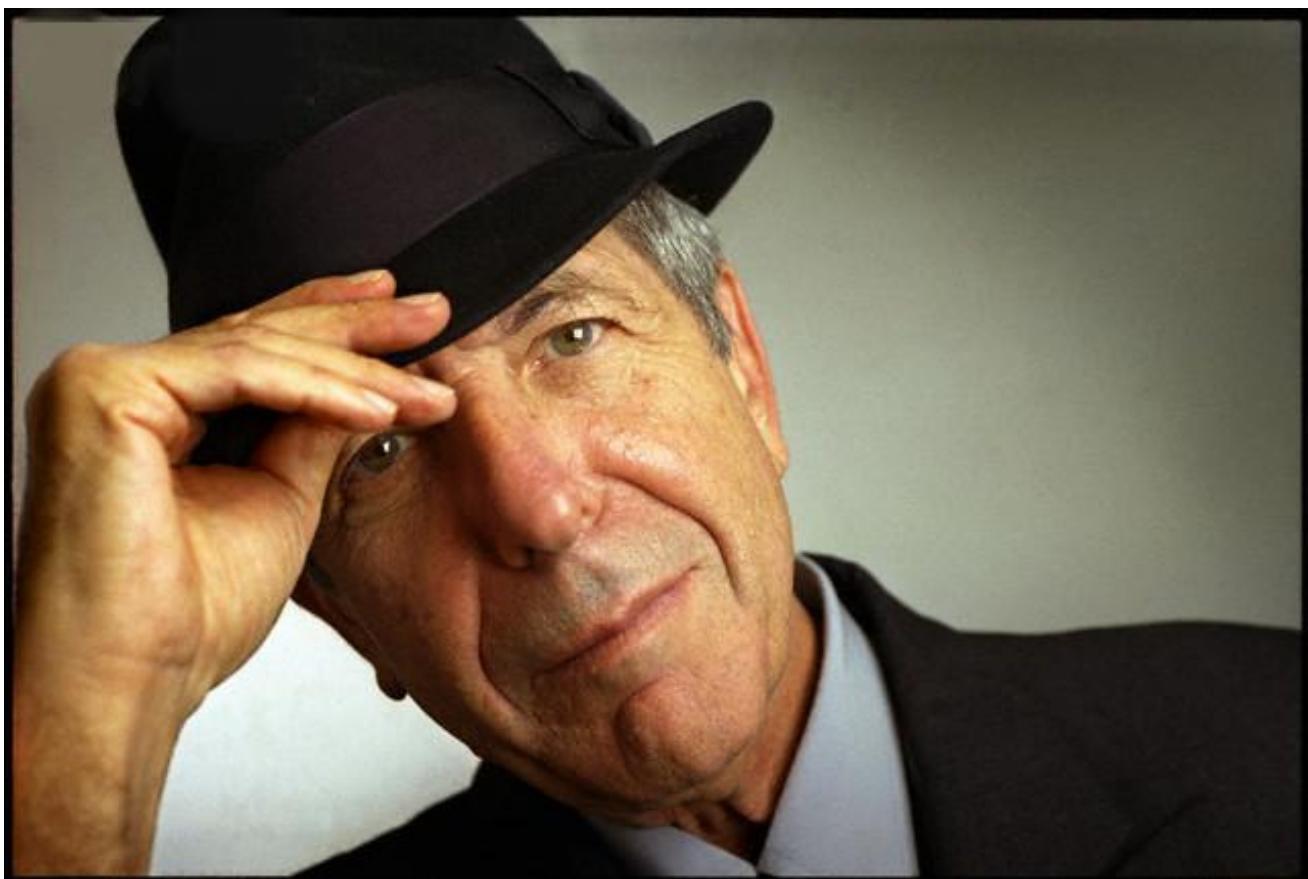


I Tried To Leave You

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.



PLATON/CPI

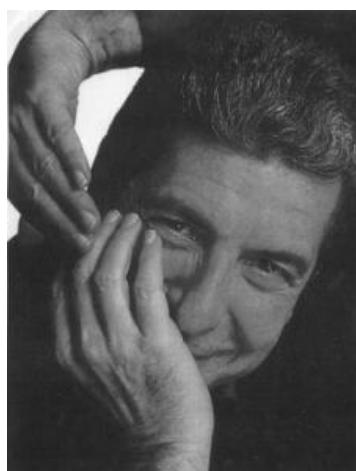
Leaving Green Sleeves

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

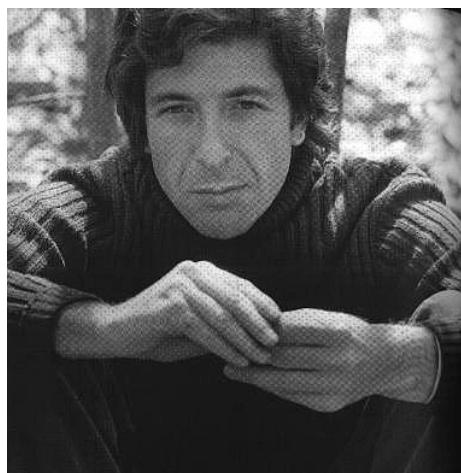
I needed you, I knew I was in danger
of losing what I used to think was mine
You let me love you till I was a failure,
You let me love you till I was a failure --
Your beauty on my bruise like iodine

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

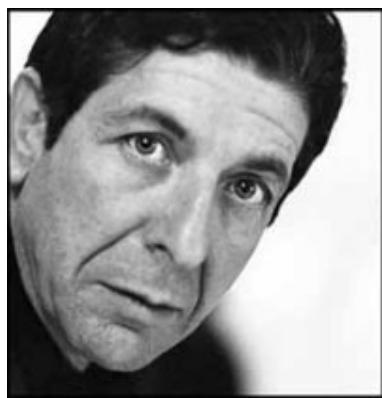
The walls of this hotel are paper-thin
Last night I heard you making love to him
The struggle mouth to mouth and limb to limb
The grunt of unity when he came in

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

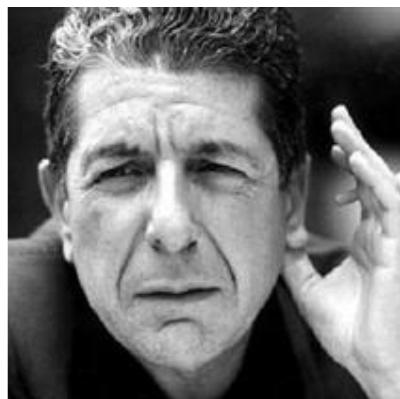


Memories

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



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."

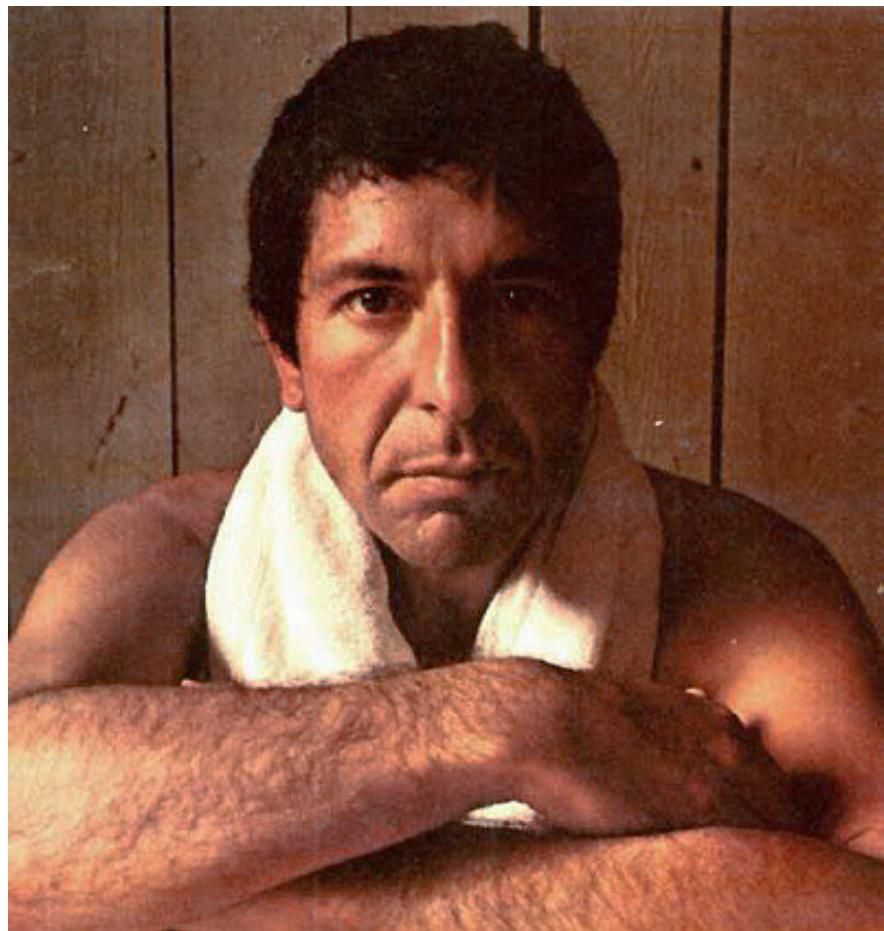
He tried to make a final stand beside the railway track
She said, "The art of longing's over and it's never coming back."
She took his tavern parliament, his cap, his cocky dance,
she mocked his female fashions and his working-class moustache.

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

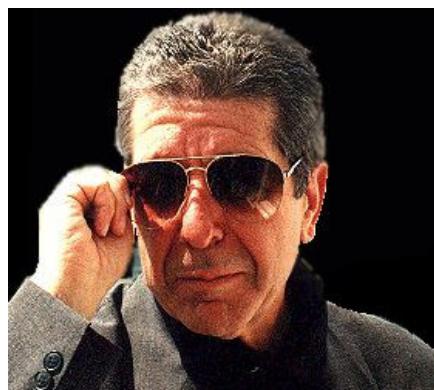
Dance me to your beauty with a burning violin
Dance me through the panic 'til I'm gathered safely in
Lift me like an olive branch and be my homeward dove
Dance me to the end of love
Dance me to the end of love

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

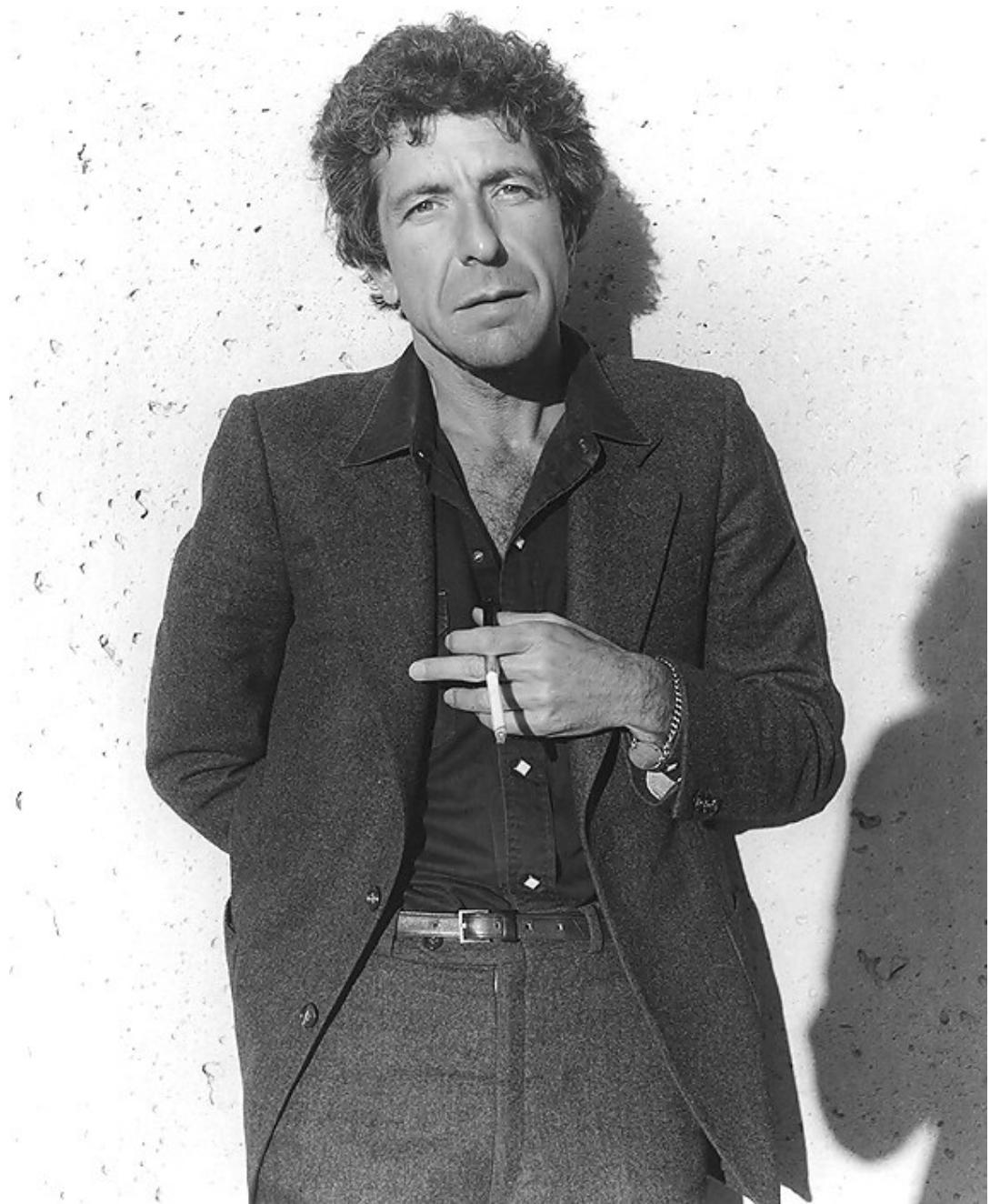
Maybe I'm still hurting
I can't turn the other cheek
But you know that I still love you
It's just that I can't speak
I looked for you in everyone
And they called me on that too
I lived alone but I was only
Coming back to you

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 tough 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."

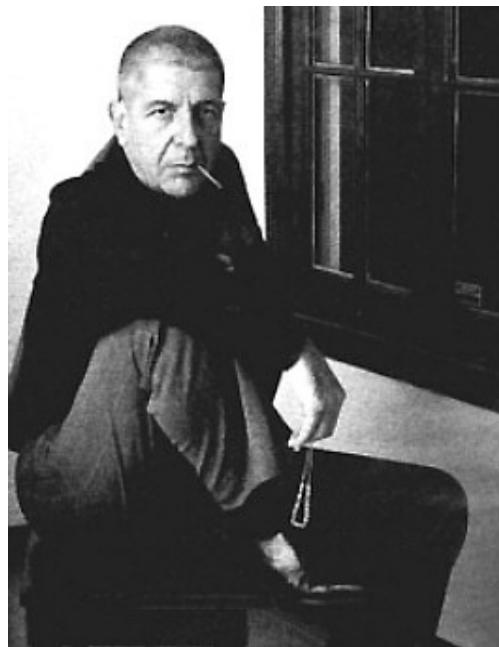
"I know that you have suffered, lad,
But suffer this awhile:
Whatever makes a soldier sad
Will make a killer smile."
"I'm leaving, Captain, I must go
There's blood upon your hand
But tell me, Captain, if you know
Of a decent place to stand."

"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

Aint 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



Ev~~ery~~body 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

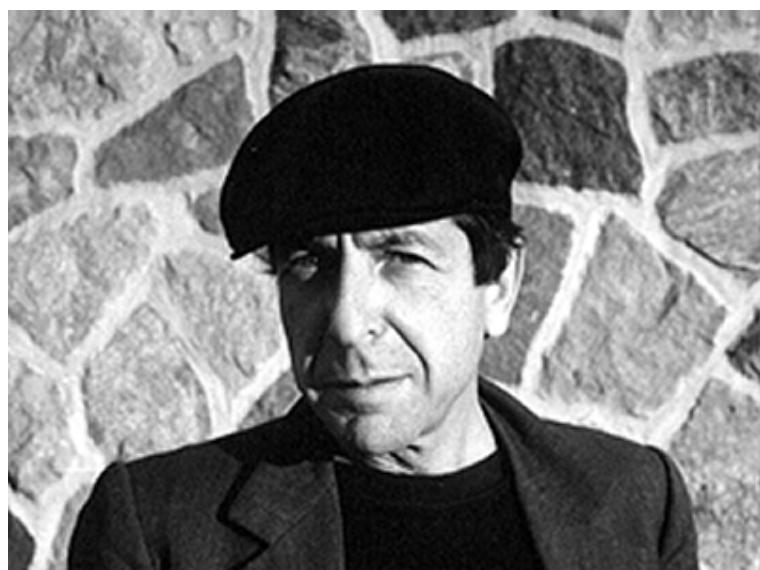
Oh I want you, I want you, I want you
On a chair with a dead magazine
In the cave at the tip of the lily
In some hallways where love's never been
On a bed where the moon has been sweating
In a cry filled with footsteps and sand
Ay, Ay, Ay, Ay
Take this waltz, take this waltz
Take its broken waist in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



Ante^m

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.

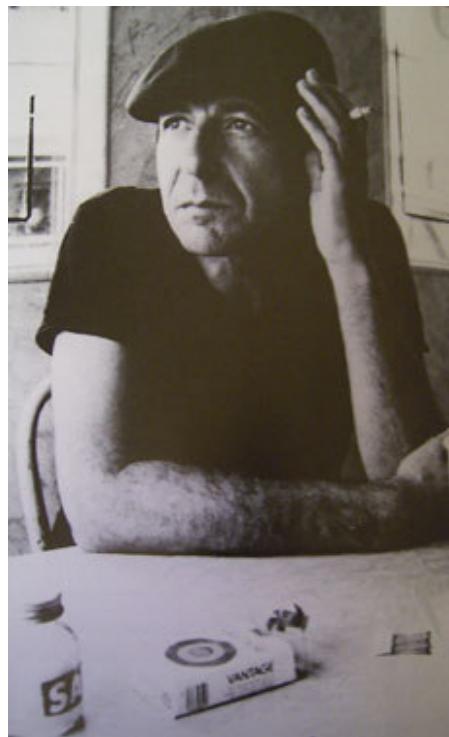
We asked for signs
the signs were sent:
the birth betrayed
the marriage spent
Yeah the widowhood
of every government --
signs for all to see.

