

Little People, BIG DREAMS™

Leonard Cohen



Written by Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara

Illustrated by Agathe Bray-Bourret

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LEONARD COHEN

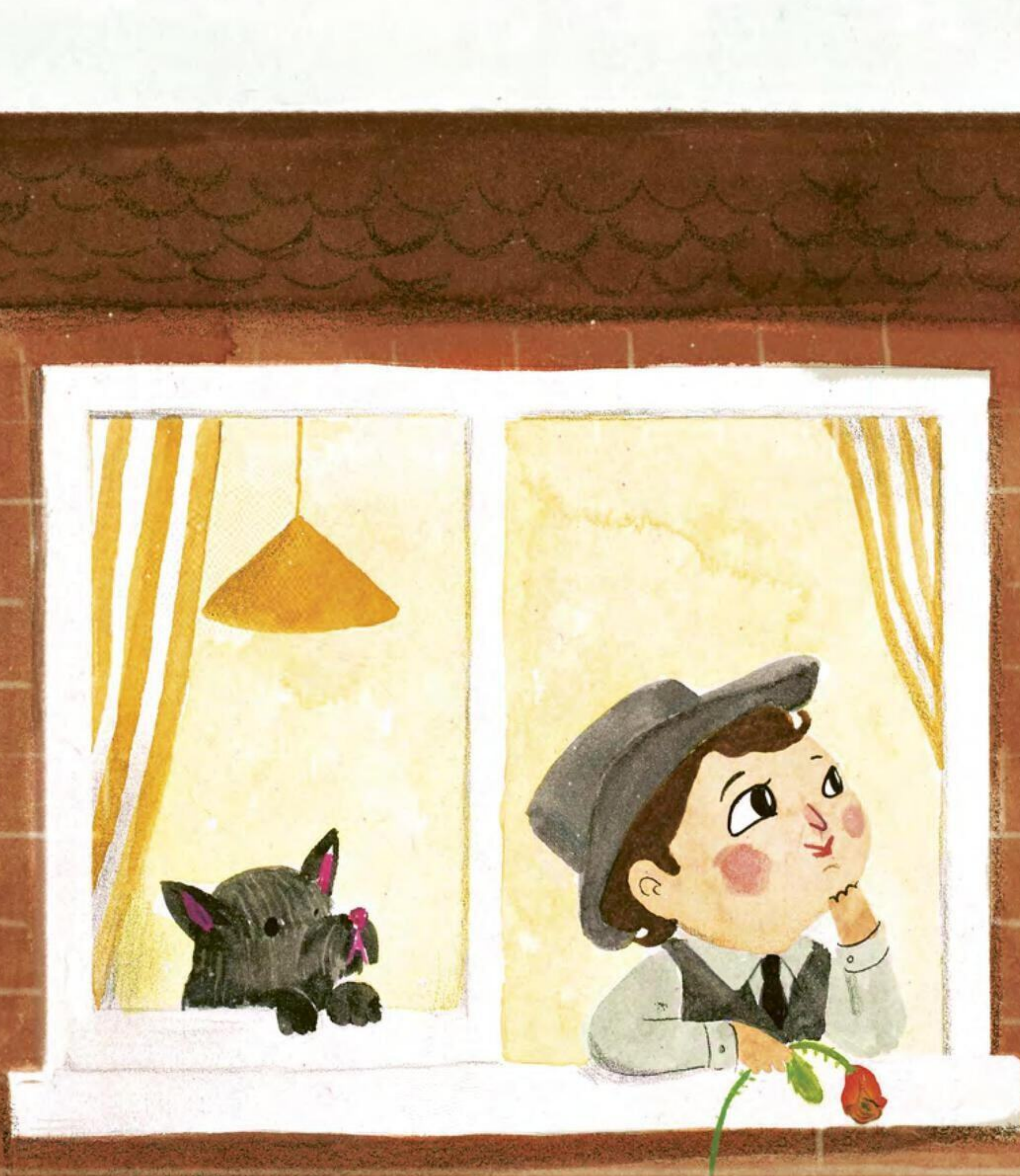
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Frances Lincoln
Children's Books

Once upon a time on the island of Montreal, Canada, there was a boy named Leonard who saw beauty where others couldn't. Whether it was a bird on a rusty wire or the stem of a rose a little too long, it was all breathtaking to him.







Every day, Leonard lost himself in the pages of his favorite comic books. And on Saturdays, at the synagogue, he listened to ancient songs and poems in wonder. The power of all these stories inspired him to find his own voice.

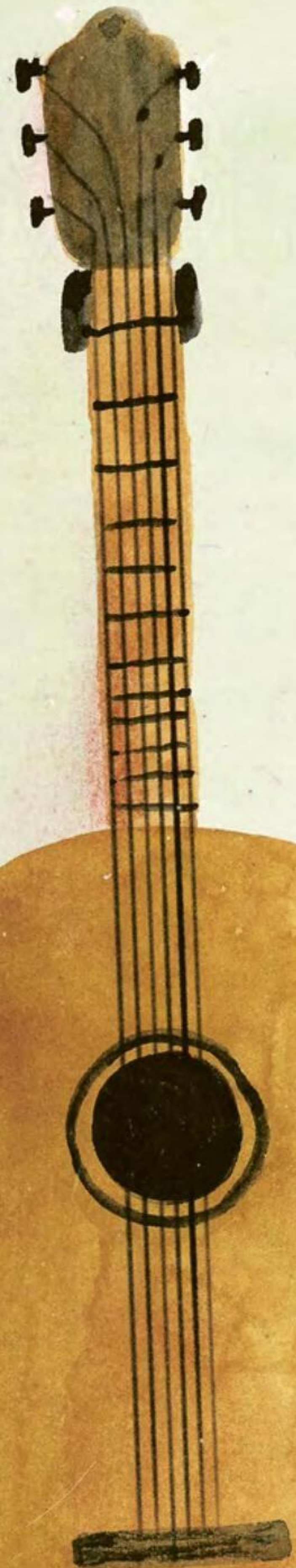






Sadly, his father died when he was nine. On the day of the funeral, Leonard took one of his dad's bow ties, tucked a message for him inside, and buried it in the backyard. It was the first time he had ever written something from his heart.

In high school, Leonard took photography classes, joined the drama club, played guitar, tried cheerleading, and even formed a folk band.



But it was when he read the poetry of a Spanish writer called Lorca that his own verses began to flow.





Things got really exciting when Leonard won a poetry competition in college. After graduating, he published his first book of poems, dedicated to his beloved father. Soon, he was the most promising young voice in Canada.







