

Story of Isaac (Paris Theatre, London 1968)

Leonard Cohen

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 coldHe 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 goldWell, 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 mineThought 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 hideYou 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 GodYou 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 wordAnd 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 canWhen 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

Songwriters

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