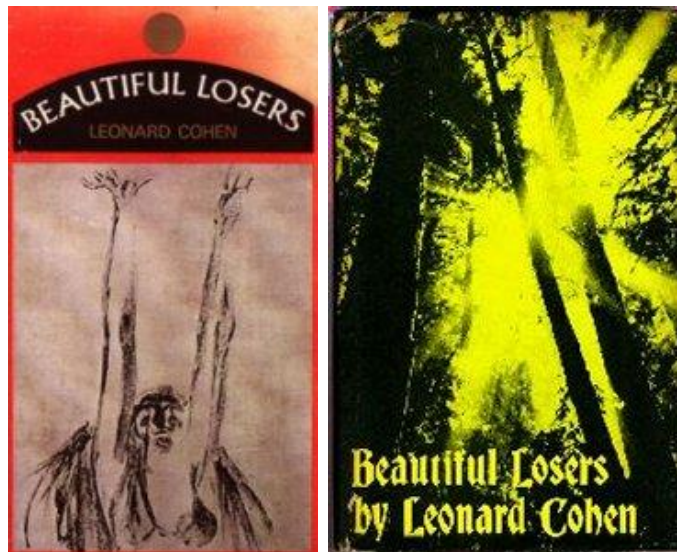


BEAUTIFUL LOSERS



Title **Beautiful Losers**

Year published **1966**

Publisher **McClelland And Stewart Ltd., Toronto**

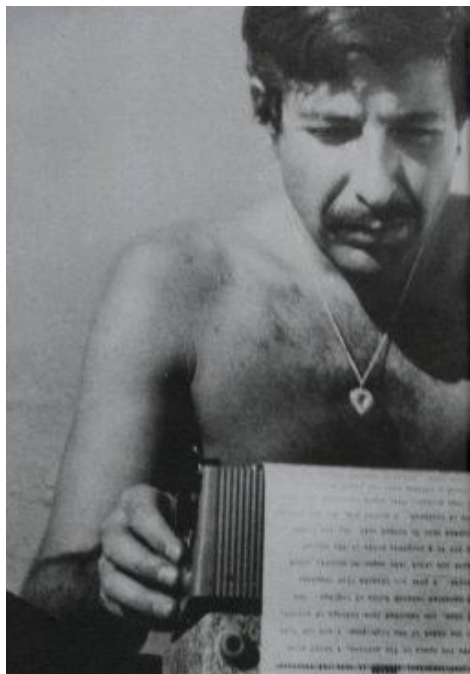
Pages **about 250**

Notes

Summary

Cohen's second (and last) novel remains, thirty years later, one of the most radical and extraordinary works of fiction ever published in Canada. ♦ Visionary and obscene, profound and ridiculous, beautiful and hilarious, it is the most complete and unsettling summation of Cohen's early themes and obsessions. ♦ History, sex, politics, religion, and poetry merge into an intricate dance of power relationships in which nothing can be taken for granted except the transcendent beauty of loss. ♦ It is a book that readers too can easily get lost in -- and maybe Cohen did so himself. Certainly, he has never been tempted to return to anything even remotely similar. ♦ ♦ ♦

*Summary written for The Leonard Cohen Files
by professor Stephen Scobie, copyright © 1997.*



Leonard at his Olivetti typewriter, writing Beautiful Losers on Hydra in mid-1960s

Photo source: *"Herewith: Music, Words and Photographs. Songs of Leonard Cohen"*

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More about [Leonard's life on Hydra](#), and many photos!

From Leonard Cohen's archive:

Dear Leonard Cohen:

I am Fan Hongsheng, the editor with Yilin Press, China, who wrote to you last time asking you questions about your book BEAUTIFUL LOSERS. Do you mind writing a letter (instead of a preface) to Chinese readers of your book which is to appear in several months? If you have some good reviews of BEAUTIFUL LOSERS, would you mind sending some to us?

*Sincerely yours,
Fan Hongsheng
Nanjing, China*

A NOTE TO THE READER

Dear Reader,

Thank you for coming to this book. It is an honor, and a surprise, to have the frenzied thoughts of my youth expressed in Chinese characters. I sincerely appreciate the efforts of the translator and the publishers in bringing this curious work to your attention. I hope you will find it useful or amusing.

When I was young, my friends and I read and admired the old Chinese poets. Our ideas of love and friendship, of wine and distance, of poetry itself, were much affected by those ancient songs. Much later, during the years when I practiced as a Zen monk under the guidance of my teacher Kyozan Joshu Roshi, the thrilling sermons of Lin Chi (Rinzai) were studied every day. So you can understand, Dear Reader, how privileged I feel to be able to graze, even for a moment, and with such meager credentials, on the outskirts of your tradition.

This is a difficult book, even in English, if it is taken too seriously. May I suggest that you skip over the parts you don't like? Dip into it here and there. Perhaps there will be a passage, or even a

page, that resonates with your curiosity. After a while, if you are sufficiently bored or unemployed, you may want to read it from cover to cover. In any case, I thank you for your interest in this odd collection of jazz riffs, pop-art jokes, religious kitsch and muffled prayer ♦ an interest which indicates, to my thinking, a rather reckless, though very touching, generosity on your part.

Beautiful Losers was written outside, on a table set among the rocks, weeds and daisies, behind my house on Hydra, an island in the Aegean Sea. I lived there many years ago. It was a blazing hot summer. I never covered my head. What you have in your hands is more of a sunstroke than a book.

Dear Reader, please forgive me if I have wasted your time.

Los Angeles, February 27, 2000

Leonard Cohen

Dear Leonard Cohen:

Thank you very much for your efforts. Your NOTE TO THE READERS is received. It is a interesting piece to Chinese readers, I think. Thank you indeed for your efforts. If you have something you need to tell me or if you have some requests, please do not hesitate to let me know.

*Yours,
Fan Hongsheng*

