

Chapter 1 : THE SPICE-BOX OF EARTH

Leonard Cohen's second collection of poems, The Spice Box of Earth was published in , when Cohen was 27 years old. One of his earlier works, the collection contains 59 poems and a photograph of Cohen taken by Sophie Baker.

New York, , p. The rabbi thrusts his hands into the "spice-box of earth, finds the sun and makes it a wedding ring for the Sabbath Queen. In using the phrase "the spice-box of earth" Cohen was using the image of the spice-box from the Jewish Havdalah ceremony, which is performed each Saturday night to mark the end of the Sabbath. In that ceremony, three ritual items are used: Havdalah Hebrew meaning "division" begins 40 minutes after sunset with the recitation of biblical verses. These verses all have references to redemption since the Sabbath day is considered a taste of the Messianic era. As such, there is always the hope that the final redemption has come before the end of the day and the Sabbath will continue forever. Havdalah marks what is called a "liminal moment," a boundary between the sacredness of the Sabbath and the ordinary days of the week. In most religious communities crossing liminal boundaries is accompanied by rituals. Havdalah is one such ritual in Judaism. Then there is a blessing over the wine. From ancient times, wine has marked sacred time. We then bless the spices and smell them. It is an ancient belief that on the Sabbath we receive an extra soul that is now leaving us and we need the smell of the spices to revive us from this loss. We then bless the candle and we hold up our hands to see the shadows which remind us of the division of light and darkness. Finally we conclude with a blessing that blesses God for the divisions between day and night, light and darkness, Sabbath and the rest of the week, the Jewish people and the other people of the world. It is a ceremony of great beauty that brings to mind not only the other times when we performed Havdalah and the people we shared it with but also the ancient stories of Creation and Redemption. The Jewish tradition is filled with blessings for such moments but also for many experiences of life or encounters in the natural world. There are blessings for eating bread and fruit; blessings for drinking water and wine; blessings for seeing the sea or a rainbow or seeing the first blossoms of spring. These are sacred pauses that are meant to open our ideas to wonder of all existence. The late scholar Max Kadushin called the theology behind the blessings "normal mysticism" by which he meant that they are designed to bring us to an immediate experience of God in Creation through everyday experiences. What seems to be mundane becomes holy in our eyes. Often, such fragrances evoke memories of when we first smelled those scents. For me, the smell of the trees on a warm summer night brings back very specific memories of teenage experiences many years ago. Walking in a forest after a rain makes me think of canoe trips in Algonquin Park in northern Ontario. But what if from time to time we plunged our hands directly into the earth? We would then smell the deep aromas from the earth itself: We would open up our senses to the kind of smells we usually seek to cover up with human-made perfumes. The spice-box of the earth changes every moment and is constantly filled with a complex diversity of elements. Every time and everywhere you smell it, it will be different. And in a very real way the sun is within the spice-box of the earth since all life processes comes from the initial energy of the sun. It has been shown scientifically that our sense of smell is a powerful memory trigger and certain scents evoke very clearly scenes from our early life. The parts of our brain that process smells are contained within the sections of our brain that are the sources of our emotions and where emotional memories are stored. So scents, emotions and memories are entwined. Our sense of smell also works much more quickly than our other senses in sending its messages to be processed. That is why smells have such an immediate and potent effect on us. Deep in each of us are memories of how we connect with the earth, how we are of the earth and how we will go back to the earth. These are the memories that we have suppressed or covered over with artificial perfumes. Maybe we need to create a new ritual to regularize this experience. I believe that we need to find a liminal moment at least once a week where after days spent feeling disconnected to the earth, we reconnect with the spice box of earth by plunging our hands into the earth, the source of our selves. In order to reconnect with Creation it is time to smell and feel once again the spice-box of earth to revive our souls. Praised are You, Adonai our God, who rules the universe, Creator of all kinds of spices.

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The Spice-Box of Earth is Canadian poet and songwriter Leonard Cohen's second collection of poetry. It was first published in by McClelland and Stewart, when Cohen was 27 years old. The book brought the poet a measure of early literary acclaim.

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Chapter 4 : Spice-Box Of Earth

Into the spice-box of earth. (From "Out of the Land of Heaven," The Spice-Box of Earth, Bantam Books: New York, , p.) This poem was written in homage to the painter Marc Chagall and seems.

Chapter 5 : Leonard Cohen: Poems

Spice Box Of Earth - Leonard Cohen. 0. To mark the publication of Leonard Cohen's final book, The Flame, McClelland & Stewart is proud to reissue six beautiful editions of Cohen's cherished early works of poetry, many of which are back in print for the first time in decades.

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