

## **Cohen Leonard**

# **"The Stranger Song"**

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It's true that all the men you knew were dealers  
who said they were through with dealing  
Every time you gave them shelter  
I know that kind of man  
It's hard to hold the hand of anyone  
who is reaching for the sky just to surrender.  
And then sweeping up the jokers that he left behind  
you find he did not leave you very much  
not even laughter  
Like any dealer he was watching for the card  
that is so high and wild  
he'll never need to deal another  
He was just some Joseph looking for a manger  
He was just some Joseph looking for a manger.  
And then leaning on your window sill  
he'll say one day you caused his will  
to weaken with your love and warmth and shelter  
And then taking from his wallet  
an old schedule of trains, he'll say  
I told you when I came I was a stranger  
I told you when I came I was a stranger.  
But now another stranger seems to want you to ignore  
his dreams  
as though they were the burden of some other  
O you've seen that man before  
his golden arm dispatching cards  
but now it's rusted from the elbow to the finger  
And he wants to trade the game he plays for shelter  
Yes he wants to trade the game he knows for shelter.  
You hate to watch another tired man  
lay down his hand  
like he was giving up the holy game of poker  
And while he talks his dreams to sleep  
you notice there's a highway  
that is curling up like smoke above his shoulder  
It's curling up like smoke above his shoulder.  
You tell him to come in sit down  
but something makes you turn around  
The door is open you can't close you shelter  
You try the handle of the road  
It opens do not be afraid  
It's you my love, you who are the stranger

It is you my love, you who are the stranger.  
Well, I've been waiting, I was sure  
we'd meet between the trains we're waiting for  
I think it's time to board another  
Please understand, I never had a secret chart  
to get me to the heart of this  
or any other matter  
Well he talks like this  
you don't know what he's after  
When he speaks like this,  
you don't know what he's after.  
Let's meet tomorrow if you chose  
upon the shore, beneath the bridge  
that they are building on some endless river  
Then he leaves the platform  
for the sleeping car that's warm  
You realize, he's only advertising one more shelter  
And it comes to you, he never was a stranger  
And you say ok the bridge or someplace later.  
And then sweeping up the jokers  
that he left behind  
you find he did not leave you very much  
not even laughter  
Like any dealer he was watching for the card  
that is so high and wild  
he'll never need to deal another  
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He was just some Joseph looking for a manger.  
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