



**LEONARD COHEN:
I'M YOUR MAN**

Babylon Lingue Straniere Rovigo
Saturday, 14th May 2022



WORDS OF LOVE - SO LONG, MARIANNE (1967)

Marianne Ihlen had been previously married to writer Axel Jensen when she lived on Hydra, with the turquoise waters and white stone houses on the Greek isle providing ample poetic imagery. As Cohen later recalled of the island community: *“It was as if everyone was young and beautiful and full of talent—covered with a kind of gold dust. Everybody had special and unique qualities. This is, of course, the feeling of youth, but in the glorious setting of Hydra, all these qualities were magnified.”*

Jensen left Marianne shortly after their son Axel Jr. was born and fled the island. It was there, in 1960, that Ihlen met a polite young poet from Canada who was escaping the dull greys of London to finish his first novel.

“I was standing in a shop with my basket waiting to pick up bottled water and milk. And I was crying in front of a Greek lady. Then, there he was (Cohen) standing in the door way with the sun behind him, and you don’t see the face, just the contours, and so I hear his voice saying ‘would you like to join us? Come into the sun. We’re sitting outside’. He was wearing a beautiful little sixpence cap. When my eyes met his, I felt it throughout my body.”

The pair soon became infatuated with one another and she allowed him to stretch out on the terrace in the morning, writing his book, and sing lullabies to her son at night. She made him forget the doldrums of modernity and the oppression of civilization.

This is why Cohen considered her his ‘muse’, a term he uttered with the highest of praise. Once in Montreal, Cohen eventually scraped together sufficient funds and sent Ihlen a telegram in the autumn of 1961: *“Have house. All I need is my woman and her son. Love Leonard.”*

She and her by now 18-month-old son joined him in Montreal, where Cohen increasingly became a surrogate father to Axel Joachim. The three lived in Canada for one year before returning to Hydra in 1963, where they spent some more years together.



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.

Now so long, Marianne, it's time that we began
to laugh and cry
and cry and laugh about it all again.

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.

Now so long, Marianne, it's time that we began
to laugh and cry
and cry and laugh about it all again.

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.

Now so long, Marianne, it's time that we began
to laugh and cry
and cry and laugh about it all again.

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.

Now so long, Marianne, it's time that we began
to laugh and cry
and cry and laugh about it all again.

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!

Now so long, Marianne, it's time that we began
to laugh and cry
and cry and laugh about it all again.



WORDS OF INSPIRATION - YOU GOT ME SINGING (2014)

You got me singing
Even tho' _____
You got me singing
The only song _____
You got me singing
Ever since _____
You got me thinking
Of the places _____

You got me singing
Even though _____
You got me thinking
I'd like to _____
You got me singing
Even tho' it all looks grim
You got me singing
The Hallelujah hymn

You got me singing
Like a prisoner _____
You got me singing
Like my pardon's in _____
You got me wishing
Our little love would last
You got me thinking
Like those people _____

You got me singing
Even though the world is gone
You got me thinking
I'd like to carry on
You got me singing
Even tho' it all _____
You got me singing
The Hallelujah song

Howard Cohen

WORDS OF INFINITE PASSION - I'M YOUR MAN (1988)

If you want a lover _____ *farò tutto ciò che mi chiedi*

And if you want another kind of love _____ *indosserò una maschera per te*

If you want a partner, _____ *prendimi per mano!*
or if you want to strike me down in anger
Here I stand: I'm your man

If you want a boxer _____ *salirò sul ring per te*

And if you want a doctor, I'll examine every precious inch of you

If you want a driver, _____ *salta su!*
Or if you want to take me for a ride
You know damn well that 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 all of 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 _____ *sparirò per te*

If you want a father for your child
Or if you want to walk with me another mile across the burning sand
I'm your man

In 2016, Leonard penned an emotional final letter to her muse Marianne, just a few days before her July 28th death, as Ihlen's friend Jan Christian Mollestad revealed to the CBC.

According to Mollestad, after he informed Cohen of Ihlen's looming death from leukemia, the legendary singer-songwriter-poet responded two hours later with this letter, which Mollestad then read to Ihlen.

“Well Marianne it's come to this time when we are really so old and our bodies are falling apart and I think I will follow you very soon.

Know that I am so close behind you that if you stretch out your hand, I think you can reach mine.

And you know that I've always loved you for your beauty and your wisdom, but I don't need to say anything more about that because you know all about that.

But now, I just want to wish you a very good journey. Goodbye old friend.

Endless love, see you down the road.

Leonard.”



*Marianne Ihlen (Larkollen - Norway, 18 May 1935 - Oslo, 28 July 2016)
Leonard Cohen (Montréal, 21 Sept 1934 – Los Angeles, 7 Nov 2016)*

WORDS OF FAREWELL

HEY, THAT'S NO WAY TO SAY GOODBYE	MISSION
<p data-bbox="159 448 1005 705">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</p> <p data-bbox="159 750 941 1108">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</p> <p data-bbox="159 1153 997 1444">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</p>	<p data-bbox="1037 448 1396 593">I've worked at my work I've slept at my sleep I've died at my death and now I can leave.</p> <p data-bbox="1037 638 1388 772">Leave what is needed and leave what is full need in the spirit and need in the whole.</p> <p data-bbox="1037 817 1388 963">Beloved, I'm yours as I have always been, from marrow to pore from longing to skin.</p> <p data-bbox="1037 1008 1364 1153">Now that my mission has come to its end I pray I'm forgiven the life that I've led</p> <p data-bbox="1037 1198 1364 1332">the body I chased it chased me as well. My longing's a place my dying a sail.</p>