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

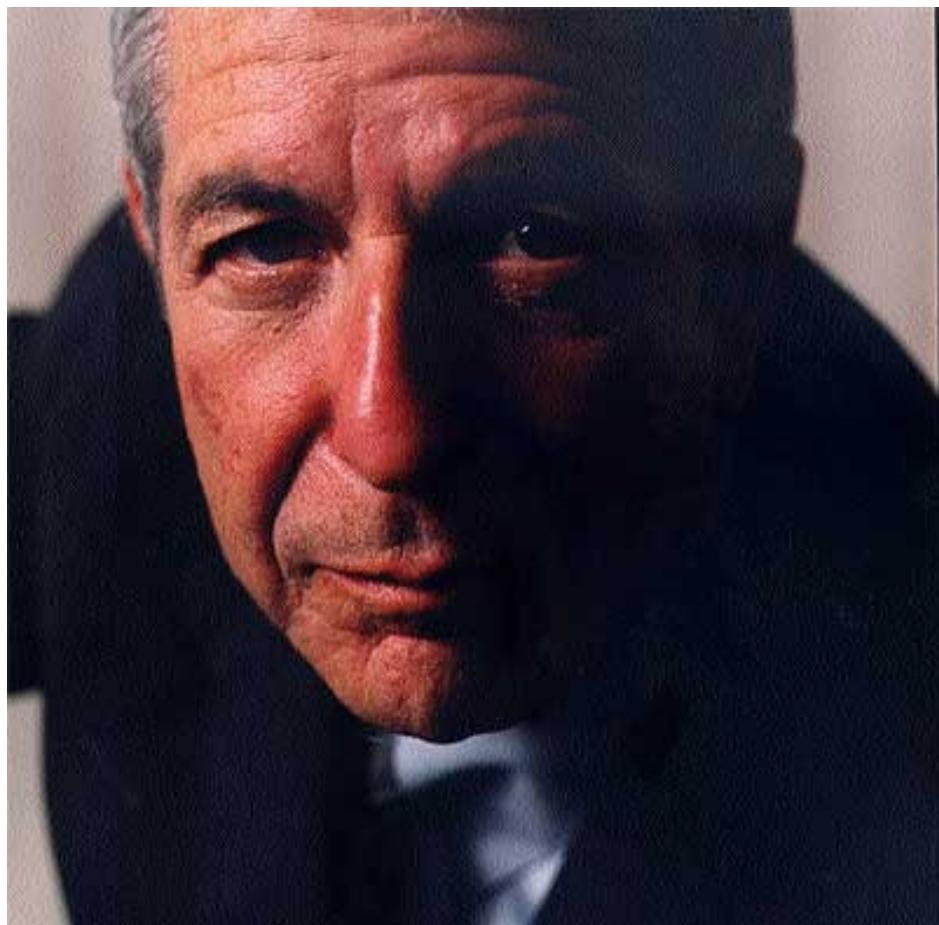
I saw you this morning.
You were moving so fast.
Can't seem to loosen my grip
On the past.
And I miss you so much.
There's no one in sight.
And we're still making love
In My Secret Life.

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.

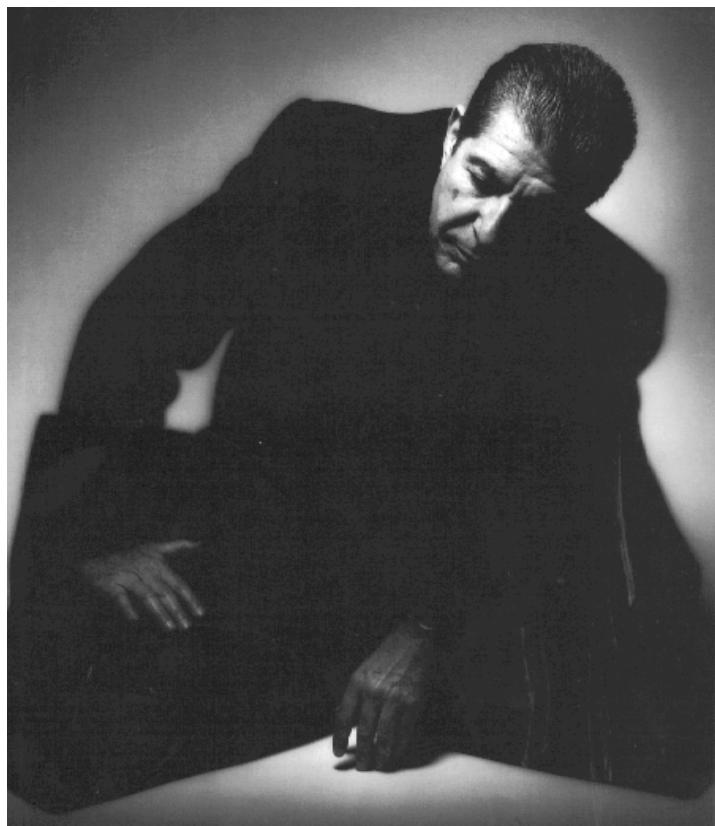
I'm turning tricks, I'm getting fixed,
I'm back on Boogie Street.
You lose your grip, and then you slip
Into the Masterpiece.
And maybe I had miles to drive,
And promises to keep:
You ditch it all to stay alive,
A Thousand Kisses Deep.

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.

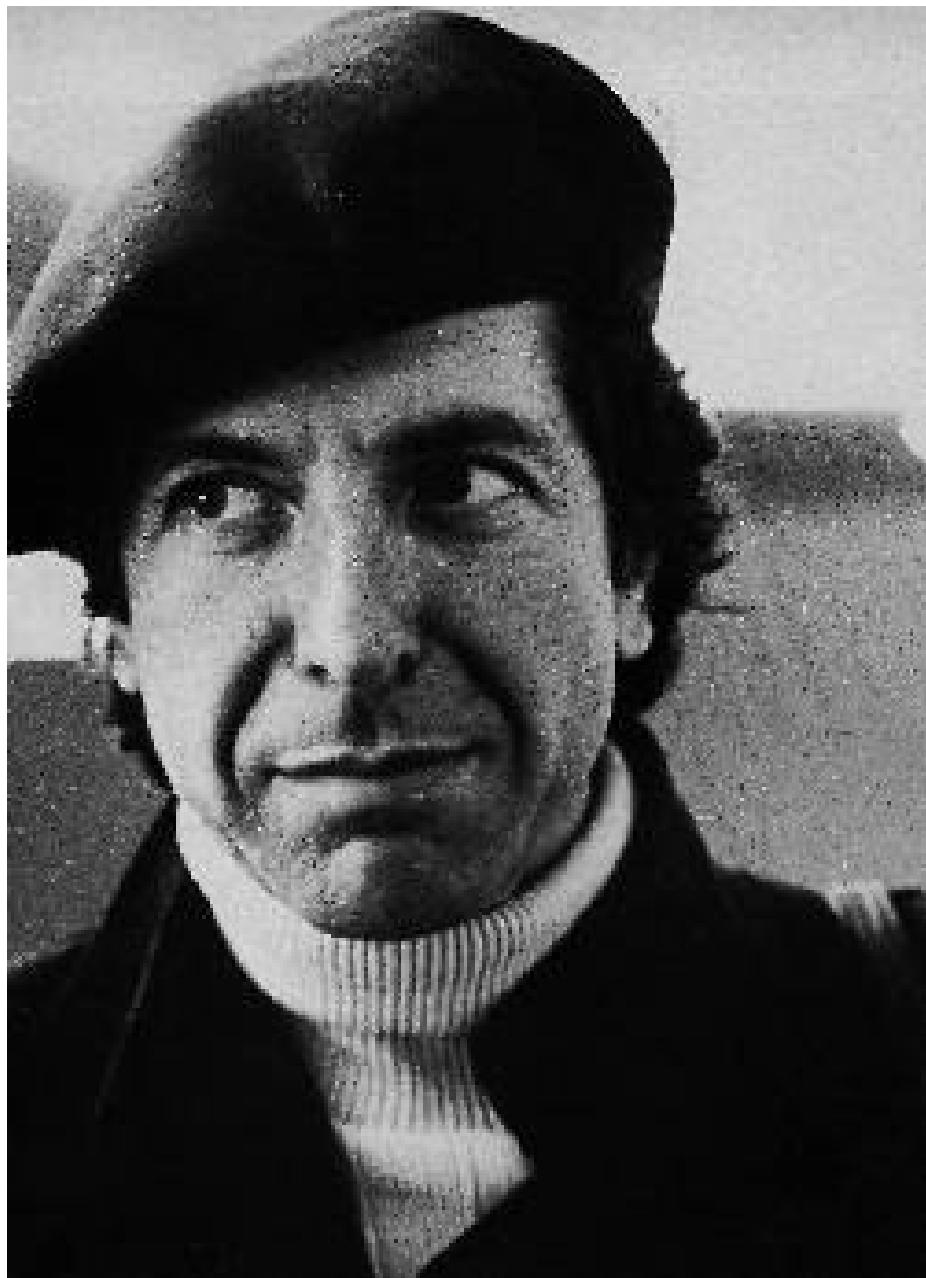
All busy in the sunlight
The flecks did float and dance,
And I was tumbled up with them
In formless circumstance.

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.

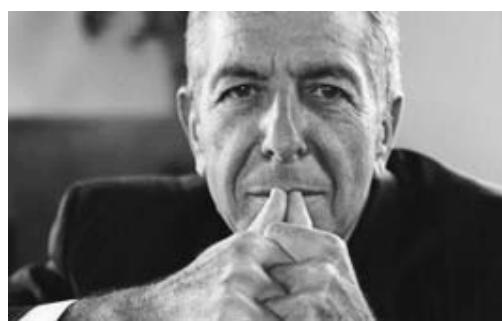
By the rivers dark,
In a wounded dawn,
I live my life
In Babylon.

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.

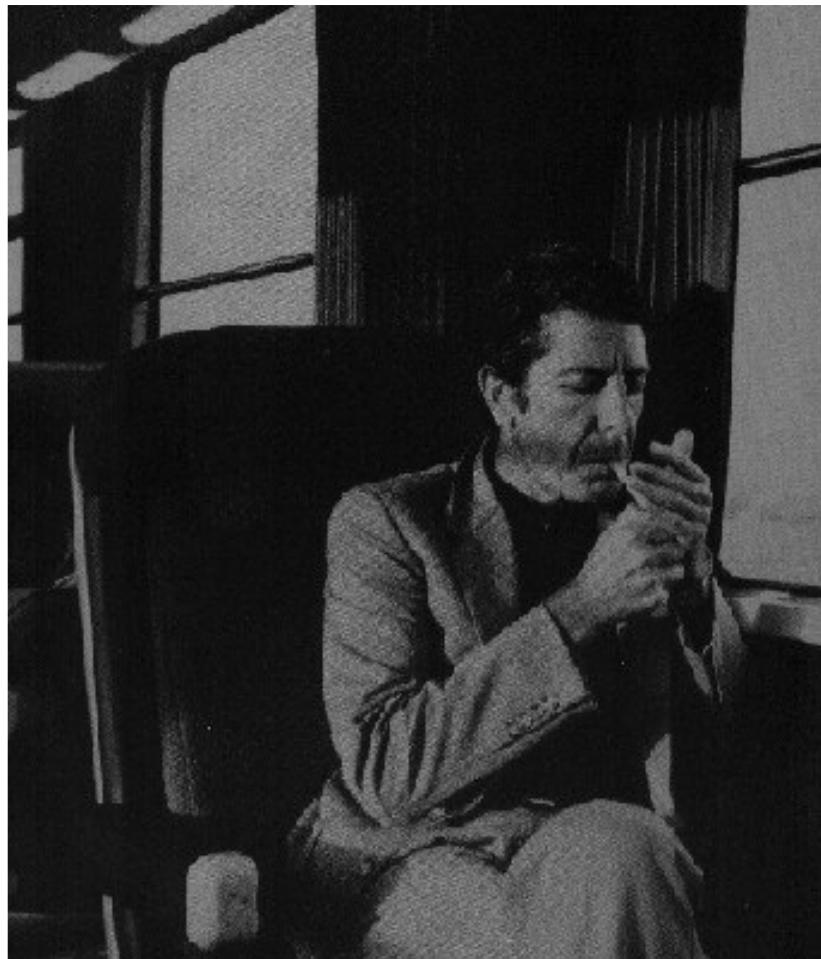
And you who had the honor of her evening,
And by the honor had your own restored –
Say goodbye to Alexandra leaving;
Alexandra leaving with her lord.

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.

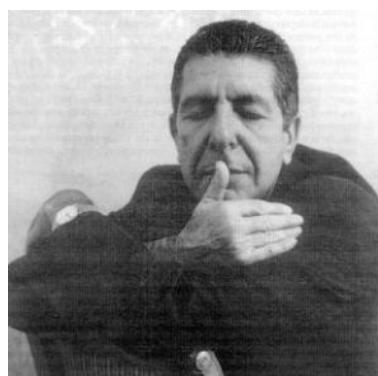
I swept the marble chambers,
But you sent me down below.
You kept me from believing
Until you let me know:

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 –

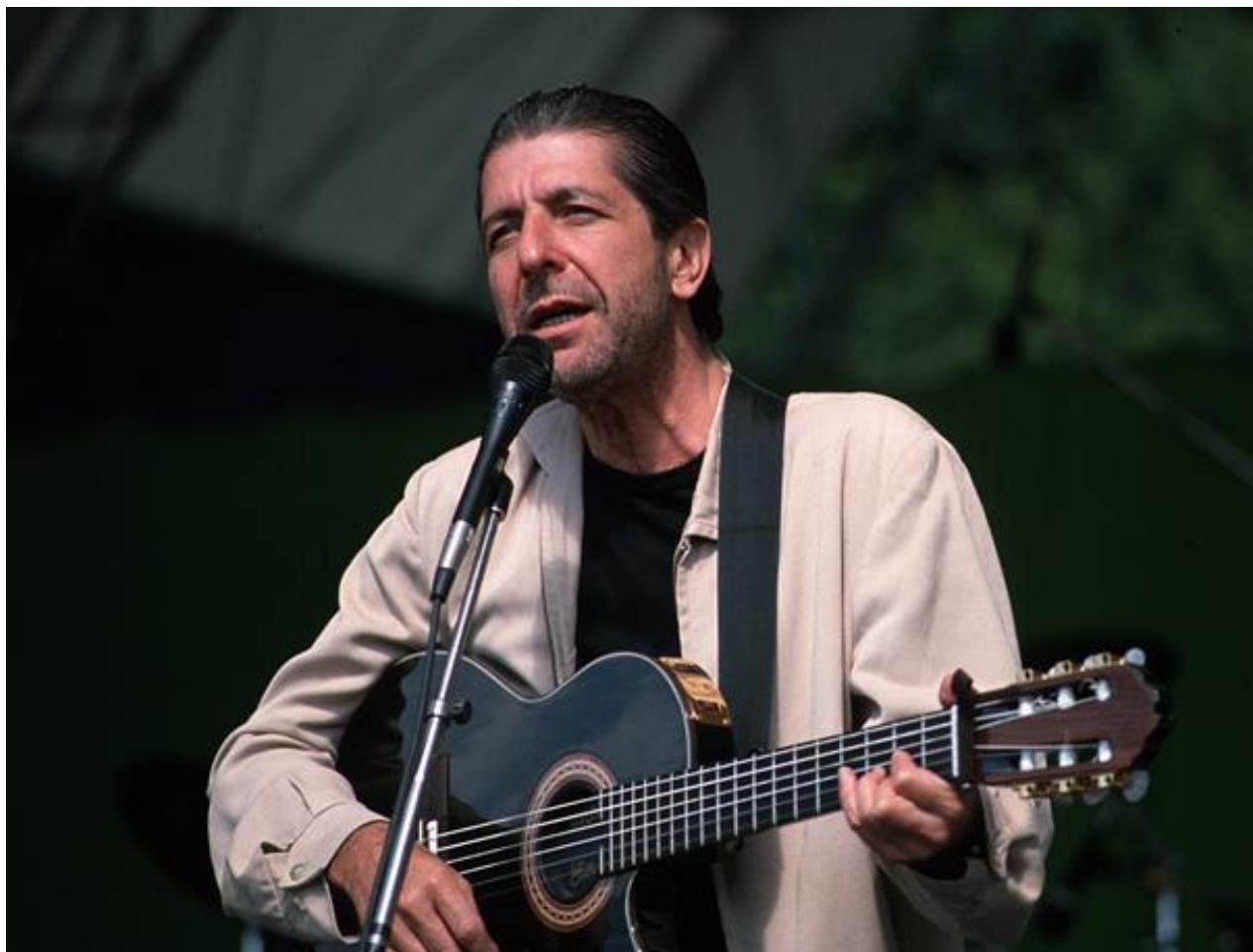
For the innermost decision,
That we cannot but obey -
For what's left of our religion,
I lift my voice and pray:
May the lights in The Land of Plenty
Shine on the truth some day.

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.



