**Leonard Cohen pays Jane Austen an**

**accidental visit in Elysium**

Good morning, Mr Cohen, I’ve been waiting for you.

I trust you find everything to your satisfaction now you’ve arrived?

*Yeah, though I will always sit with the family of loneliness.*

Oh please don’t take me to the edge of despair!

I wanted to talk to you about Marianne.

*Marianne? Ah yes, we met when we were almost young*.

So you said, so long ago. But Marianne was never yours,

and after you left her

*...No, no, she left me –*

*she left when I said I was curious.*

I know all about what happened between you,

you don’t need to dress it up in fine words.

I did after all write about Lydia Bennet, remember?

*She made me forget to pray for the angels.*

It is not everyone who had her passion for dead leaves.

I don’t usually speak ill of the dead, but you have an air

of foppery and nonsense about you, all those hats,

and coats over your shoulder, quite unnecessary.

And all your women – worse than Byron,

and my goodness he is not the man to follow.

You don’t need to laugh and cry and cry and laugh about it all again.

She hasn’t written you letters since goodness knows when.

No doubt you had a song like this about Harriet Smith,

and Mary Crawford told me some very ripe stories about you.

Lady Susan mentioned that you called her Suzanne, and she’s

definitely not a person to have a dalliance with.

I wanted to tell you it’s all been such a waste of your talents,

because, bless you, Marianne, who really was such a pretty one,

lost her looks when she and Colonel Brandon had the first two children,

and after that, I’m sorry to tell you, she’s turned into just such another

Mrs Bennet! Herhidden love would not have been welcome, would it?

Leonard Cohen thought he must make himself very disagreeable,

or she would not have said such things to an old friend and admirer.

So he took up the mike, turned to his imaginary audience,

draped his coat over his shoulder, tipped his hat and croaked

*Now so long Marianne, and so long Mary Crawford, so long Emma,*

*and so long Harriet Smith and even Anne Elliot, I forgot you all*

*a long, long time ago.*

That’s a most uncompromising and irritating young man, thought Jane.

I can’t be doing with all that posturing.