In search of inspiration, Leonard moved to Hydra, a Greek island, where time passed slowly. There he met a woman named Marianne, who became the muse for many of his poems. He worked tirelessly, carefully choosing each word.

Still, it was hard to make a living as a poet, so Leonard decided to try his hand at songwriting in New York City. He settled in the Chelsea Hotel, where artists and creative souls like Andy Warhol and Janis Joplin hung out.





One day he played a song to an artist named Judy Collins, hoping she would put it on her next album. The song, "Suzanne," became one of her biggest hits. It was the beginning of a long friendship between the two.



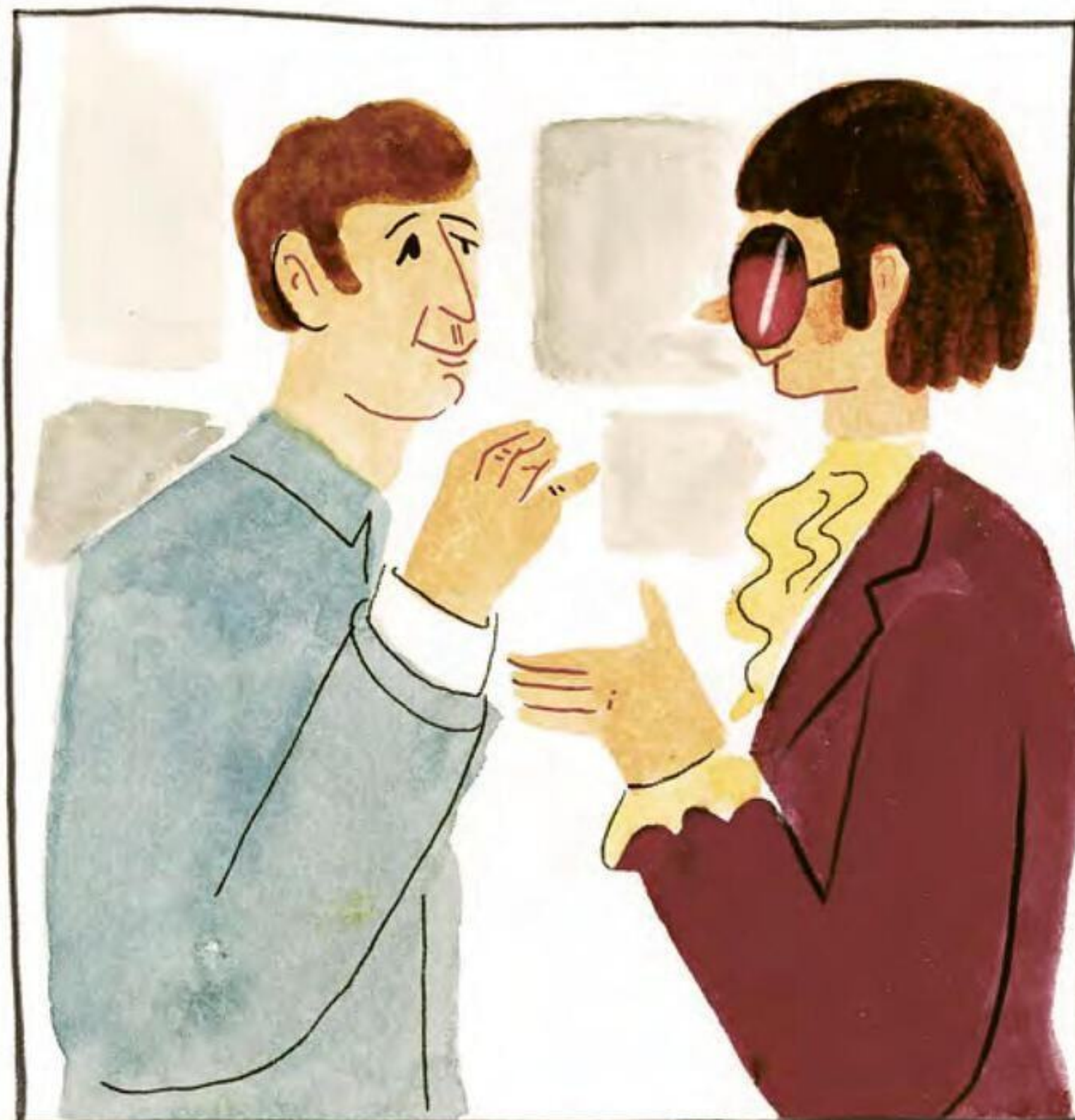


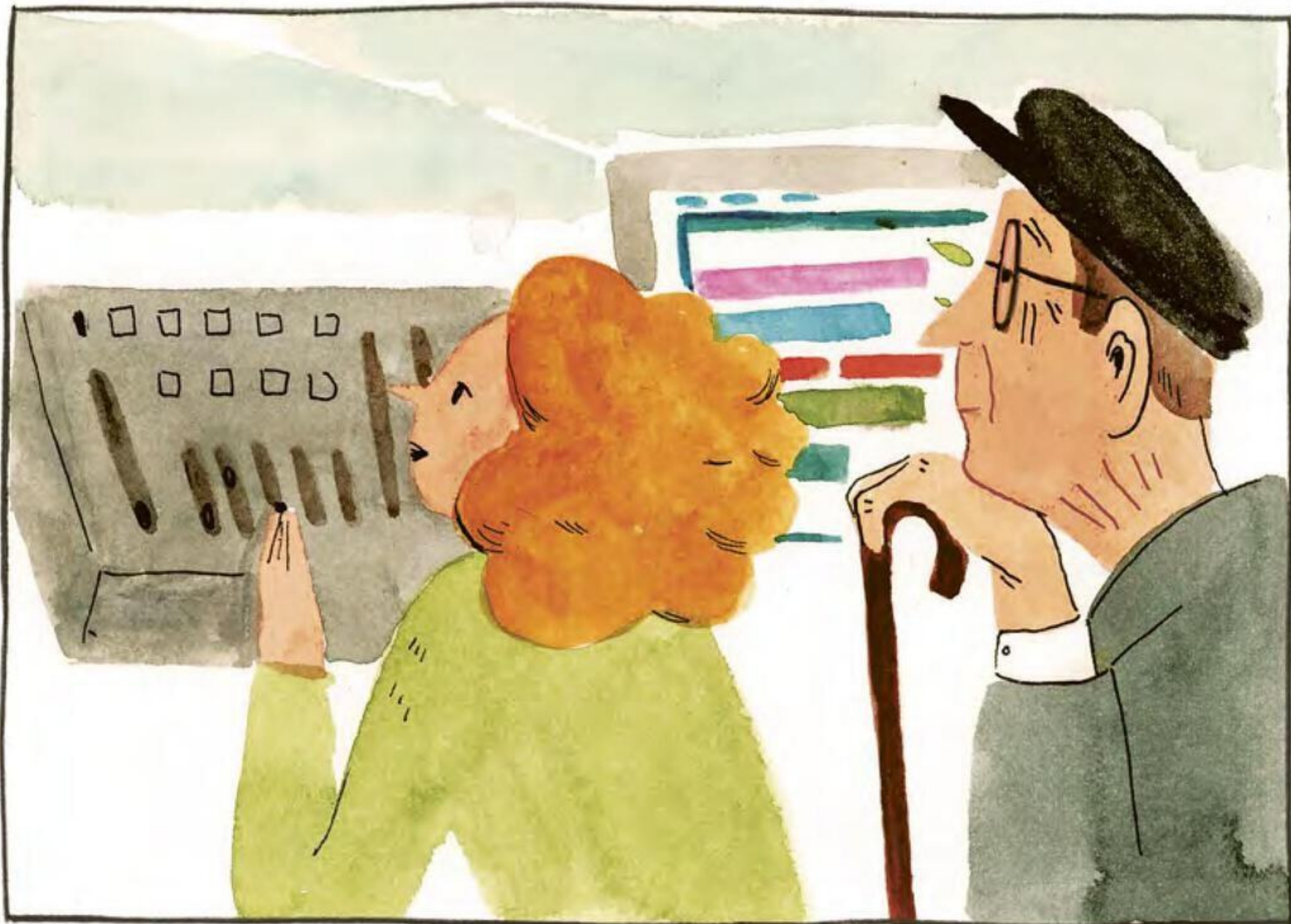
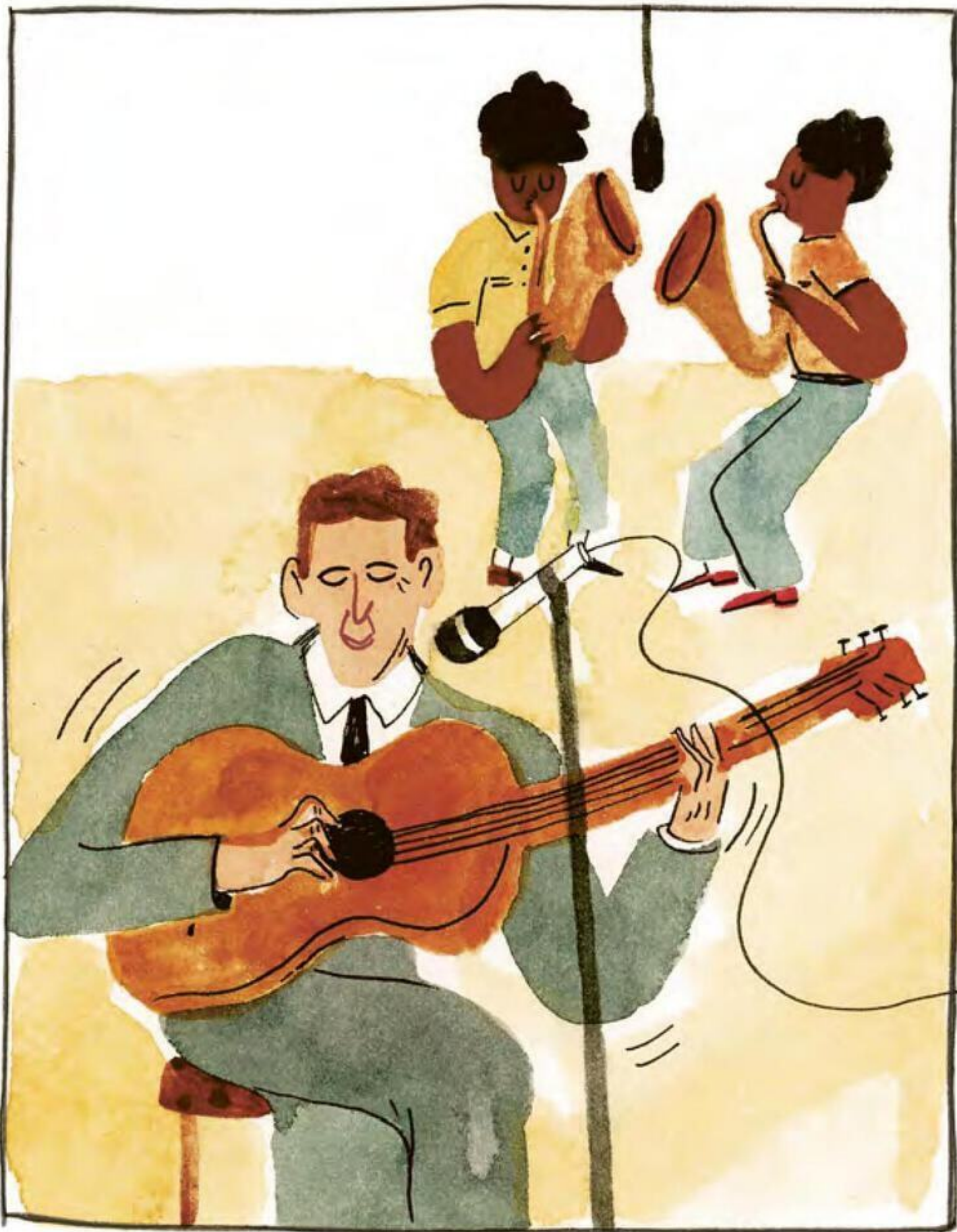
When Judy persuaded Leonard to sing at a charity concert, everyone was moved by his heartfelt lyrics and deep voice. But he was so nervous that he walked off stage halfway through, leaving the audience longing for more.