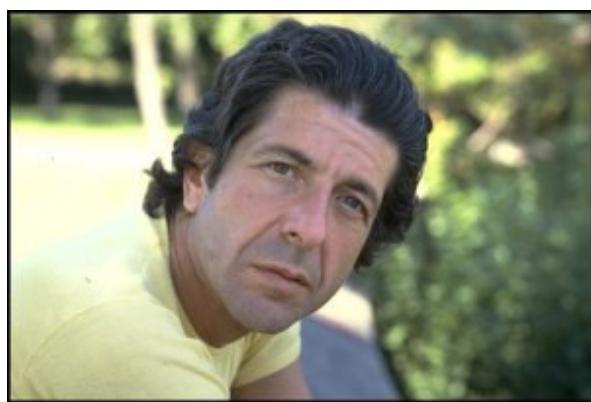
Because Of

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

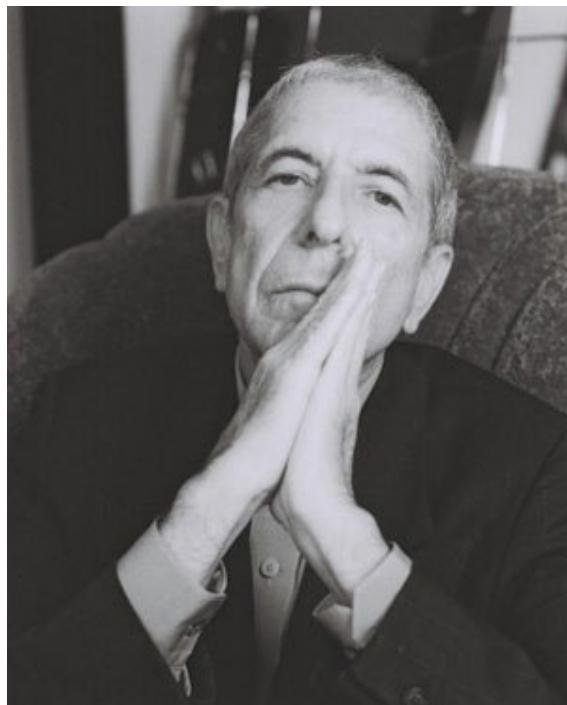
Dear Heather
Please walk by me again
With a drink in your hand
And your legs all white
From the winter



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)

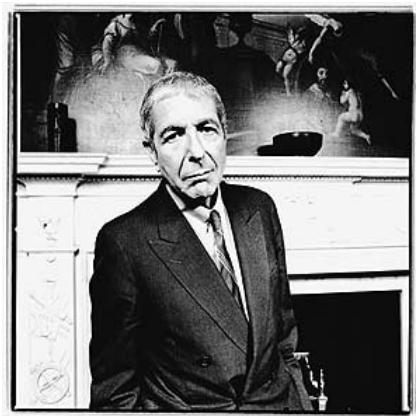
Hurt once and for all into silence.
A long pain ending without a song to prove it.
Who could stand beside you so close to Eden,
When you glinted in every eye the held-high
razor, shivering every ram and son?
And now the silent loony bin, where
The shadows live in the rafters like
Day-weary bats,
Until 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]

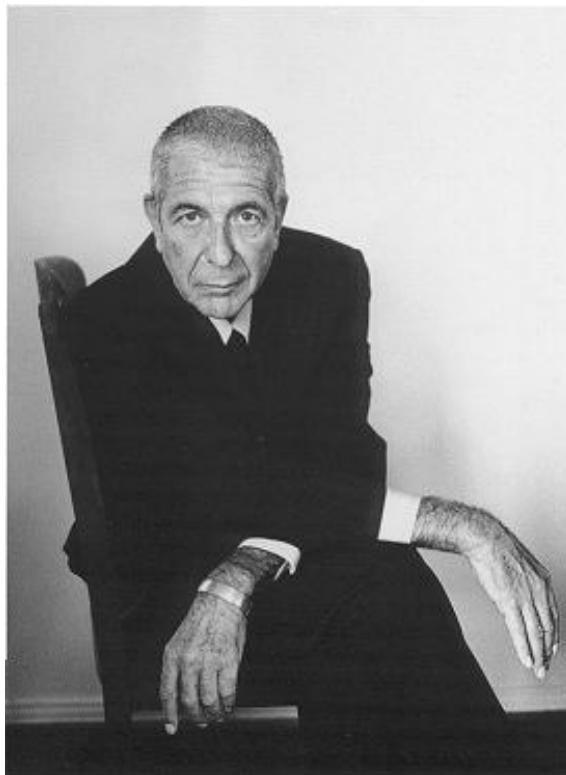
The sea so deep and blind
The sun, the wild regret
The club, the wheel, the mind,
O love, aren't you tired yet?
The club, the wheel, the mind
O love, aren't you tired yet?
The blood, the soil, the faith
These words you can't forget
Your vow, your holy place
O love, aren't you tired yet?
The blood, the 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.

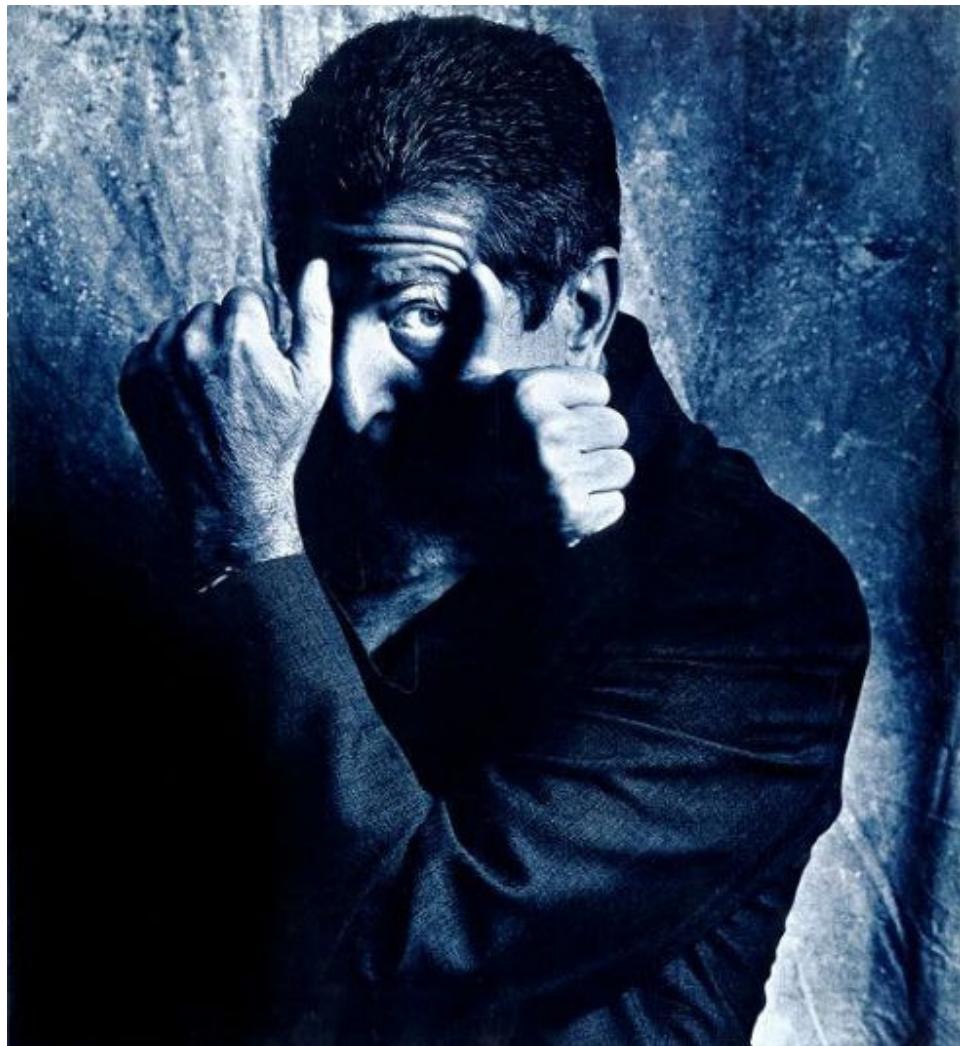


God is Alive, Magic is Afoot

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

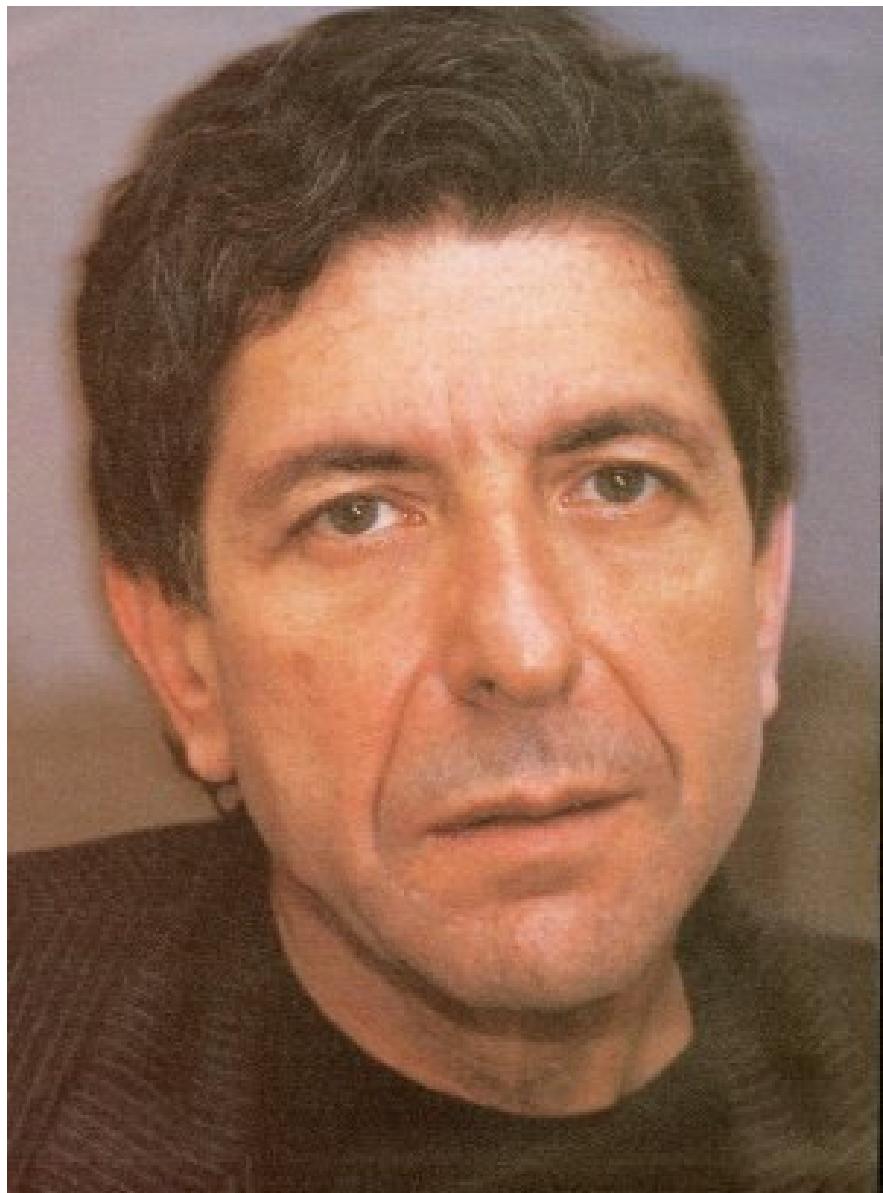
He's angry at the universe
He drives him up the wall
I could say for a fact
He's not pleased with this universe
He drives him up the wall
He's sorry that He ever thought of you and me at all

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.

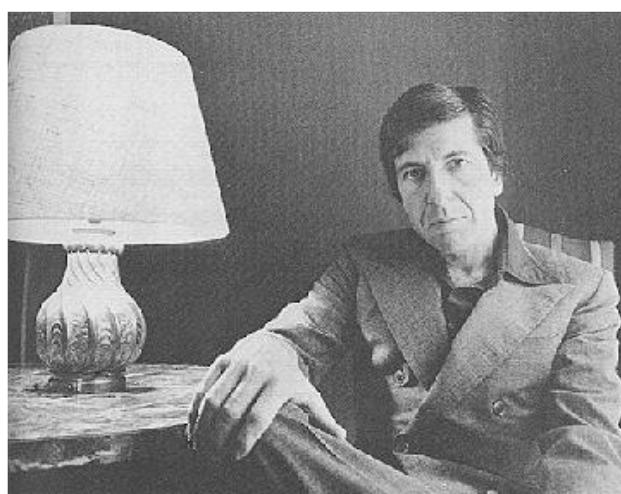
La da dada dada dadada
Da dadada dada dadada
La da dada dada dadada
Da dadada dada dadada

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-existent 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

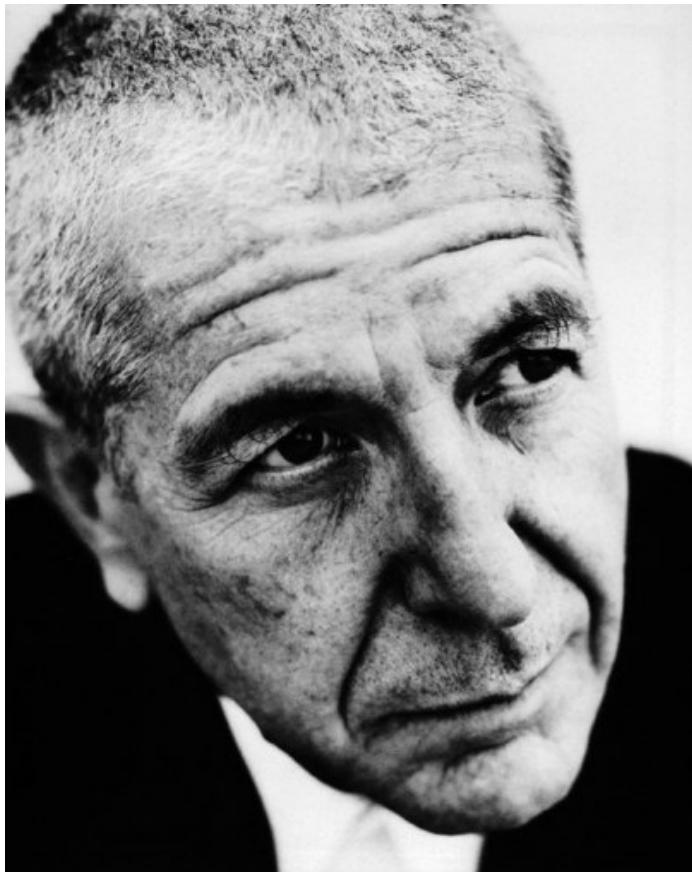
Don't know why I'm scared tonight, but baby, I am
I don't know if it's just the crowd out there
I don't know if it's the slaughtered lamb
But I'm singing chains of gold for you
You know I've become a prisoner of song
With lawyers and contracts and royalties
And very little else in my hand.



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

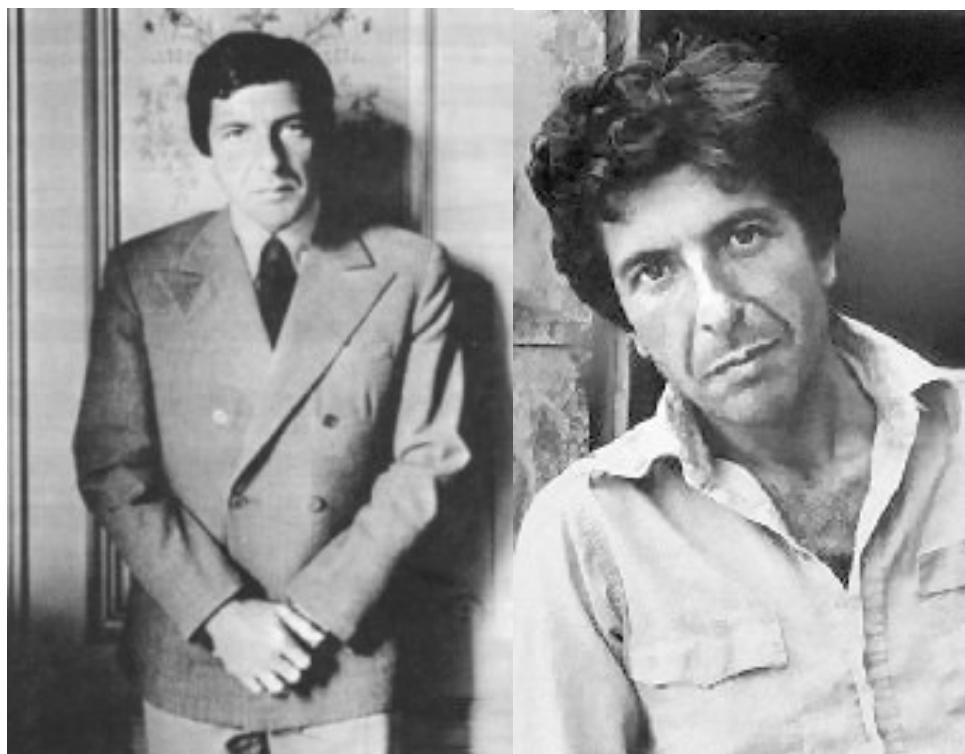
I was dying when we met
I bet my life on you
But you called me and I folded
Like you knew I'd do
You called my ace, my king, my bluff
Okay, you win, enough's enough
I was never any good
Never any good
I was never any good at loving you

