

# Ballad Of The Absent Mare

Leonard Cohen

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