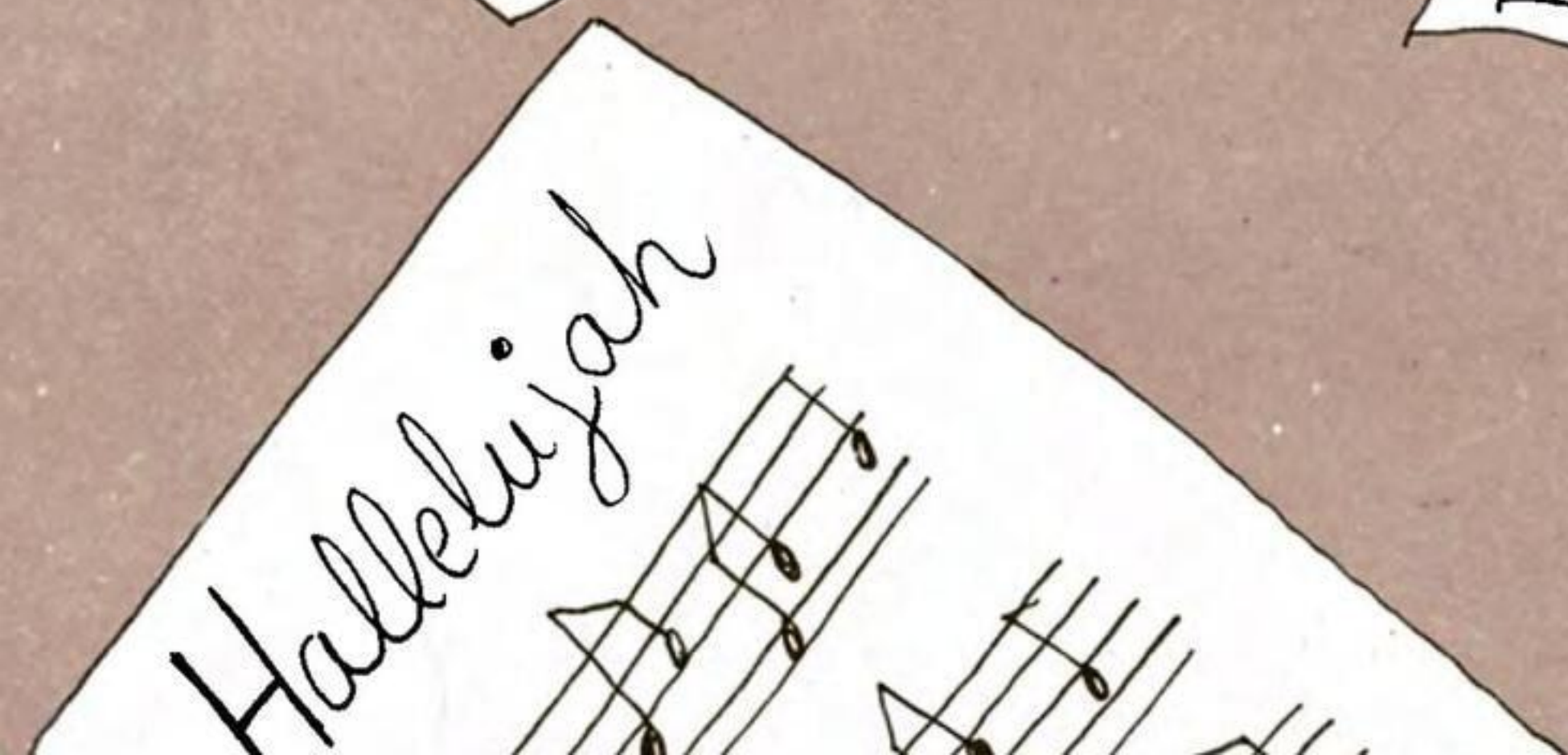
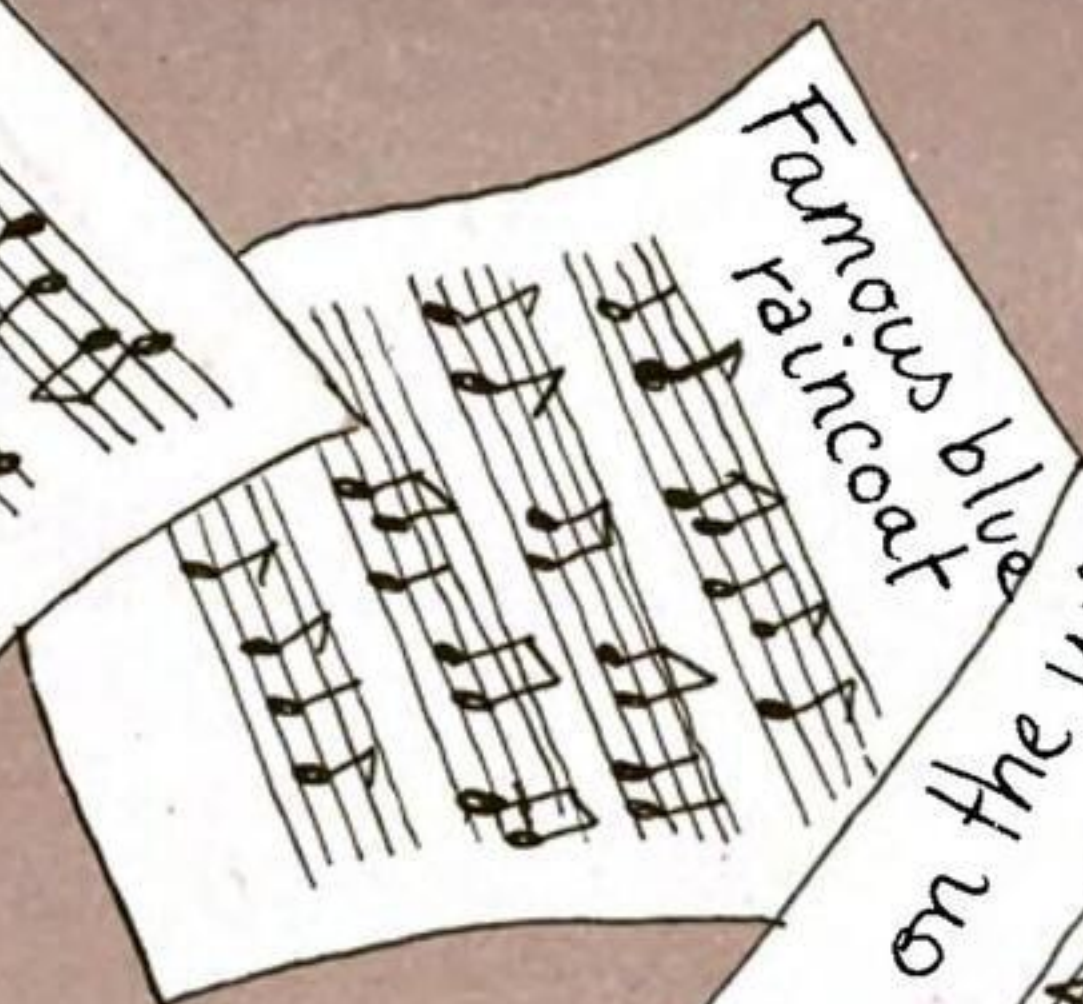
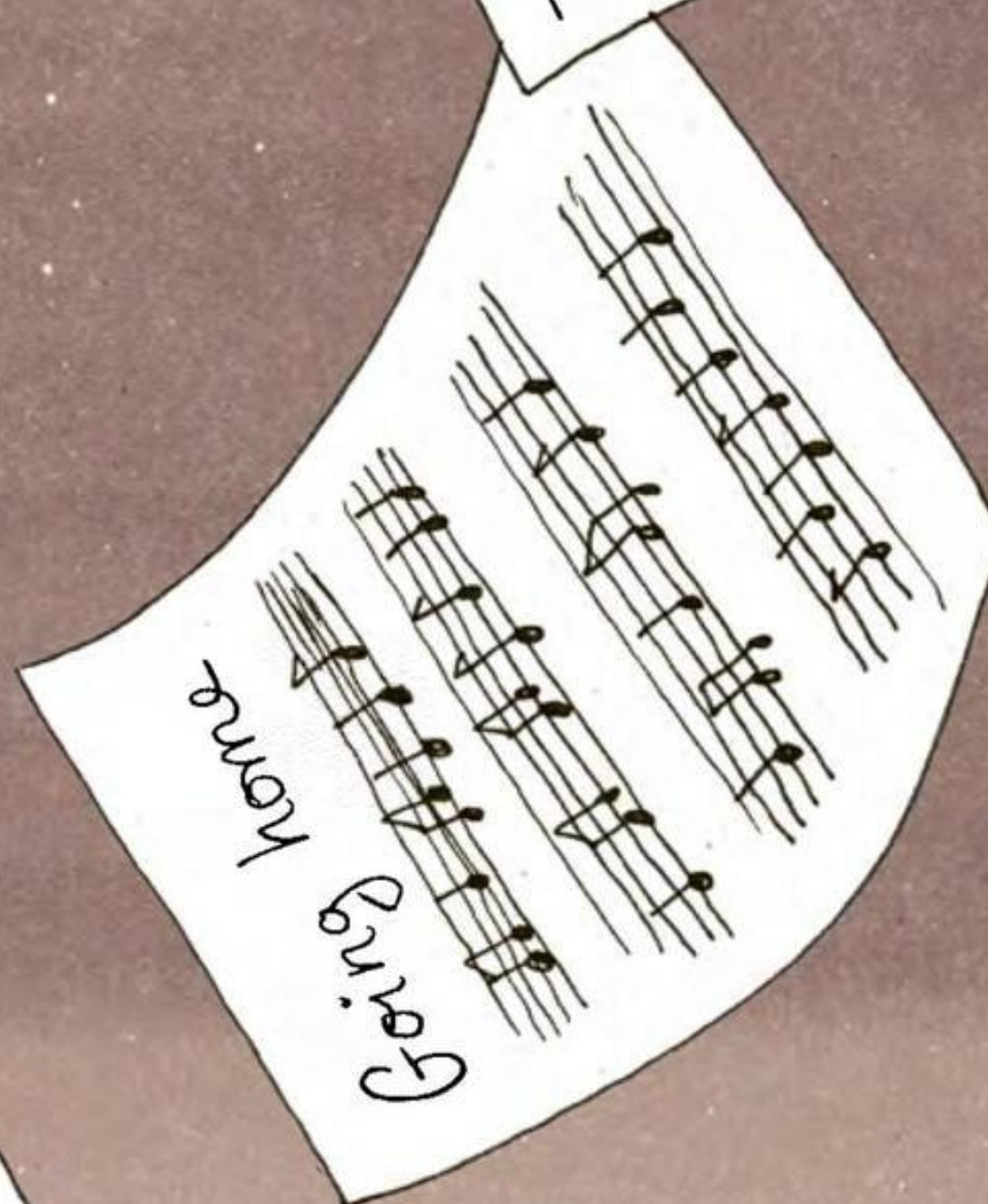
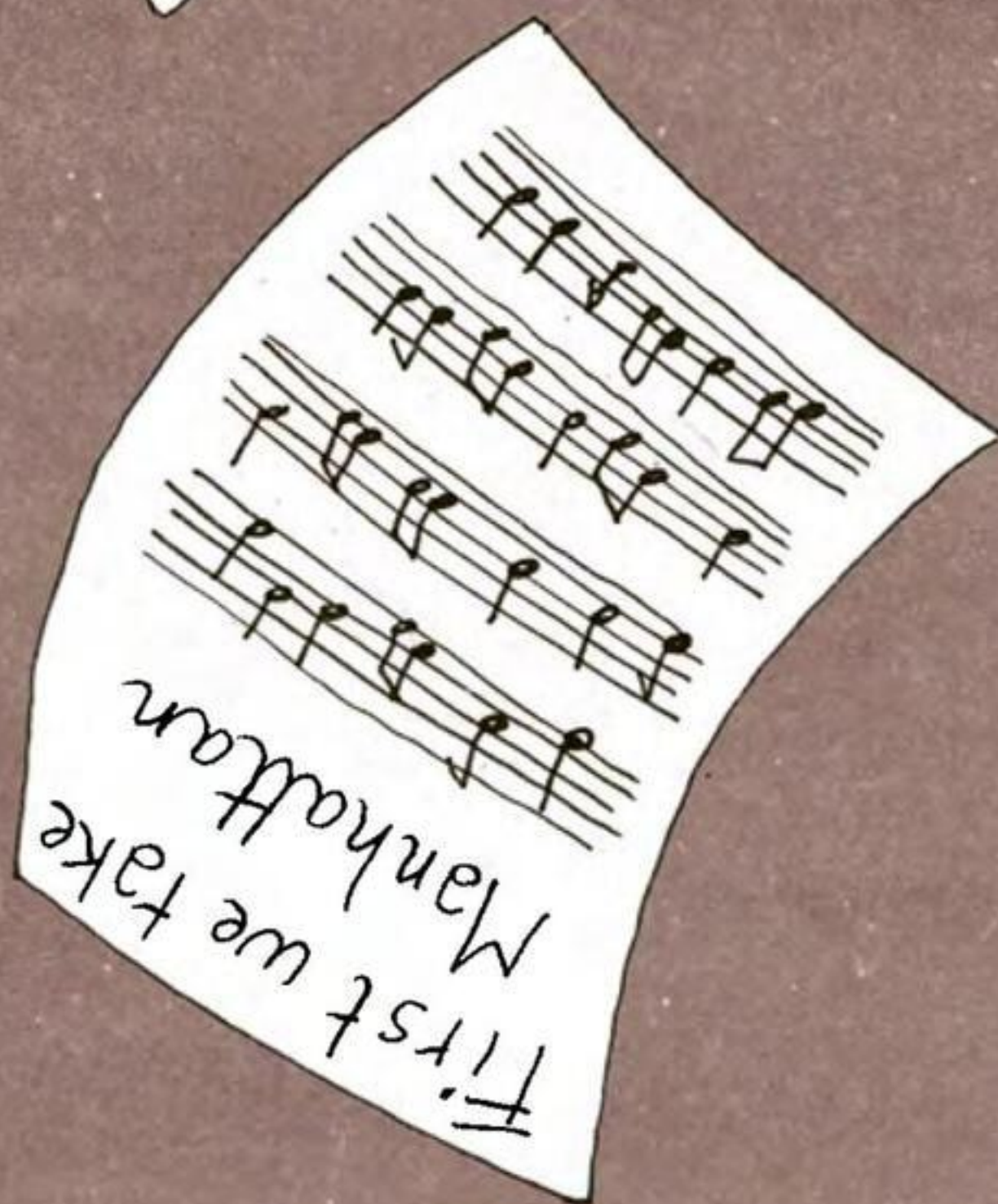