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

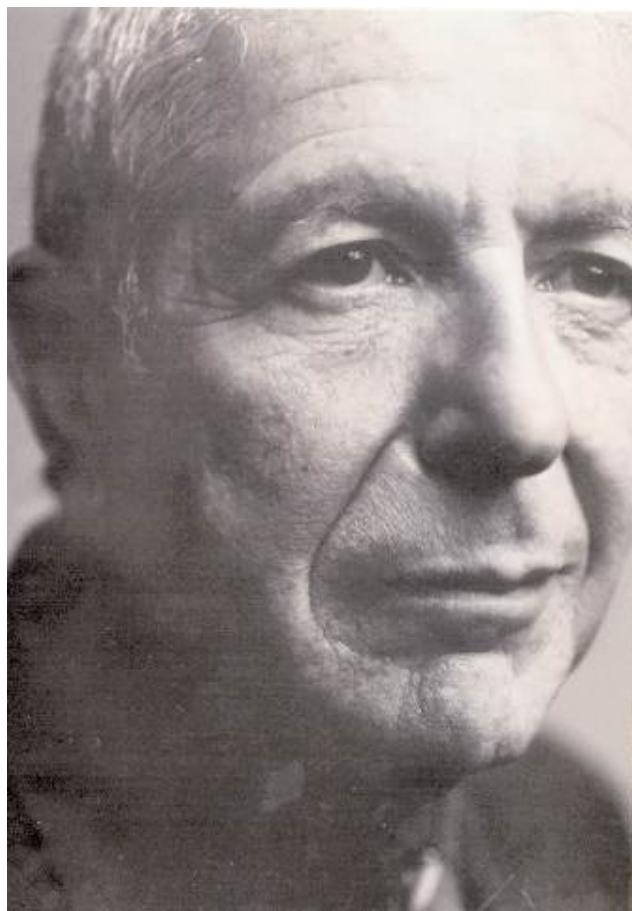
I was never any good at loving you
At doing what a woman really wants
A man to do
Youre going to feel much better
When you cut me loose forever
I was never any good
Never any good
I was never any good at loving you



Theres 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.*



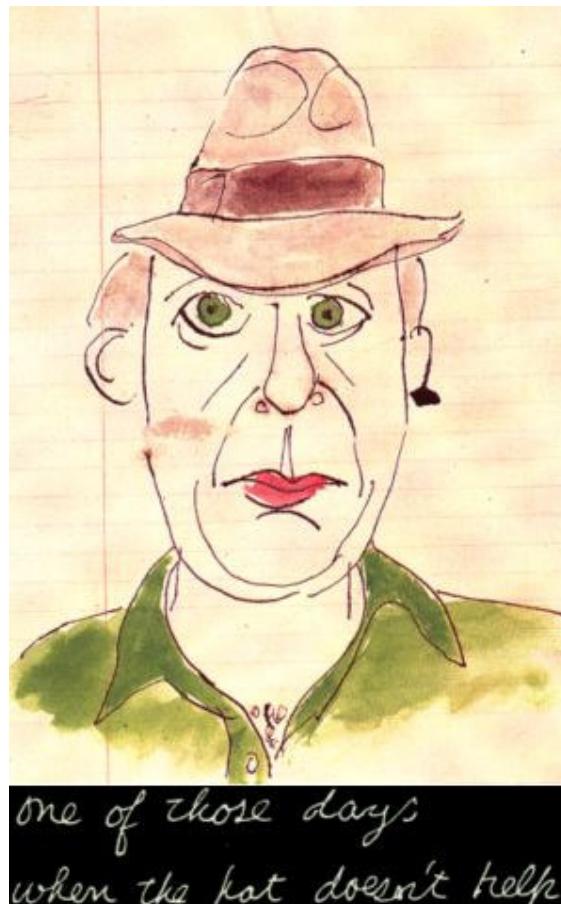
Poems



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 aunts
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.



*one of those days
when the hat doesn't help*

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 its 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.



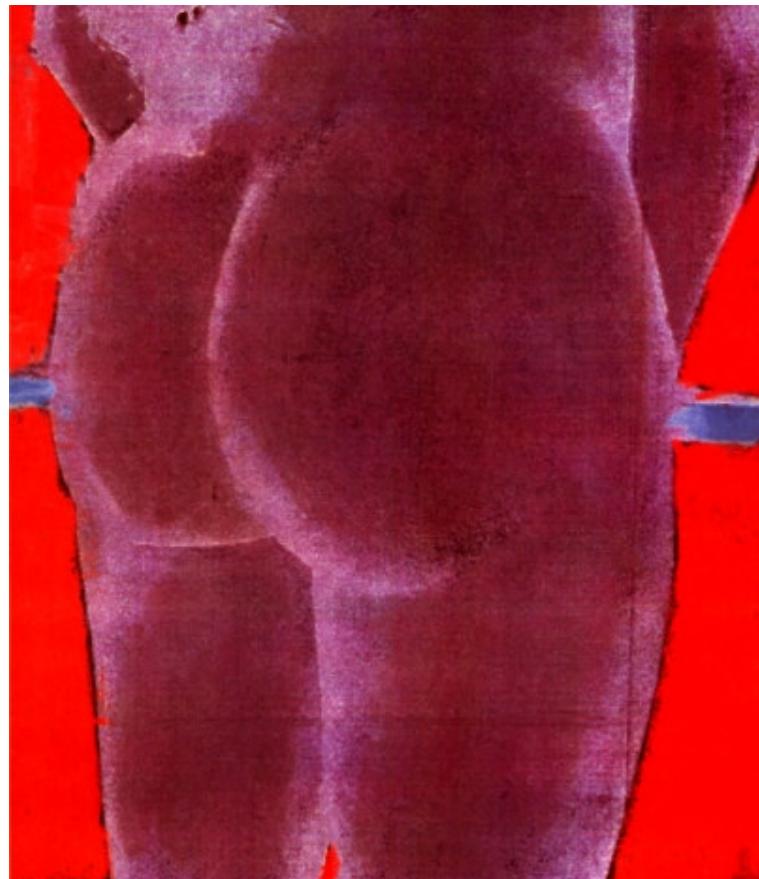
You Are Right, Sahara

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
unharmed 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.

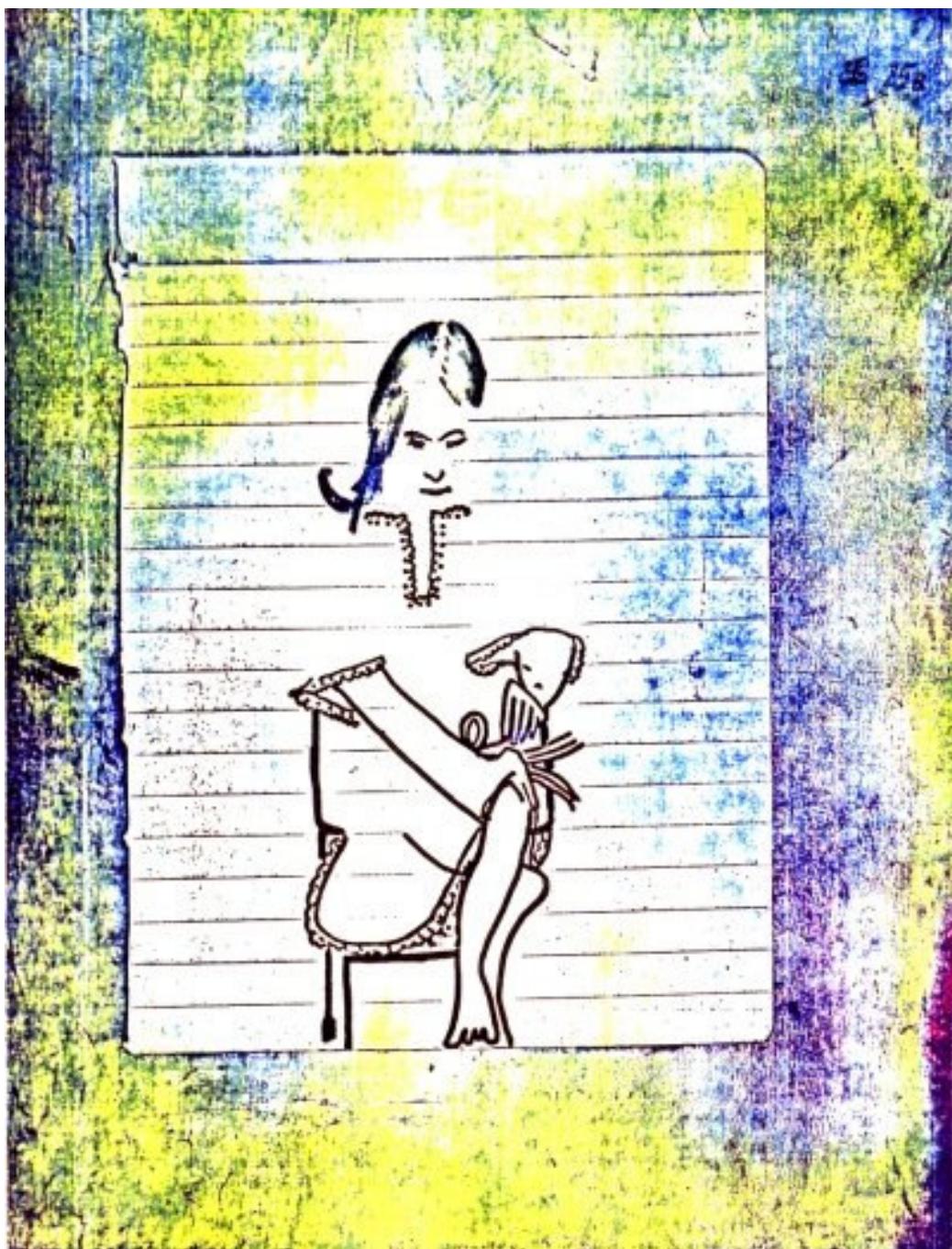
Even though she sleeps upon your satin.
Even though she wakes you with a kiss.
Do not say the moment was imagined,
Do not stoop to strategies like this.

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.

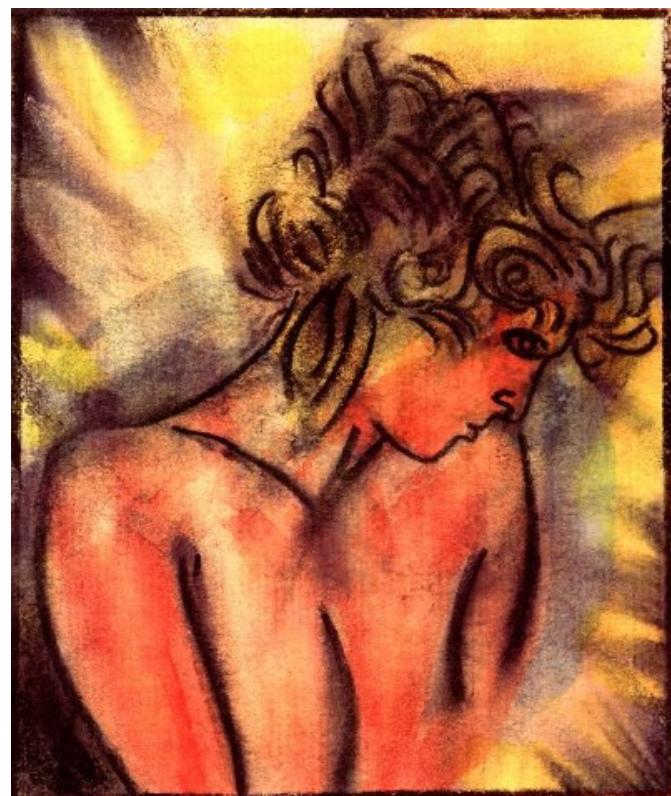
As someone long prepared for the occasion;
In full command of every plan you wrecked---
Do not choose a coward's explanation
that hides behind the cause and the effect,

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.



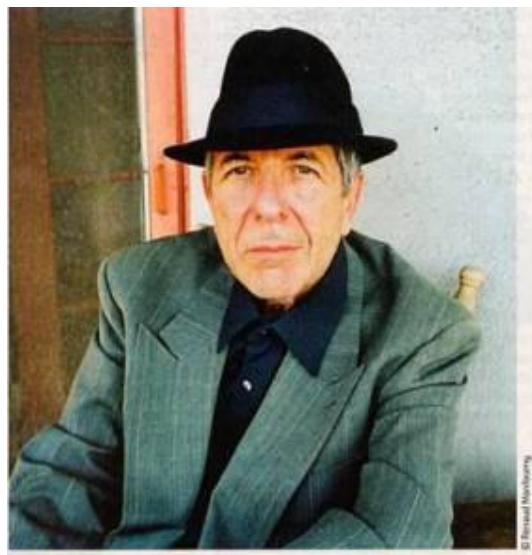
Promise

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.



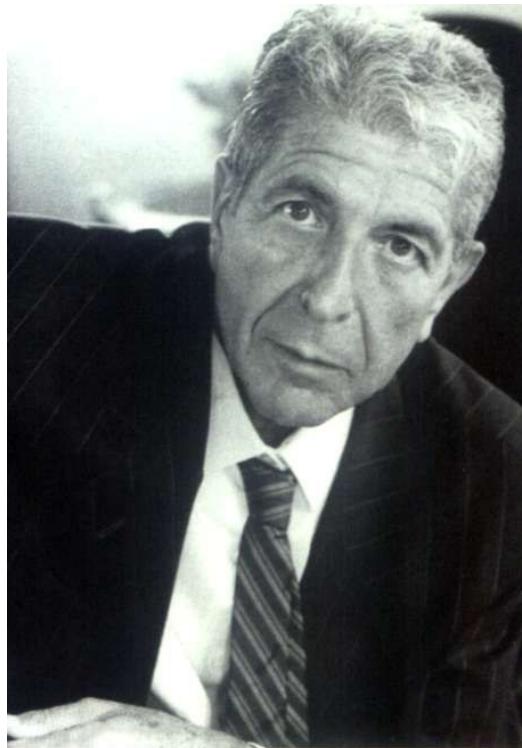
Good Advice For Someone Like Me

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

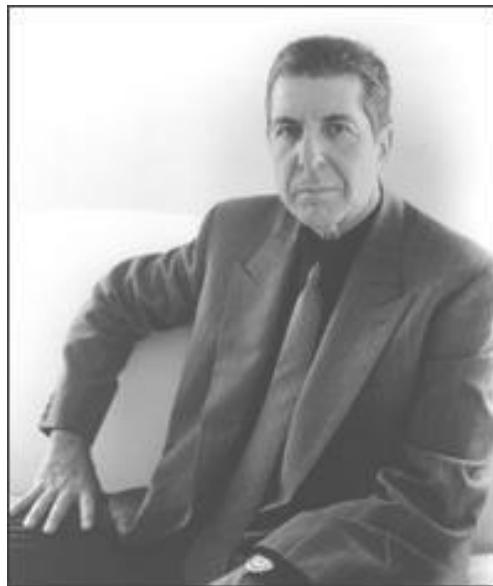
If You Are Lucky
You Will Grow Old
And Live
A Life Of Errands.
You Will Discern
What People Need
And Provide It
Before They Ask.
You Will Drive Your Car
Here And There
Delivering And Fetching
And Neither The Traffic
Nor The Weather
Will Bother You
In The Least.
You Will Whip Down The 405
To San Diego
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



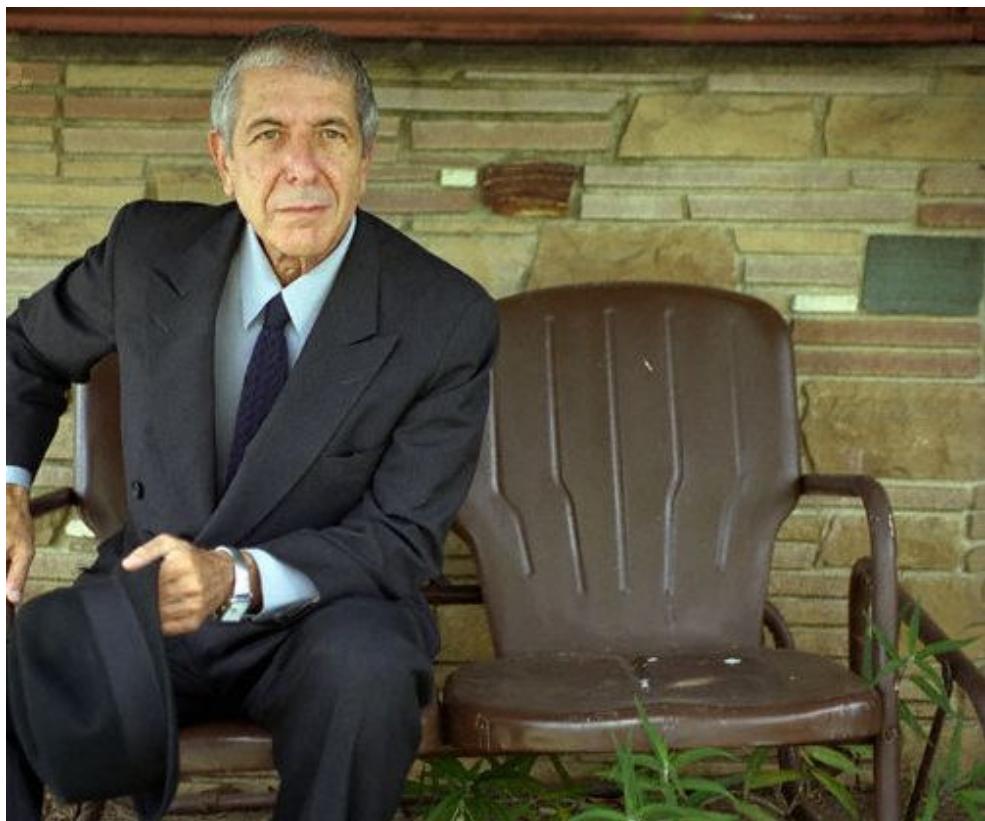
It Seemed The Better Way

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

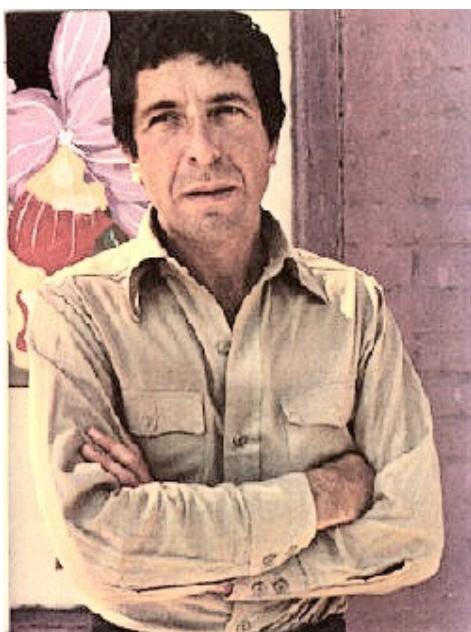
When I went out to tell her
The love that can't be told
She hid in themes of marble
And deep reliefs of gold

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.

