

To A Teacher

Leonard Cohen

[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.

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