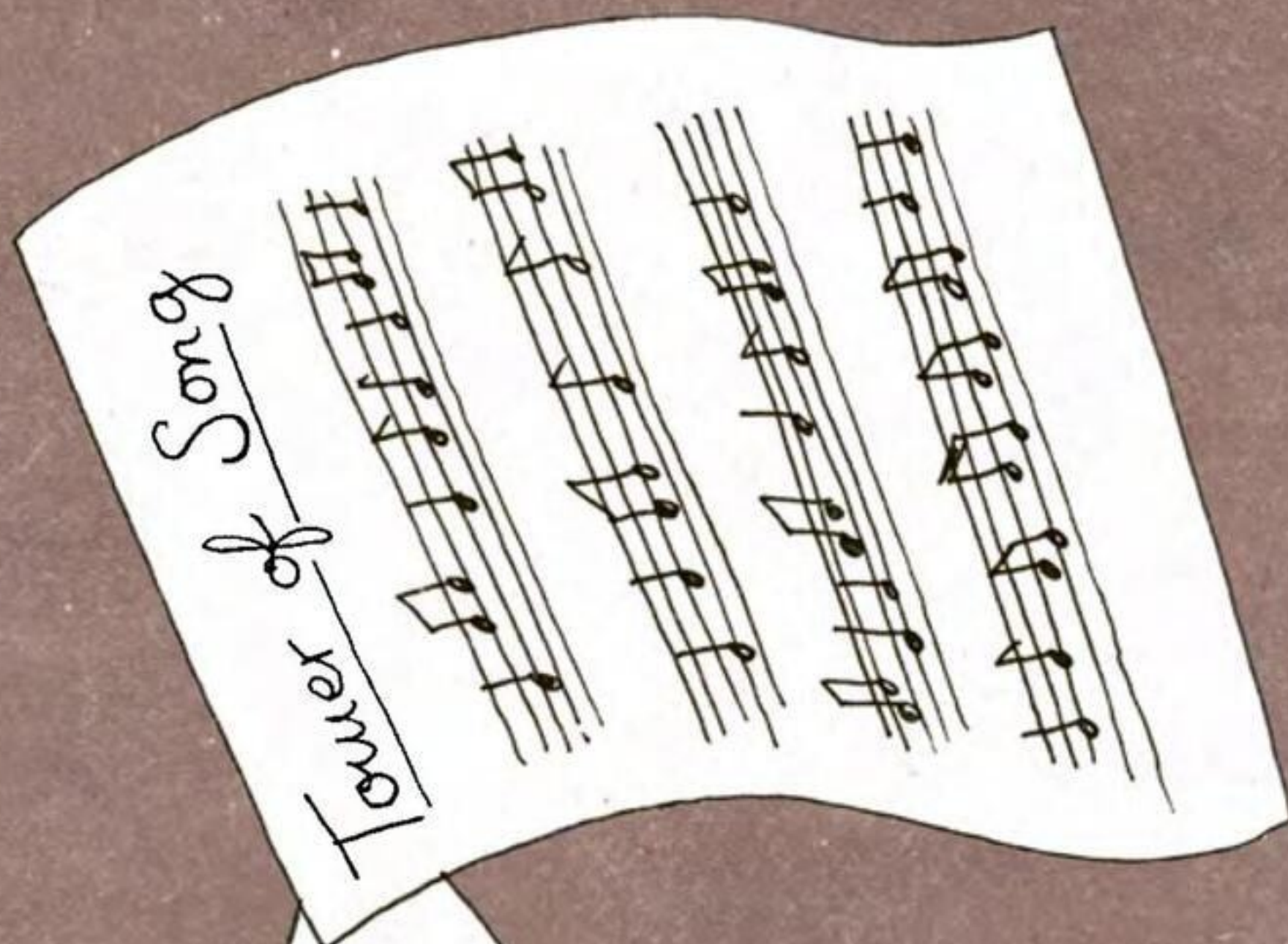
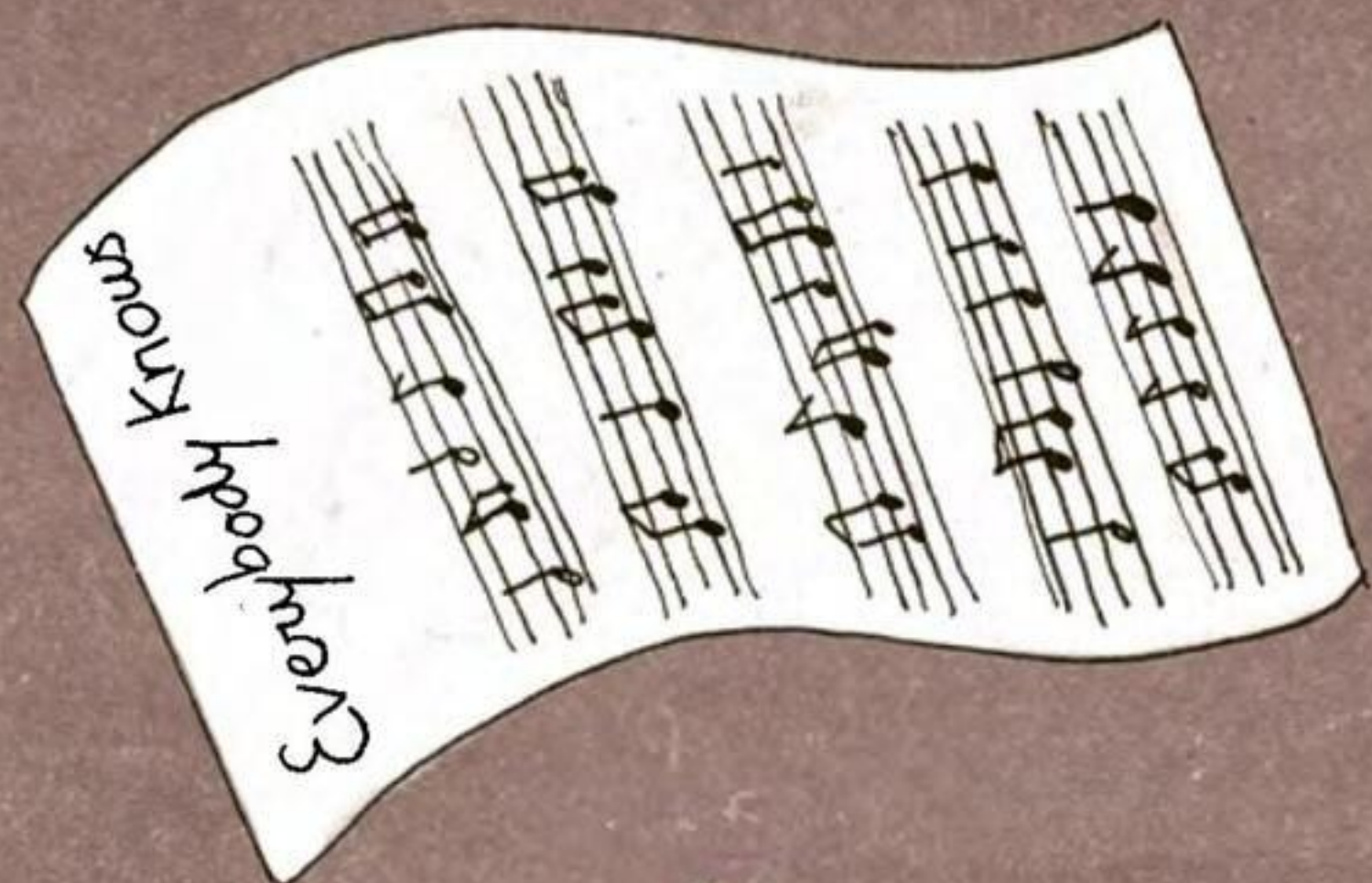
Leonard discovered that people didn't just love his music, they also loved him! Soon after, he recorded his first album. And he continued singing for almost fifty years, writing some of the most beautiful lines the world had ever heard.