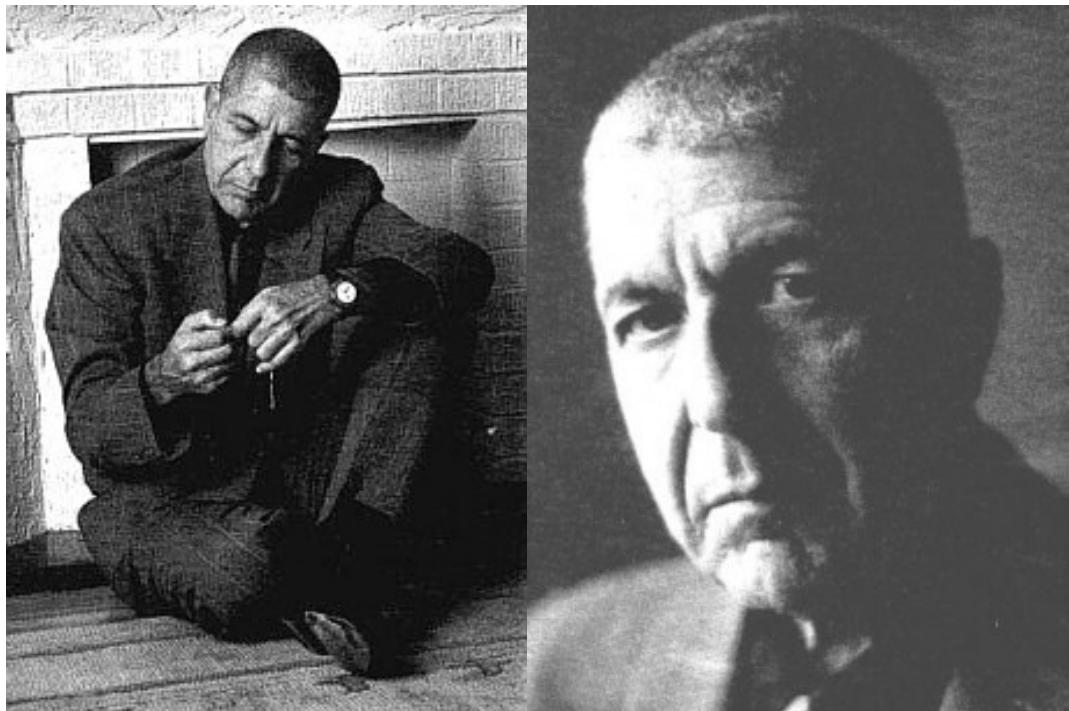
(And fragrant is the thought of you,
The file on you complete -
Except what we forgot to do
A thousand kisses deep.)

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

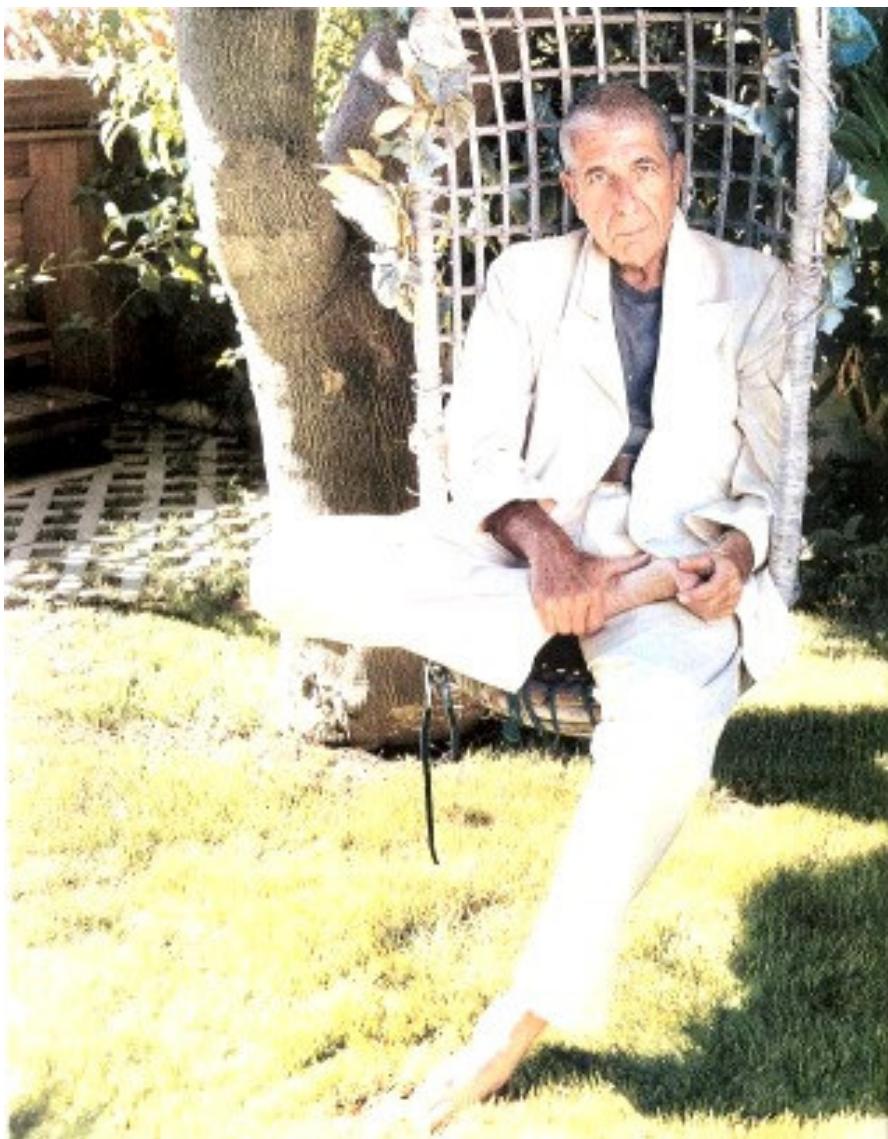
For you
I will be an apostate jew
and tell the Spanish priest
of the blood vow
in the Talmud
and where the bones
of the child are hid

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!

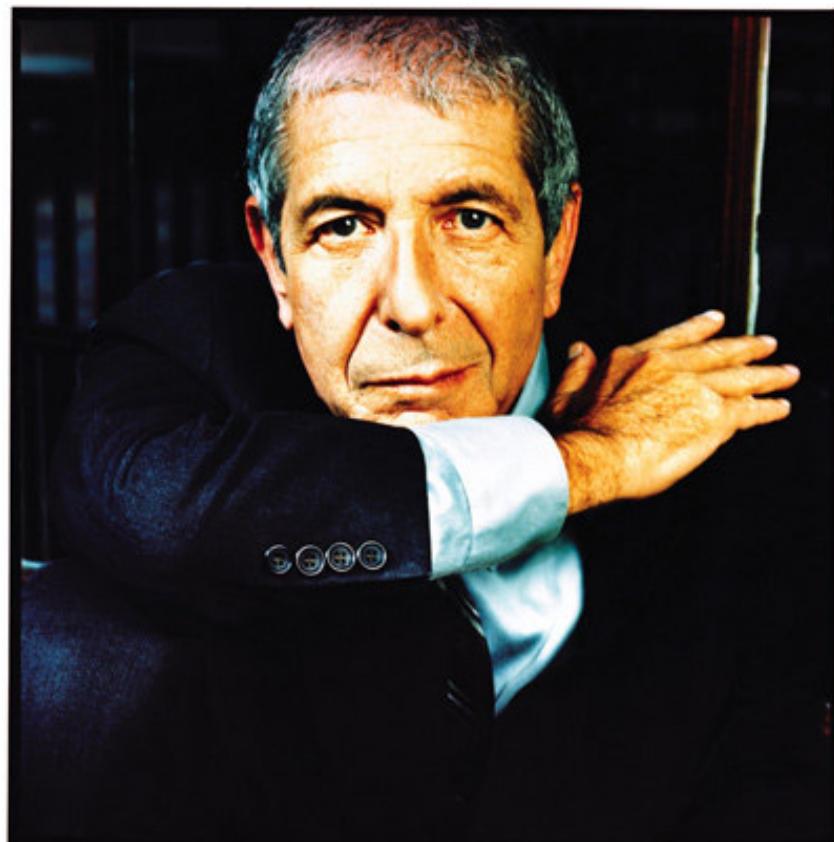


The Only Tourist In Havana Turns His Thoughts Homewards

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.



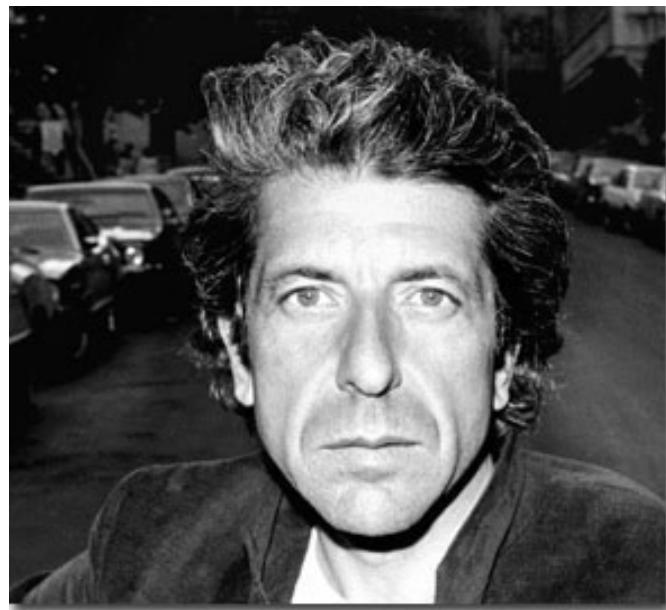
Waiting for Marianne

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

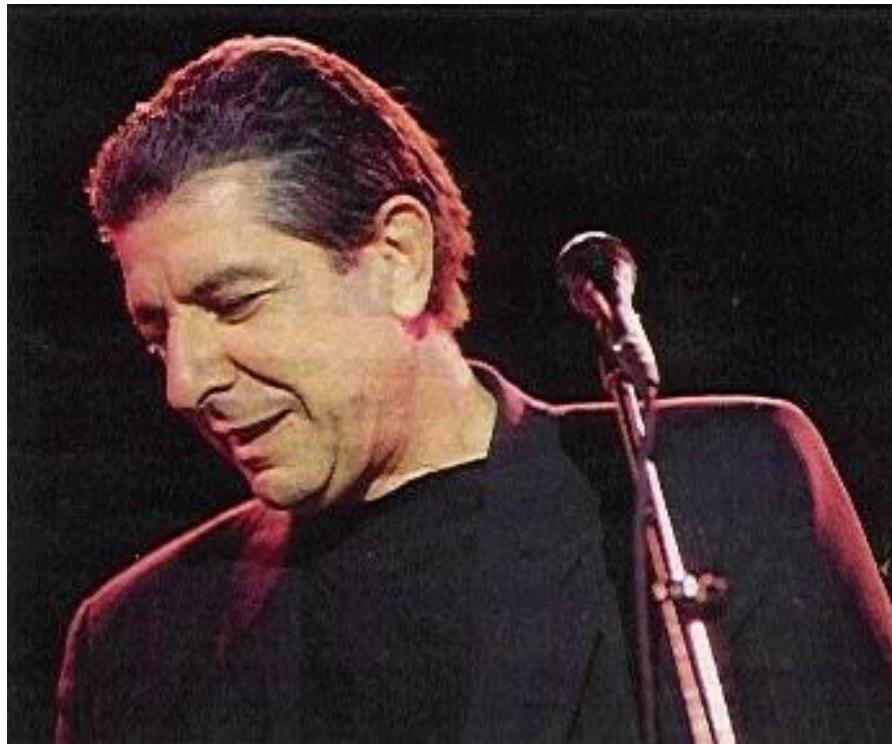
Did you take the telephone
knowing I'd sniff it immoderately
maybe heat up the plastic
to get all the crumbs of your breath

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

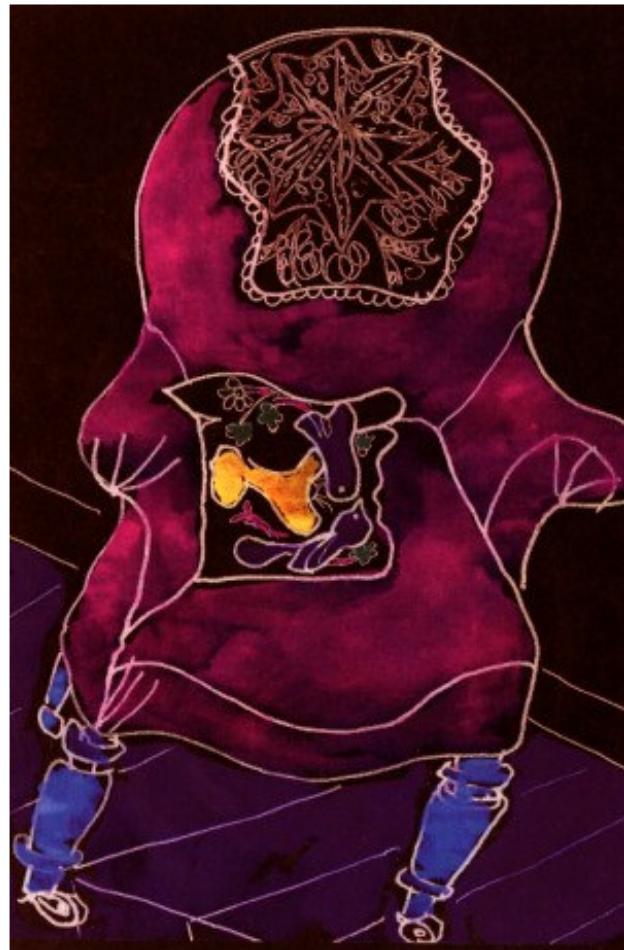
I stopped to listen, but he did not come. I began again with a sense of loss. As this sense deepened I heard him again. I stopped stopping and I stopped starting, and I allowed myself to be crushed by ignorance. This was a strategy, and didn't work at all. Much time, years were wasted in such a minor 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

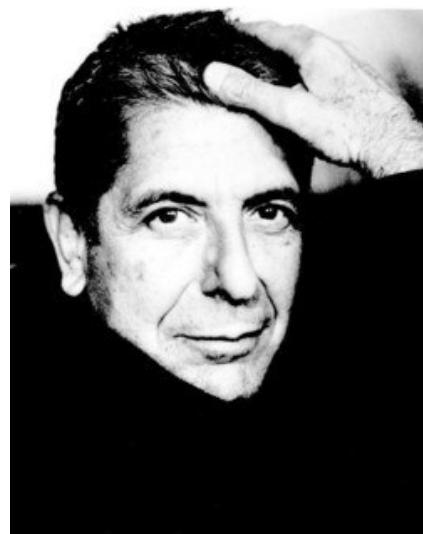
I long to hold some lady
For my love is far away,
And will not come tomorrow
And was not here today.

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 sandles.
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 eighth 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

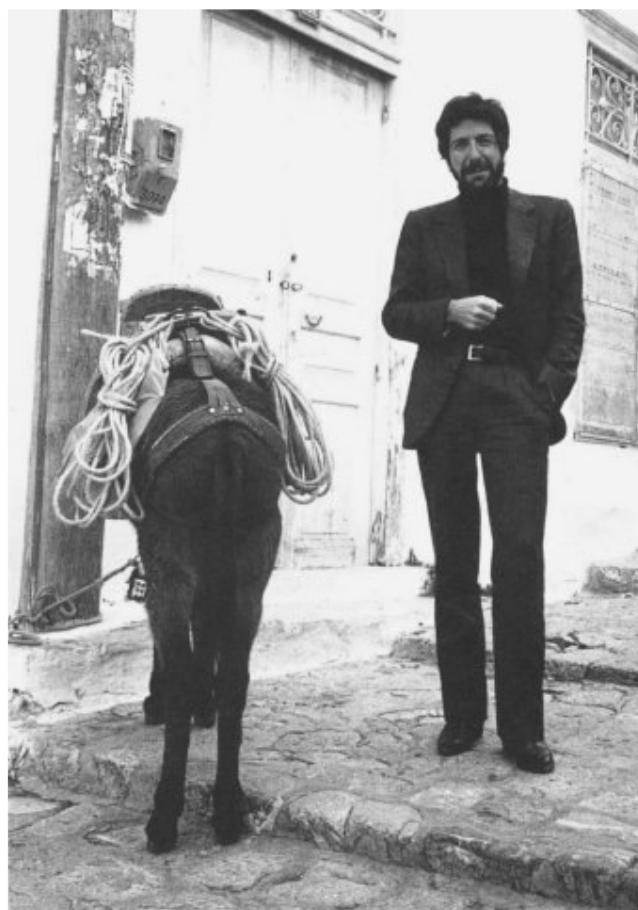
For Frank and Marian Scott

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

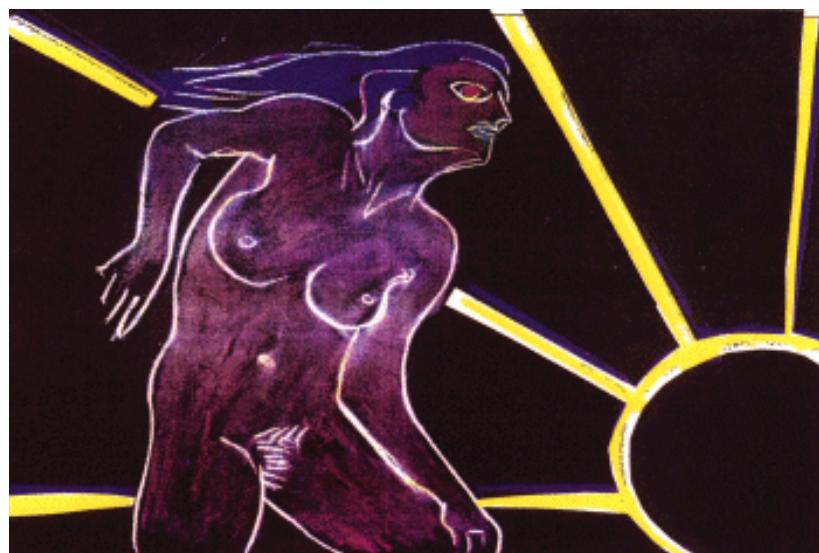


You Do Not Have To Love Me

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,
.... striken, 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

