

Ballad Of The Absent Mare
Leonard Cohen

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Say a prayer for the cowboy, his mare s run away

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And he ll walk till he finds her, his darling, his stray

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But the river s in flood and the roads are awash

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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 and 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 and he tracks her all day
Oh blind to her presence except to compare
His injury here with her punishment there

Then at home on his branch in the highest tree
A songbird sings out so suddenly
Oh the sun is warm and the soft winds ride
On the willow trees by the riverside

Oh the world is sweet and 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 and 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 their 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
Wither thou goest, I will go
And they turn as one and they head for the plain
No need for the whip, 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