His songs were like stories told in a calm and gentle voice. Leonard's lyrics spoke of love, war, and everything that makes us human. And even though his melodies sounded a little bit sad, there was always a ray of hope shining out from them.



Leonard's most famous work, "Hallelujah," made him a global star, but what really mattered to him lay beyond the spotlight.



He was a loving father to Adam and Lorca and spent years in a monastery as a Zen monk.



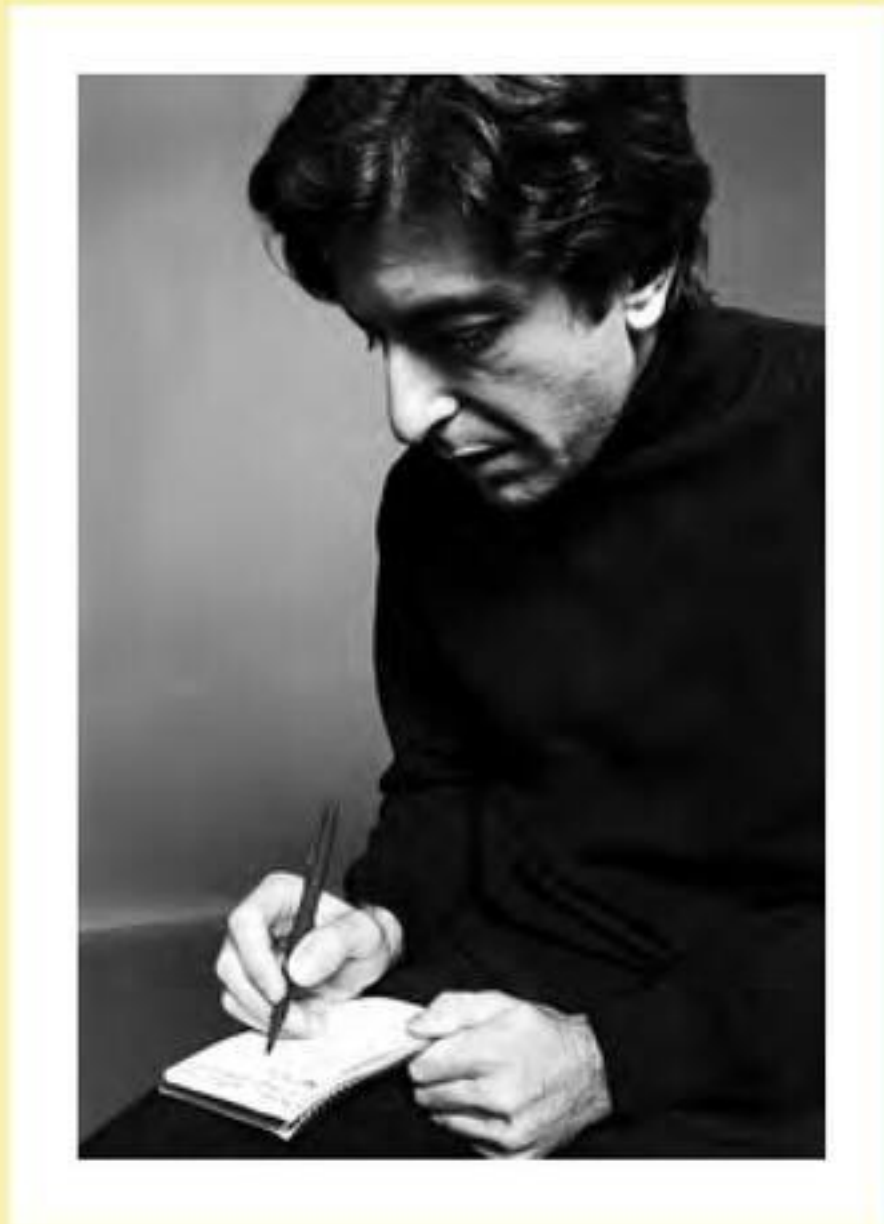


And even now, generations of writers and musicians
remember Leonard through his novels, poems, and songs.
The little boy who showed the world that true beauty does
not have to be perfect, it just has to move the soul.



