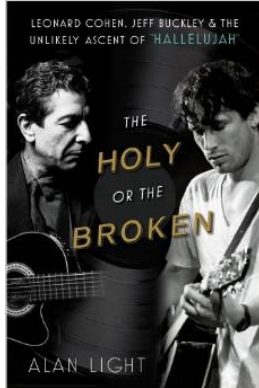


***The Holy or the Broken: Leonard Cohen, Jeff Buckley, and the Unlikely Ascent of "Hallelujah"* by Alan Light
Atria Books (December 4, 2012)**



In entire biography dedicated to a single song might seem excessive at first. But when that song is “Hallelujah”—a decades-old, epic ode to sex, spirituality, and everything in between—such a spotlight is not only justified but arguably necessary. Leonard Cohen spent years painstakingly penning the lyrics and wound up with more verses than anyone has ever heard. The song has been rerecorded, reimagined, reinvented, and ultimately immortalized through (occasionally) gloriously great and (too often) tragically terrible renditions. It is, as author and music journalist Alan Light puts it in *The Holy or the Broken*, “one of the most unexpected and triumphant sagas in the history of popular music.” With this complex and fascinating story, Light succeeds in doing for a song what some biographers struggle to accomplish for human subjects: He captures the essence and importance of a living, breathing entity, and his telling is at times as moving as the masterpiece itself. --[Robin A. Rothman](#)