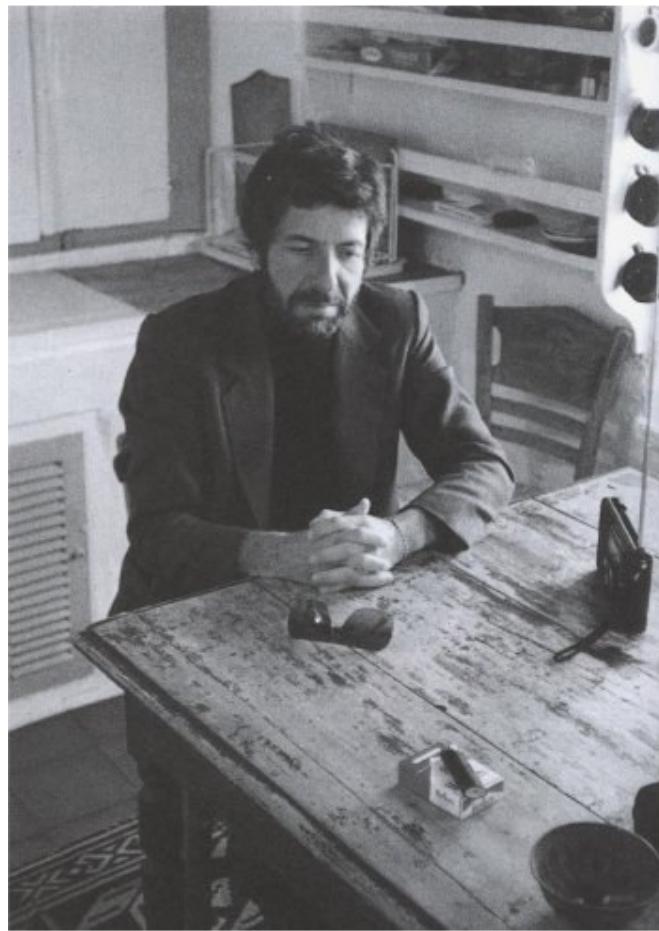
You tell me that silence
is nearer to peace than poems
but if for my gift
I brought you silence
(for I know silence)
you would say
This is not silence
this is another poem
and you would hand it back to me



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



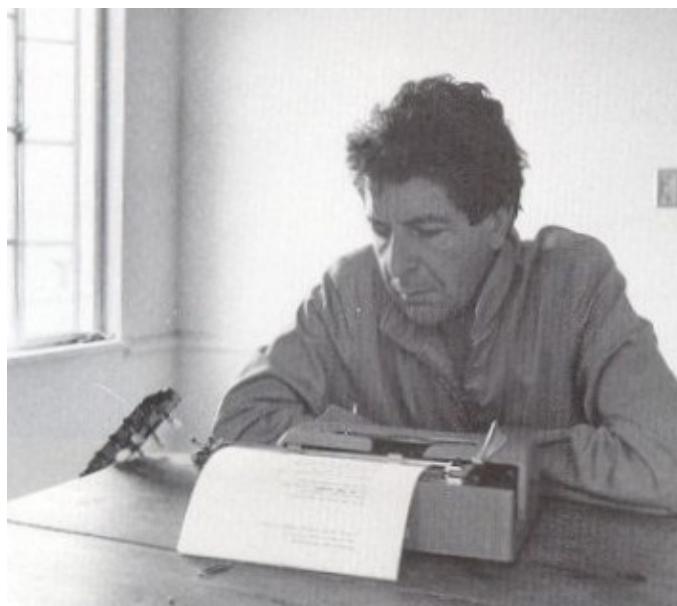
The Lovesick Monk

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*



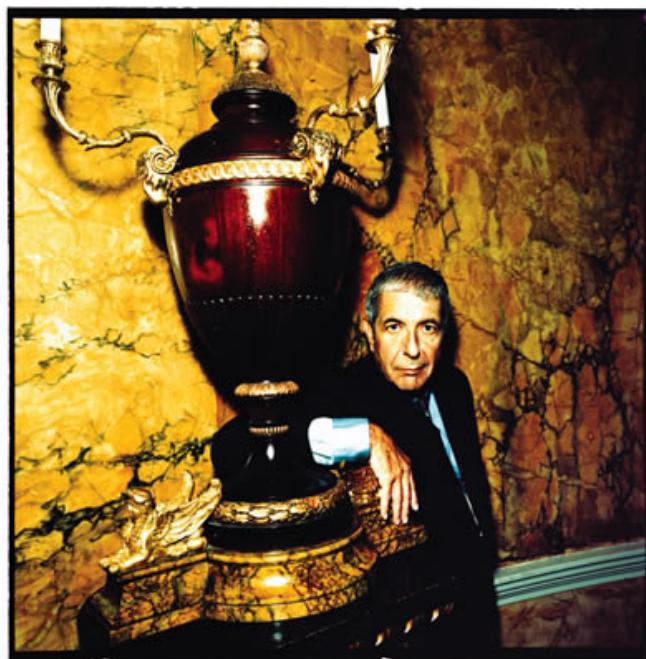
You'd Sing Too

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



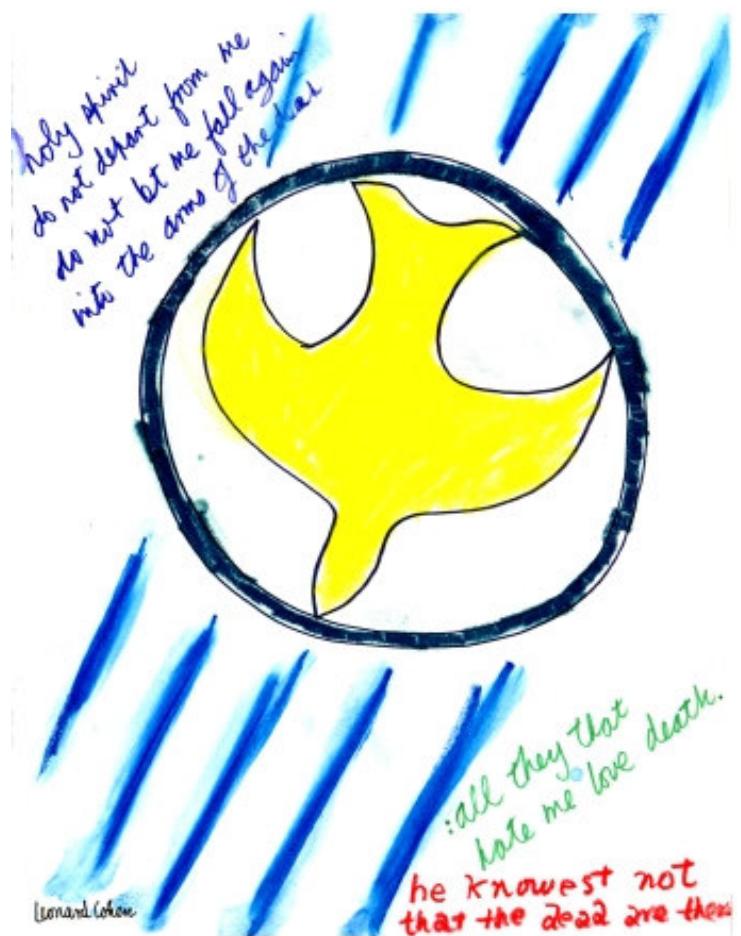
The Wind Moves

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

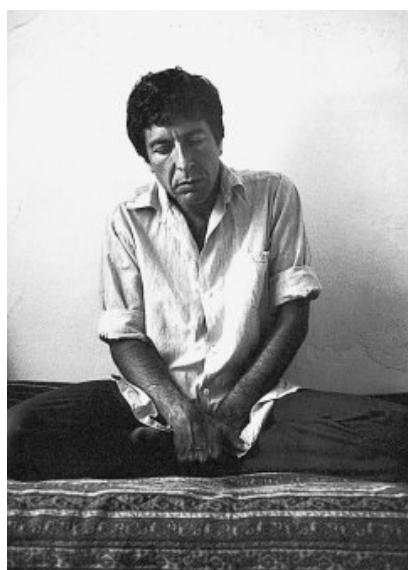
The moon is outside.
I saw the great uncomplicated thing
when I went to take a leak just now.
I should have looked at it longer.
I am a poor lover of the moon.
I see it all at once and that's it
for me and the moon.



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.

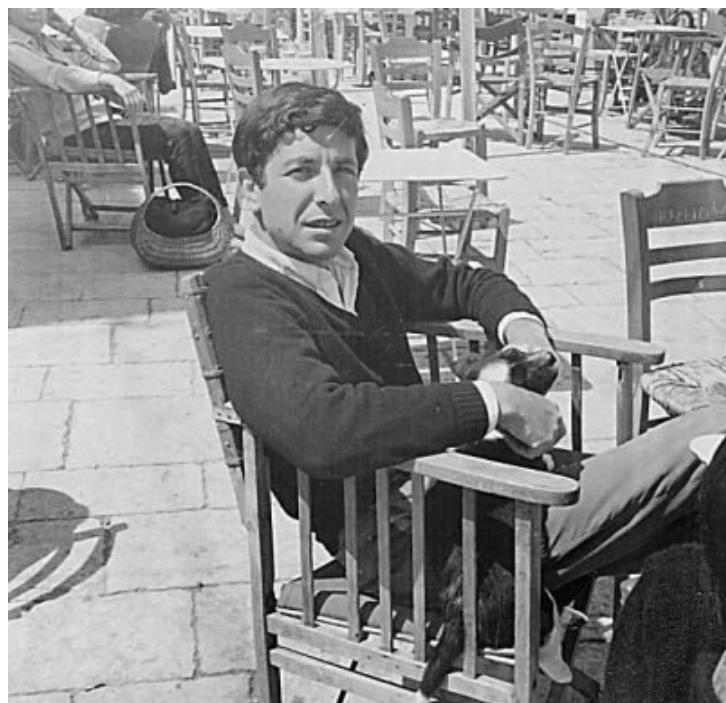
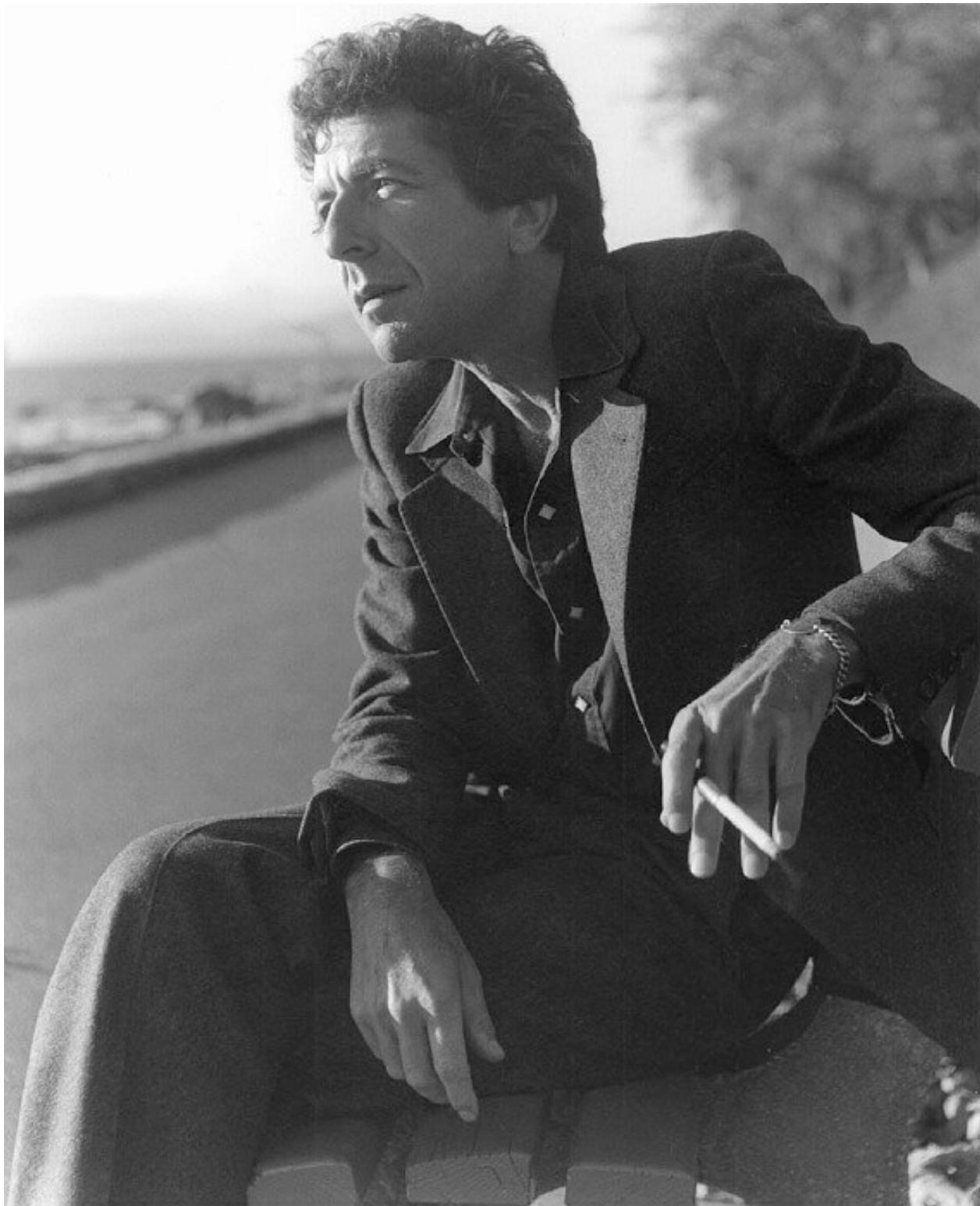
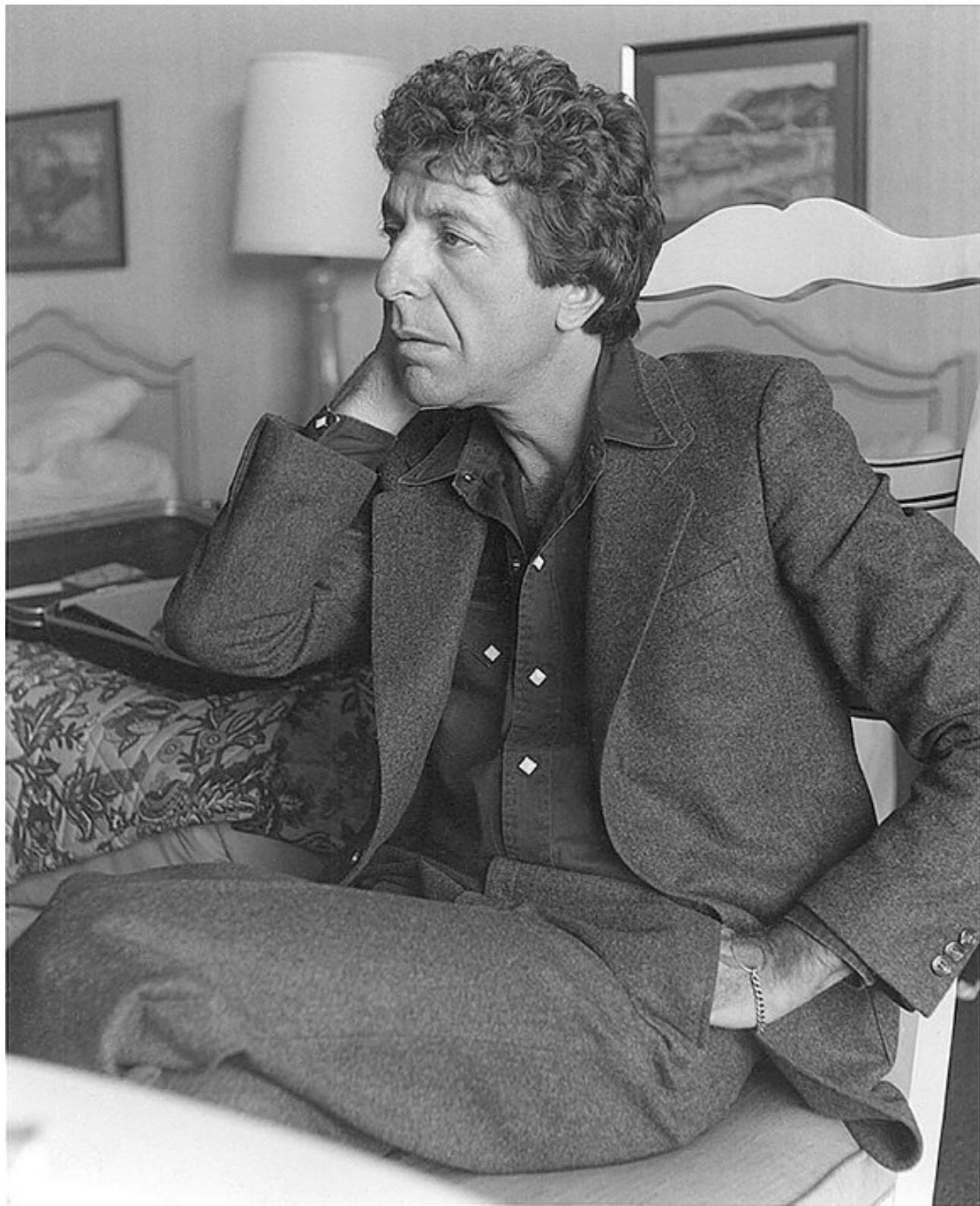


