



# High Lonesome: The American Culture of Country Music

*Cecelia Tichi*

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What does the 'country' in country music mean? Most interpret country as a regional or folk music that belongs to people in the hills and in honky-tonks, but Cecelia Tichi argues that it is in fact a national music form, one that belongs to all Americans. In *High Lonesome*, she shows that country music is strongly linked to our nation's literature and art. Country music, Tichi argues, explores the same themes that have intrigued this country's premier writers and artists over three centuries: the American road, the meaning of home, class struggle, spiritual travail, and the persistent loneliness of the American character. These are obsessions that country music artists like Dolly Parton, Hank Williams, Rodney Crowell, Merle Haggard, and Emmylou Harris share with artists not thought of as 'pop'--Ralph Waldo Emerson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mark Twain, Thomas Cole, Edward Hopper, and Georgia O'Keefe. Generously illustrated with photographs of country music artists and images of American art, *High Lonesome* uses interviews and biographical profiles to provide an insider's look at the schooling, customs, demands, and discipline of country music--an art form that Tichi maintains is emphatically part of mainstream American culture. from the book When the poetry of Walt Whitman links up with the country music of Hank Williams, when Dolly Parton and Ralph Waldo Emerson pair up and Mark Twain and Emmylou Harris are found to have a common ground, and the vacationing traveler is also involved, then new ideas about cultural relations become possible. It is not a trivia question to ask, What does country music have in common with Thomas Jefferson, Walt Whitman, American painters Thomas Cole and Edward Hopper, and twentieth-century writers John Steinbeck and Jack Kerouac? Songs and partial songs found on the *High Lonesome* CD \* indicates partial songs Dolly Parton, 'My Tennessee Mountain Home' Barry and Holly Tashian, 'Home' Emmylou Harris, 'Hickory Wind'\* Steve Earle, 'Guitar Town' Robin and Linda Williams, 'Rolling and Rambling' Merle Haggard, 'Ramblin' Fever' Emmylou Harris, 'Lonely Street'\* Emmylou Harris, 'A River for Him'\* Hank Williams, 'I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry' Laurie Lewis, 'The Cowgirl's Song' Tex Ritter, 'High Noon' Dolly Parton, 'Wildflowers'\* Eddy Arnold, 'Bouquet of Roses' Emmylou Harris, 'Roses in the Snow'\* Emmylou Harris, 'Timberline'\* Emmylou Harris, 'Red, Red Rose'\* Emmylou Harris, 'Wayfaring Stranger'\* Peter Rowan, 'Trail of Tears' Barry and Holly Tashian, 'Let Me See the Light' Kathy Chiavola, 'I Am a Pilgrim/We Are Pilgrims' Laurie Lewis, 'The Maple's Lament' Cody Kilby, 'Bill Cheatham' Rodney Crowell, 'Many a Long and Lonesome Highway'

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