



So Long, Marianne: A Love Story ? includes rare material by Leonard Cohen

By Kari Hesthamar

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At 22, Marianne Ihlen travelled to the Greek island of Hydra with writer Axel Jensen. Axel wrote and Marianne kept house, until the day Axel abandoned her and their newborn son for another woman. One day while Marianne is shopping in a little grocery store, in walks a man who asks her to join him and some friends outside at their table. He introduces himself as Leonard Cohen, then a little-known writer.

Thus starts a love story that lasts through most of the 1960s and which takes them to Oslo, Montreal and New York and back to Hydra. Meanwhile, Cohen writes “So Long, Marianne,” one of the most beautiful love songs of all time. Peppereed with previously unpublished poems, letters, and photographs, *So Long, Marianne* is an intimate, honest account of Marianne’s journey and a portrait of the international artists’ colony on Hydra in the 1960s.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

As any Leonard Cohen fan knows, “So Long, Marianne” is one of his best songs, and it is about a real person. Cohen met Marianne Ihlen (then Marianne Jensen) in 1960 on the Greek island of Hydra, where her husband had abandoned her and her infant son for another woman. “The coming together of Marianne and Leonard was like a slow waltz,” writes Hesthamar. Ultimately, Cohen invited both mother and son to live with him back in Montreal. She accepted and became one of his literary muses. But this is also Marianne’s story, from her youth in Oslo, her marriage, her life on Hydra and with Cohen in Montreal. Later, she visited the restless Cohen when he was living at the Chelsea Hotel in New York, only to be told by him that his bohemian world was no place for a young mother. Hesthamar reports that Marianne moved back to Norway in the early 1970s to follow her own path. A quirky and unusual addition to the Cohen files, with previously unpublished poems, letters, and photographs. --June Sawyers

Review

“*So Long, Marianne* will appeal primarily to [Cohen’s] legion of die-hard fans wanting to fill in biographical gaps and read some of his previously unpublished poems. Yet the book’s great delight is Hesthamar’s sun-drenched evocation of life in Hydra during the years of its transformation into a Bohemian idyll for poets, painters, and musicians from around the world.” — *Quill & Quire*

“A vivid glimpse of life on the Greek island of Hydra where artists traveled to live, love and escape convention in the heady ’60s, with excursions to Norway, Montreal and New York, this thoughtful story of a young woman finding her own way in and out of love is a good read in its own right. The glimpse into Cohen’s memories and heart is a particular treat for his fans, and they will be pleased to find several previously unpublished poems.” — *Publishers Weekly*

“A quirky and unusual addition to the Cohen files, with previously unpublished poems, letters, and photographs.” — *Booklist*

“While many muses’ identities are confined to their role in the art they sparked, Hesthamar’s thoughtful and empathetic biography centers on the woman herself, elevating her from an inspiration to a full-fledged human, interesting for her own life, on her own merits . . . Marianne is ultimately a likable and beautifully imperfect protagonist. It’s the mark of a wonderful biography that we, too, fall in love.” — *Shelf Awareness for Readers*

“Richly textured and revealing . . . Readers will be drawn to Ihlen as representative of a young woman’s struggles in the changing society and artistic milieu of her time. Her story will provide an additional perspective for those familiar with Cohen’s work. Rare letters, poems, and photographs enhance the text.” — *Library Journal*

“*So Long Marianne* is an empathetic telling of a love story between a man who would be famous and a young woman trying to make her way in a complicated world.” — *Lacombe Globe*

“Hestamar sketches Marianne clearly: her insecurities and earned jealousies, her beauty and blandness, her feminine wrestling between art and domesticity . . . The photographs, folded like memories into the pages,

show a woman whose eyes are filled with undeniable fire and presence.” — *Scene Magazine*

“It is an interesting biography about an interesting person who lead an interesting life in interesting places. Reading about life on Hydra was fascinating and more than 35 black-and-white photos complement the text.” — Simco.com Blog

“A bohemian time and place so tantalizingly evoked by the famous snap on the back cover of *Songs From a Room*, and a mythologized affair that received a lasting benediction from the song that provides the book with its title, are explored in greater depth than the standard biographies allow through interviews with both Ihlen and Cohen. As a considerable bonus, there are some hitherto unseen Cohen poems.” — *Montreal Gazette*

From the Back Cover

The story of the enigmatic woman who captured the hearts of two extraordinary artists ? now in trade paper

At 22, Marianne Ihlen travelled to the Greek island of Hydra with writer Axel Jensen. While Axel wrote, Marianne kept house, until Axel abandoned her and their newborn son for another woman. One day while Marianne was shopping in a little grocery store, in walked a man who asked her to join him and some friends outside at their table. He introduced himself as Leonard Cohen, then a little-known Canadian poet.

Complemented by previously unpublished poems, letters, and photographs, *So Long, Marianne* is an intimate, honest account of Marianne’s life story ? from her youth in Oslo, her romance with Axel, to her life in an international artists colony on Hydra in the 1960s, and beyond. The subject of one of the most beautiful love songs of all time, Marianne Ihlen proves to be more than a muse to Axel and Leonard; her journey of self-discovery, romance, and heartache is lovingly recounted in *So Long, Marianne*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Bruce Zimmerman:

Here thing why this *So Long, Marianne: A Love Story ?* includes rare material by Leonard Cohen are different and reliable to be yours. First of all reading through a book is good nonetheless it depends in the content than it which is the content is as delicious as food or not. *So Long, Marianne: A Love Story ?* includes rare material by Leonard Cohen giving you information deeper as different ways, you can find any e-book out there but there is no e-book that similar with *So Long, Marianne: A Love Story ?* includes rare material by Leonard Cohen. It gives you thrill looking at journey, its open up your current eyes about the thing that will happened in the world which is maybe can be happened around you. It is possible to bring everywhere like in park your car, café, or even in your way home by train. Should you be having difficulties in bringing the imprinted book maybe the form of *So Long, Marianne: A Love Story ?* includes rare material by Leonard Cohen in e-book can be your alternative.

Ira Gonzalez:

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Kimberly Wheatley:

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