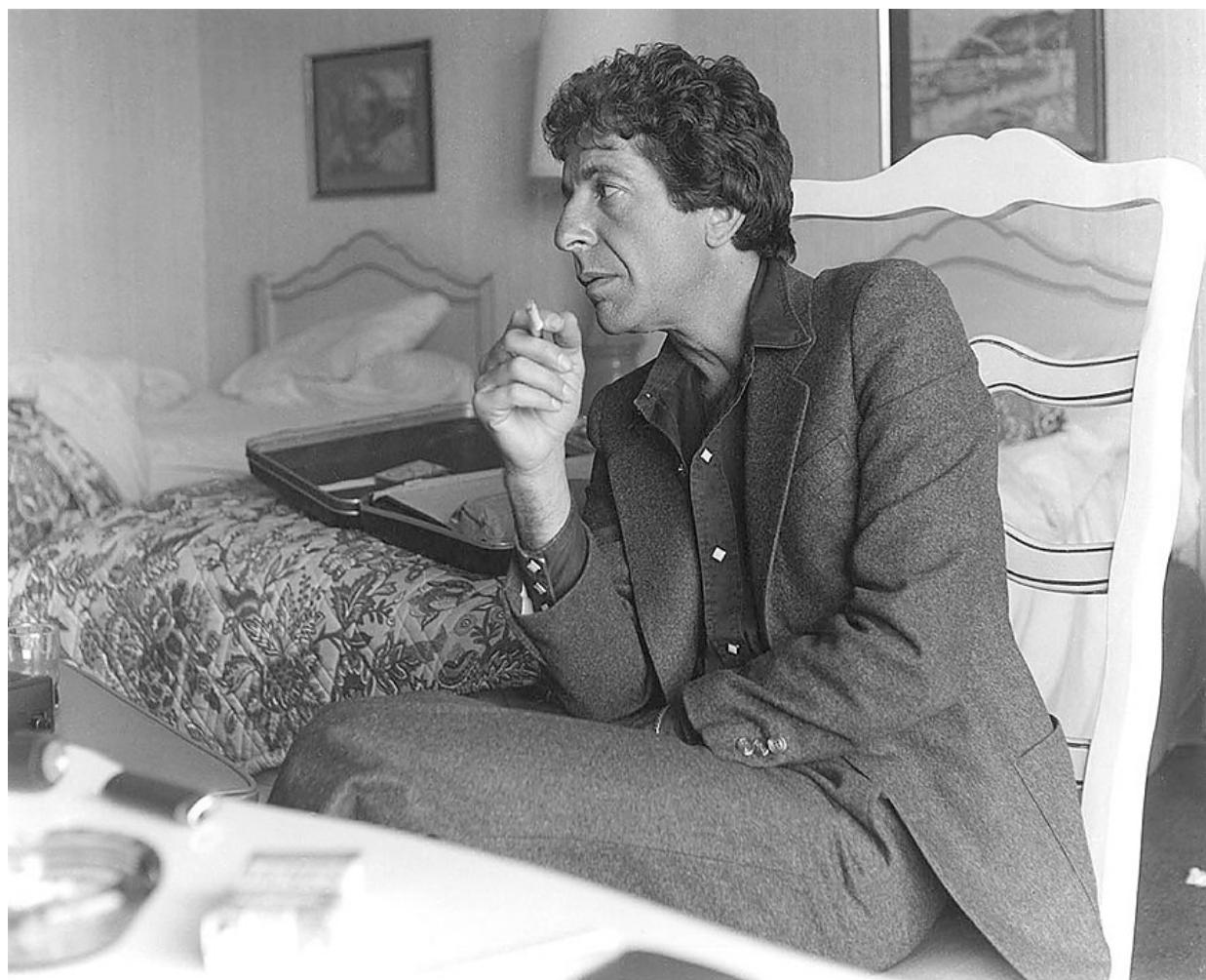
Photo Gallery

















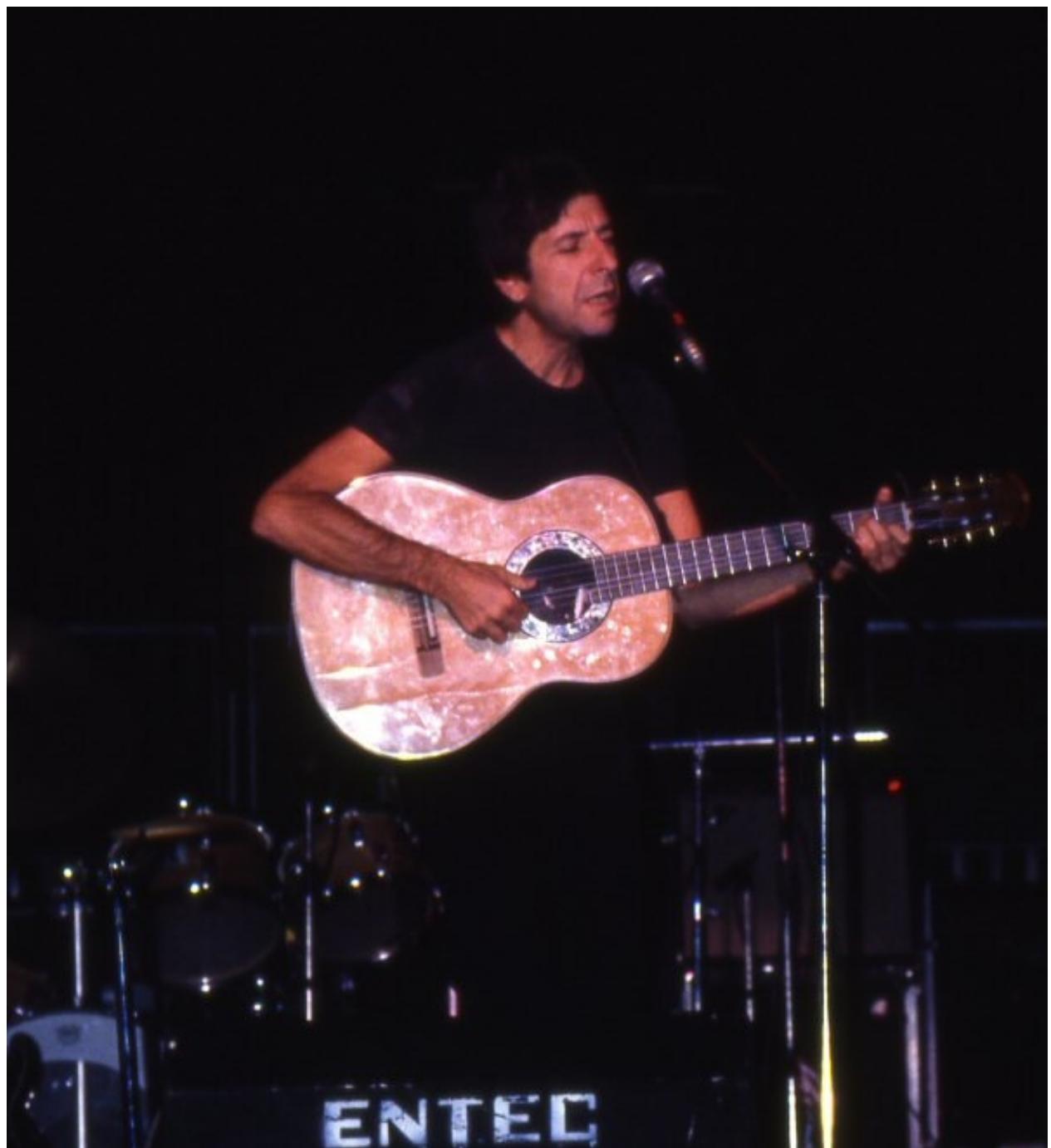
















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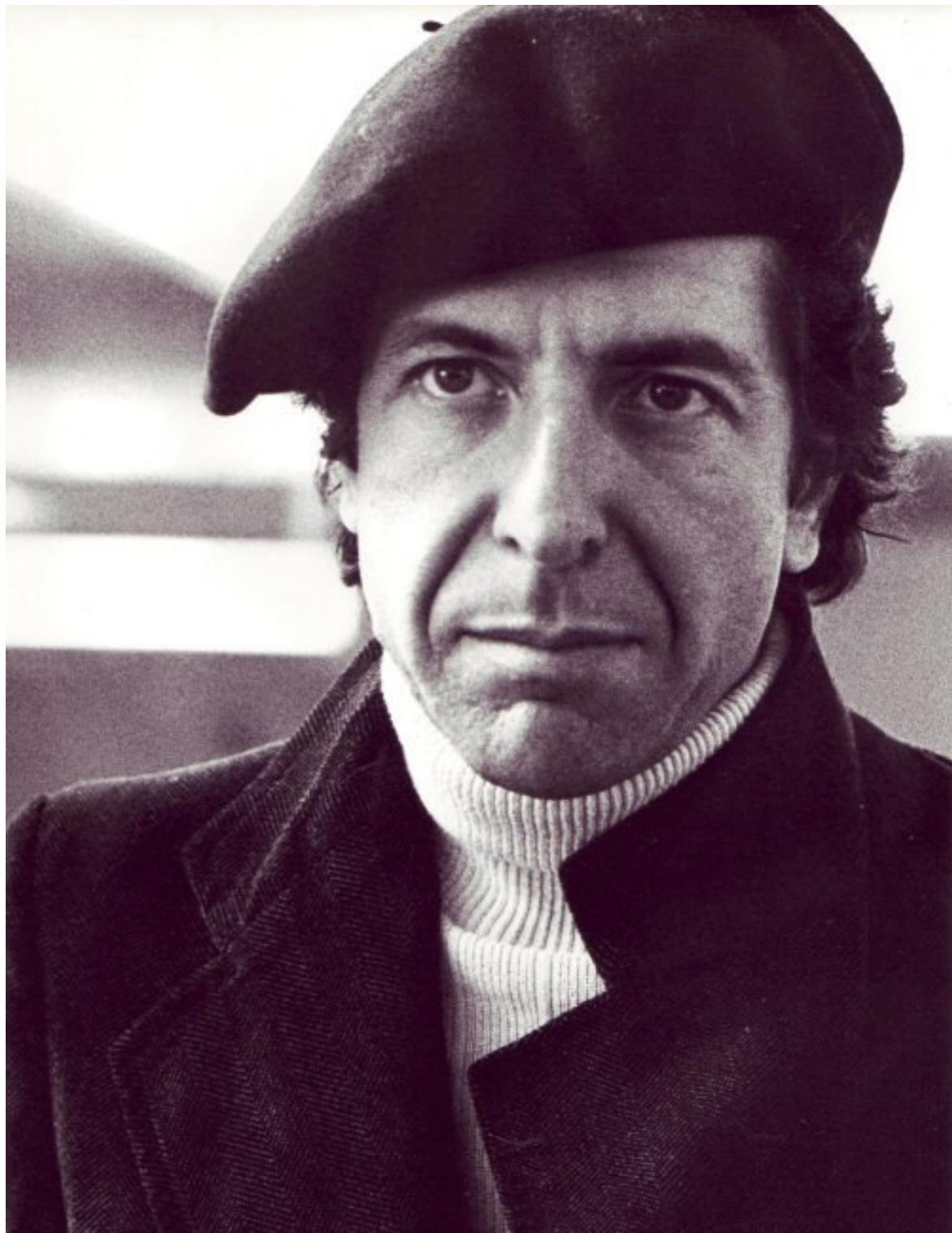