LEONARD COHEN

(Born 1934 – Died 2016)

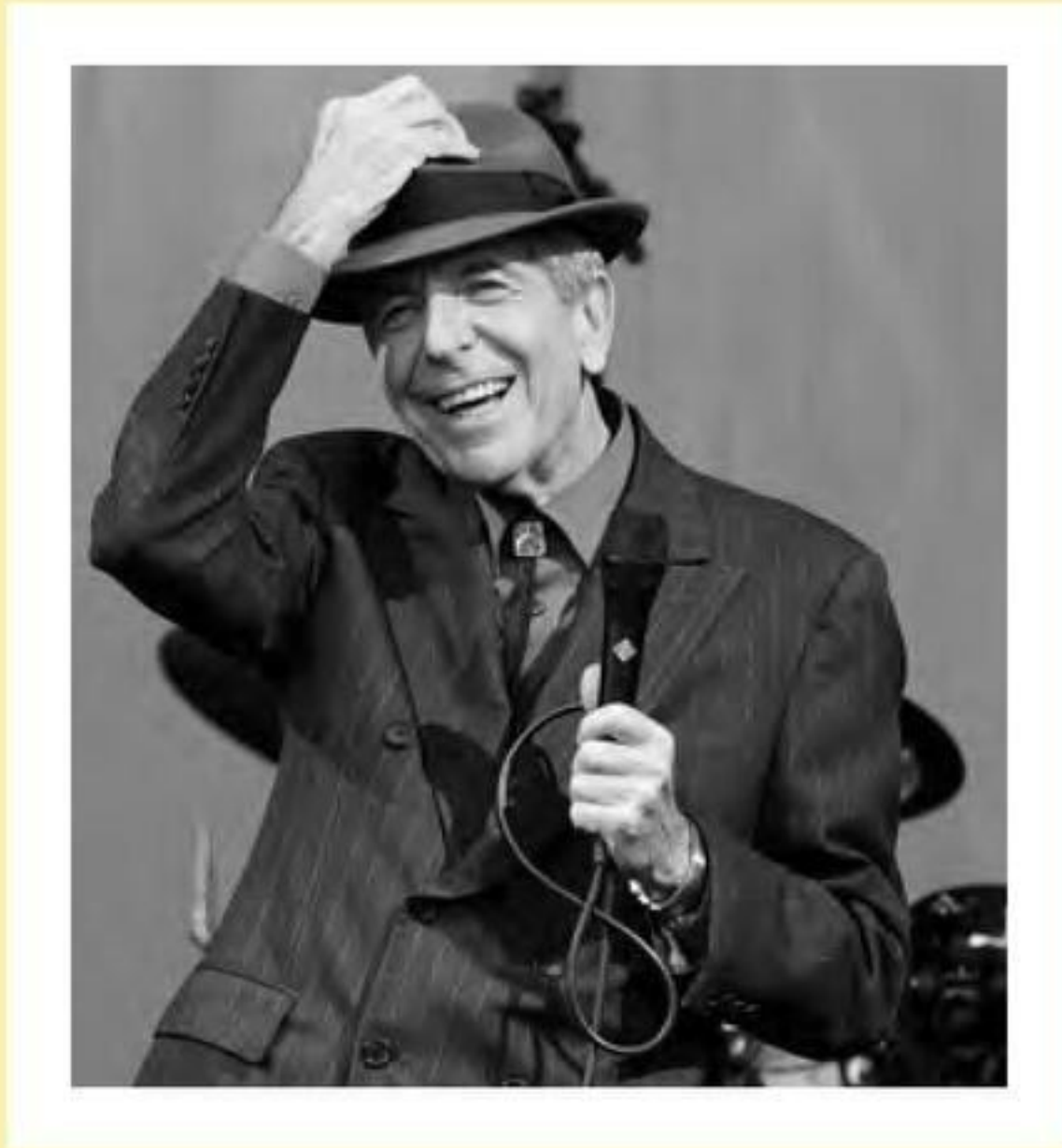


1967



1993

Leonard Norman Cohen grew up in Montreal, Canada, with his parents and sister, Esther. Both his grandfathers had been important figures in the city's Jewish community. Leonard felt a strong connection to his faith and attended synagogue with his family where he also learned Hebrew. As a teenager, his passion for country music inspired him to take up the guitar. At age fifteen, he fell in love with Federico García Lorca's poetry and began writing his own verses. He went on to study English literature in college, and his first book of poems was published shortly after. Supported by the Canada Council for the Arts, Leonard traveled to London, UK, but soon left for sunnier Greece. He lived on an island called Hydra and was mesmerized by the nature he saw and the people he



2008



2018

met there. Yet it was hard to make money from poetry, so, after seven years, he moved to the United States to work as a musician, using his gift for words to write songs. Leonard made friends in New York City's music scene and became known for his passionate lyrics and haunting melodies. Tunes such as "Suzanne" and "Bird on the Wire" were soon classics. But it was "Hallelujah," which took years to craft, that proved to be his biggest hit. At first his record label didn't believe in the song, but Leonard always did, and it became one of the most covered tracks in history. He released his final studio album at age eighty-two and continued writing until the end of his life. Leonard's story reminds us that all our feelings matter, and by expressing them creatively, we can connect with others and ourselves.

Want to find out more?

Have a read of this great book:

Poetry Prompts: All sorts of ways to start a poem by Joseph Coelho

With help from an adult, you can listen to Leonard Cohen's music online.

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Photographic acknowledgments (pages 28-29, from left to right): 1. Portrait of Canadian poet, novelist, and musician Leonard Cohen (1934 - 2016), dressed in black, as he writes in a notebook, August 1967 © Jack Robinson via Getty Images. 2. Leonard Cohen performing at the Paramount Theater in New York City on June 14, 1993 © Ebet Roberts/Redferns via Getty Images. 3. Leonard Cohen The Glastonbury Festival - Day 3 Glastonbury, England - 29.06.08 © WENN Rights Ltd via Alamy Stock Photo. 4. Photo taken in March 2018 shows a mural of late Canadian poet, novelist and singer-songwriter, Leonard Cohen, drawn in the heart of his hometown Montreal in time for the anniversary of his death © Kyodo News Stills via Getty Images.



Little People, **BIG DREAMS™**

Leonard Cohen

Discover the lives of outstanding people,
from designers and artists to scientists. All of
them achieved incredible things, yet each began
life as a child with a dream.

Little Leonard loved listening to songs and poems at
the synagogue. At age fifteen, he discovered the work of a
famous Spanish poet and started writing his own verses.
He dreamed of moving people with his words. Years later,
when he focused on writing songs, the world listened.
His poetic lyrics and melodies captivated audiences and
became classics. This inspiring story of the musician and
writer features a fact and photo section at the back.



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