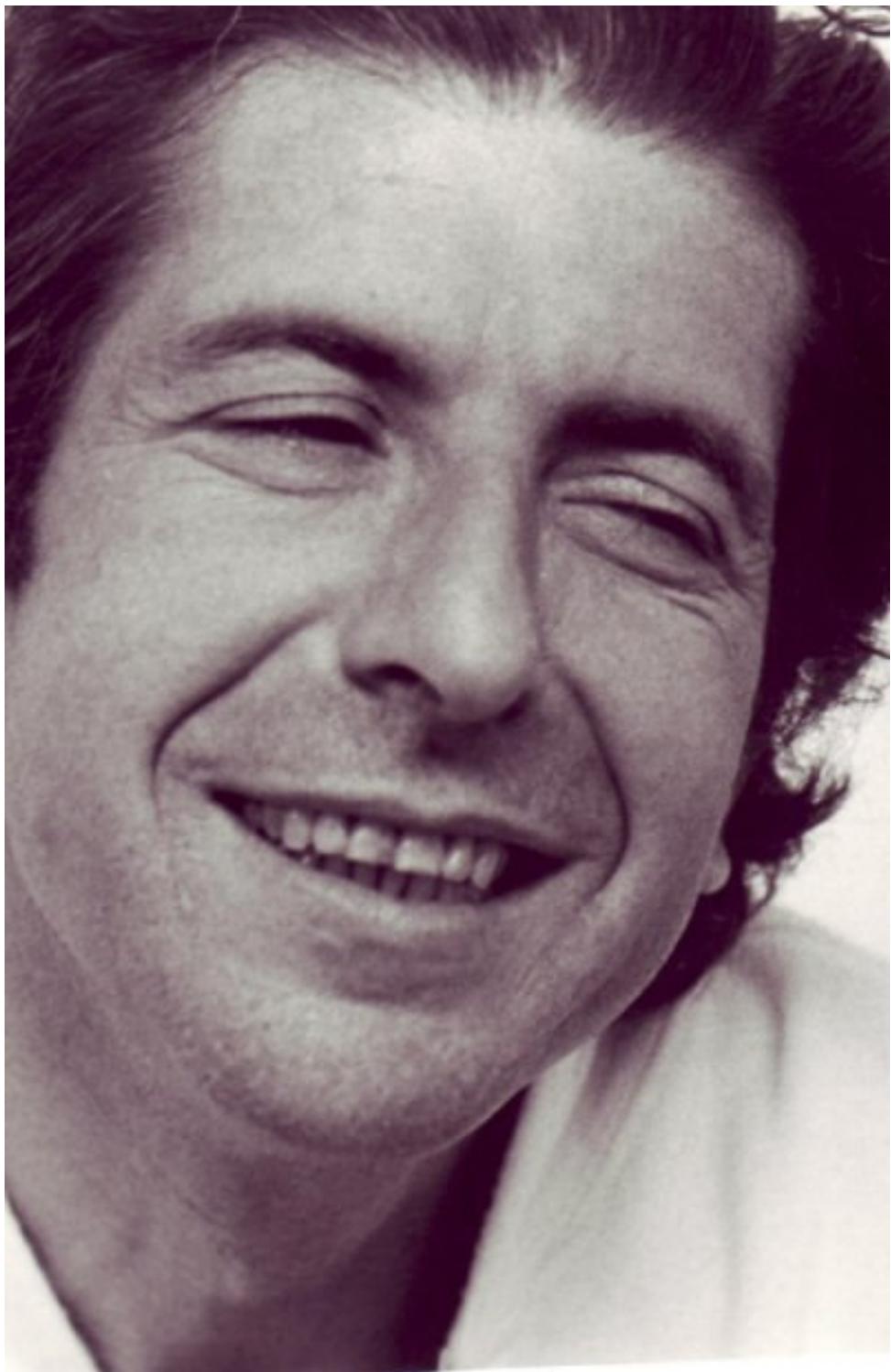




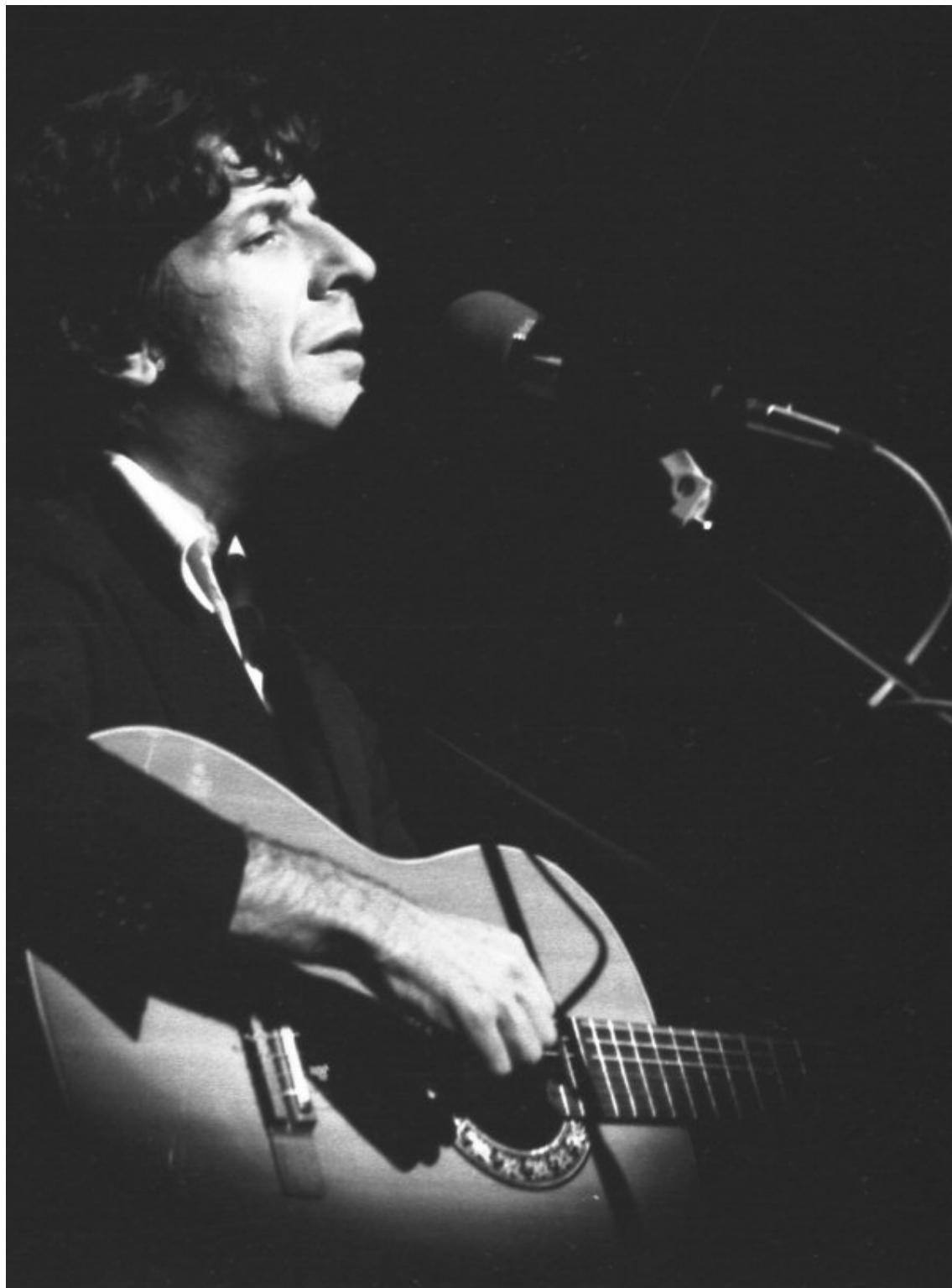






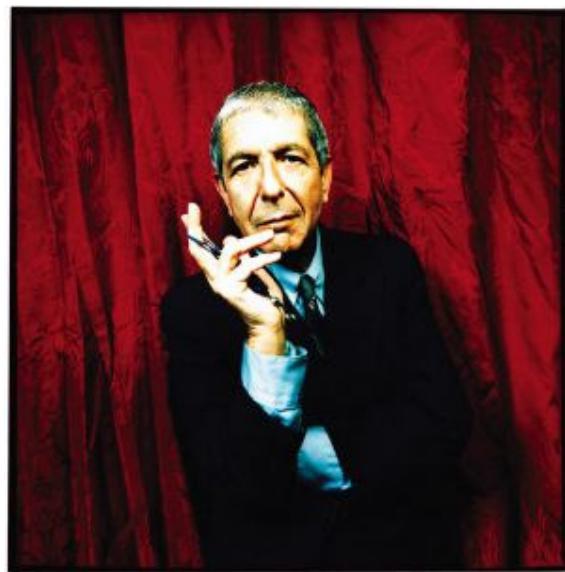




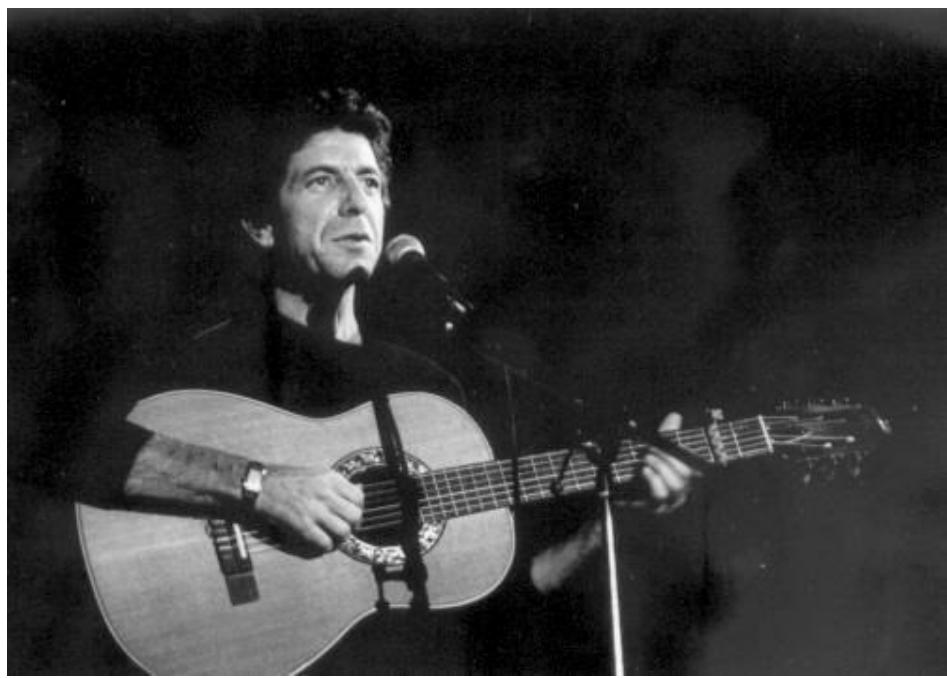




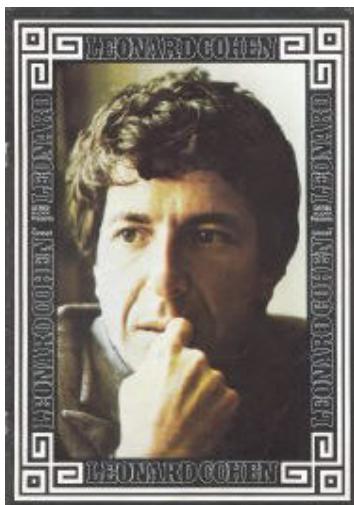
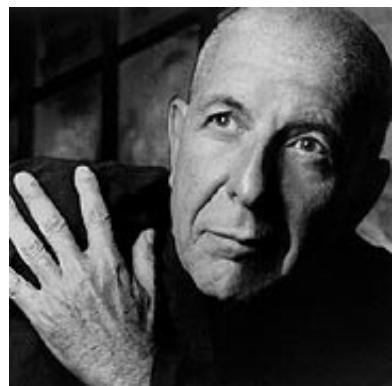
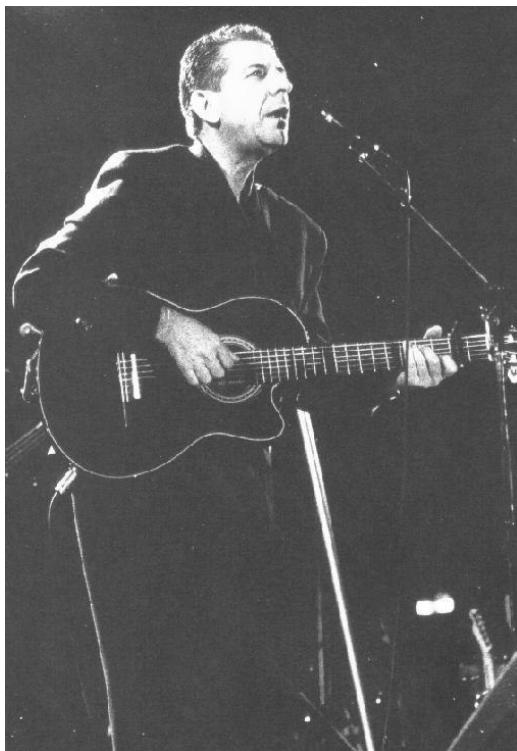


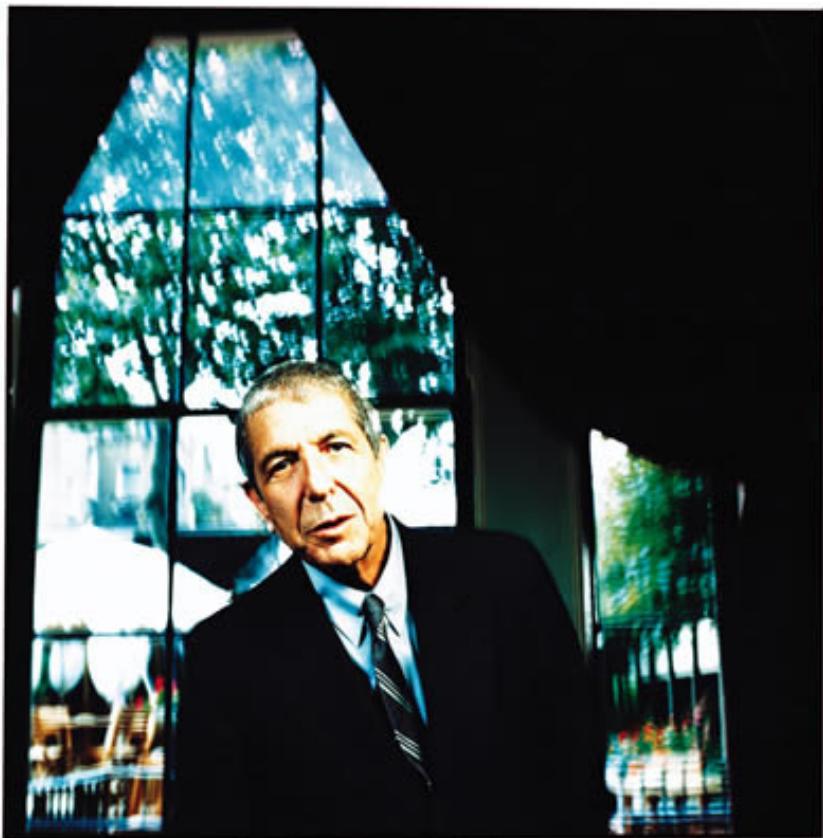
















From A Notebook

Hotel de France 1968

Hotel de France Nov. 1968

I do love to sit at this desk. Beverage number is 932-2095.

The radio says it will snow tomorrow.

God bless the men in the restaurant.

Suzanne

And you know Chopin was a sailor
when he walked upon the water
and he spent a long ^{time} ~~watching~~
from a little wooden tower

Suzanne takes you down
to her place near the river
you can hear the boats go by
if you like the night beside her
and she feeds you tea and oranges
that come all the way from China
and she ~~sells~~ ^{leads} you all the many ways
~~that you can see her lover~~
~~and you who~~ ^{thirsting} food
that you had no time to offer
and when you start to tell her
~~but you have no time to offer~~
~~because you stay here all day~~
she lets the ocean tell you
that you have been away from him
that you've always been here alone

and when he knew for certain ^{that}
that ~~drunken~~ men could see him
~~that they alone could see him~~
he said all men will be ^{gathered} down
until the storm shall free them

And he himself was broken
before the sky could open
~~forever~~ forsaken + alone
he sank beneath our wisdom
like a stone

if you are too ^{hurting}
you need feed your appetites
and you can never bring the river

and Jesus was a sailor
who moved upon the water
+ when he knew for certain
only ~~drunken~~ men could see him
he said all men will be ^{gathered} down
until the storm shall free them
he spent a long time ^{watching}
from a little wooden tower
and left in the sky could see
he said beneath our wisdom lies a stone

if you're too tired then you ¹⁰
just let you time here today
with your mind

when you know the land
was made 1000 years ago
Hannibal's song from Melancholy
it's about your major
if you are a drinking kind
I say I just don't
if you are a ^{drunk} kind
just think how much you
want

Suzanne combs her hair
in the light of the moon or the sun
and sees weans tags and pictures
from the ~~Salvation Army~~^{top}
and the sun birds like flowers
on the ~~the~~ Lady of the ~~Harbord~~^{sea}
~~she~~ are seagulls ⁱⁿ the sky
like a handful of confetti
and you when you mean to tell her
that you won't stay ~~poor~~
she will you & this ~~we~~ been
and she lets the sun catch her
take you both ~~we~~ live ~~to~~ together

Suzanne takes your hand bunch
and the leaves open to the moon
and she shows you where to look for
among the ~~garden~~ and the flowers
and the heart of the ~~sun~~^{sea} leaves
and the creation of the morning
~~before~~ leaving out for love
this will be an ~~old~~ ~~new~~ flower
and when you leave to tell her how ~~we~~ her
why the river ~~will~~ much better
~~and the~~ ^{now} ~~depth~~ of the water and all the fuses in the water
twice over & for like a number

Joan Of Arc

And ~~as~~ he took into ~~the~~ ^{his} heart
All the dust of Joan of Arc
And ~~then~~ ^{as} we clearly understood
if ~~she~~ was fire, ~~or~~ she was wood
~~she~~

~~But then she clearly understood~~
~~that she was fire and she~~

~~Then~~ ^{in pity} he ~~asked~~ ^{me} if I could
make ~~his~~ ^{the} body bright and cold
red and bright
And she could pull aslack in snow
~~My nation was to all her no~~
~~Then~~ ^{she} answered ~~yes~~ no

But I demand a miracle
So that all the souys ~~will~~ tell
That none is a victim when
he dies to free the souls of men

Mad Roger this she desired ~~inside~~
~~and soon I had her for my bride~~
~~she was my bride~~
the list of miracles to learn
that smoke will bind and fire burn

The Bridal Fire

The flames they followed Jeanne of Arc
as she went riding through the dark
No moon to keep her armour 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~~ or something white
to wear upon my ~~appatite~~ ^{waist}

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

~~And who are you, she sternly spoke~~
to the ~~fire~~ ^{fire} through the smoke
I am fire, ~~she~~ 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
then 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 Jeanne of Arc was wool

And then into his fiery heart
he took the dust of Jeanne 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 for rain~~
~~and there were some who said adieu~~
~~the way the silver bangles do~~

And there were some who said adieu
the way the silver bangles do
And there were some who wished for rain
and more than this I can't explain



This is a song for
~~long~~ ^{long} for Tom & Dore

Deep into his fiery heart
He took the dust of Joan of Arc
And there is ^{nothing} more to tell
The saint is married, the saint is married well

And there are some who must complain
and change the tale and pray for rain
I hear the fire answer them
~~as Joan~~ ^{will do} the doors up her horse & chinks inside again
I see the girl come riding, riding ^{all} to him once again
I see the maid come riding to the fire once again

The Old Revolution

I finally broke into the prison
I took my place in the chair
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
you when I cannot betray

The Stranger Song

you cannot watch another kind man
lay down his hand
like he was giving up the holy game of poker
and while he puts his
dreams to sleep you
see that there's a highway
curling in like smoke
beyond his shoulder

and while he talks to
dreams to sleep you
see that there's a highway
that that is coming in
like smoke beyond
his shoulder

Some where we will
meet the sun
beside between the trains
we're waiting for
harry to be lally & a strag

and maybe we will choose
a time to meet beneath a
bush. the sun beneath
a bridge that they are
building on some river

you tell him to come in, sit down,
but some thing makes you turn around
the door is open, you ~~can't~~ ^{can't} close
your shelter

~~you~~ ^{try to} ~~the~~ ^{the} wood, if what you should
have done before ^{my life for you} don't be afraid,
tis you, who are the stronger

~~I~~ ^{I've} been waiting,
~~I~~ ^{I was} waiting for you
I was sure we'd meet between
the trains we're waiting for,

The ~~highways~~ ^{to} ~~abandon~~ let
fellow answer
I think its time to bound another

~~Please~~ understand I do not
have a ~~slight~~ ^{slight} ~~chart~~ ^{chart} to lead me
to the heart of this or any other
if I do you know I do ^{matter} it with ^{please}

you try the handle of the wood, it opens
do not be amazed, it's you, my love,
tis you who are the stronger

Not Nobody finds you with the men
who talk too much of what's done
you learn that they all
are one big together

But you only try you are when
a man who talks to you
is lost

now you know that kind of man
~~he need his often empty hand~~
~~never had a dream to stand~~

~~he hasn't any dreams to stand~~
he has just some ~~go~~ little
looks for a manager

yet, incident, I do not have a
secret about

you loss your bag out the shelf

letting yourself ~~out~~ you
as he leaves the platform for the sleeping car
~~too~~ that's warm, you'll find
her very advertising one more shelter

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 loves

He who was a hundred loves
Field commander Cohen
woulded in the service of
protection for the young

Field Commander Cohen

he was our most important spy
parachuting acid onto
diplomatic cocktail
parties

urging Fidel Castro
to go back to poetry

Field Commander Ahon

he was our most important spy
brought down by a silver bullet
parachuting ~~accidently~~ into
diplomatic cocktail parties
urging leader Fidel Castro
to abandon his ^{beliefs} and cause
and return (and return)
~~like a man to party~~
and come back like a man
to party

Bible
always high
and ineffe^{tive}
Field Commander Jones
he was our most important spy
wounded in the line
of duty
parachuting acid
onto diplomatic
cocktail parties
urging Leader Fidel
Castro
to abandon fields and
castle
leave it all and like a
poor even money man
come back to poetry
the world of poetry

So ignorant so hurt that
he does not know his
dragon
turn this meat infested
split cargo
turn this cowards where
Catus d's

this meat infested sun
Tay
dungeon
imotent and nibe
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 always later than you think
but now it's closing time

Too late, too late
the band goes out
too late for one and all
too late for the fiddler and the honky steel
too late for the guitars on the wall

when the / boss has / got his / last one / and it / does

time

I was / holding / ^{now} ^{now} going / folding a / now it / down

day ought to write do right or ticket now
for shedding its crime

When you're listening to the fiddles
 then you're listening to your heart
 and you're listening to the words
 you never said
 to the woman that you wanted
 to do children that you wanted
 with a love so fierce and unforced

when you're listening to the fiddles
 then you're listening to the fiddles
 of the heart being answered one by one

when you're listening to the fiddles
 then you're hearing all the fiddles
 of the heart being answered
 one by one
 such as who is going to need you
 such as who is going to leave you
 and who is going to be your soul of fear

to run this righteous evening
 off the cliffs of closing time

I was drinking I was dancing
 with a very close companion
 and the fiddler doing damage
 the shadows the latters of my heart

I was drinking I was dancing
 with a very close companion
 She was lethal I was handsome
 and the fiddler was doing damage

She was wild and I was handsome
 and the fiddler of

I was drinking I was dancing
 with a very close companion
 and the fiddler driving everybody mad

I was drinking I was dancing
 and the fiddler they was happy
 and the Morris walked with jumping
 legs
 And my very close companion
 took the bandage off her swollen stomach
 and was rubbing away her cut against
 her thigh

I loved you for your beauty
& it might made a fool of me
but you were in it for your
beauty too

I loved you for your body
There's a voice that pounds

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 Euromen, 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



