

How Bob Dylan Influences My Life and Work

A Never-Ending Document

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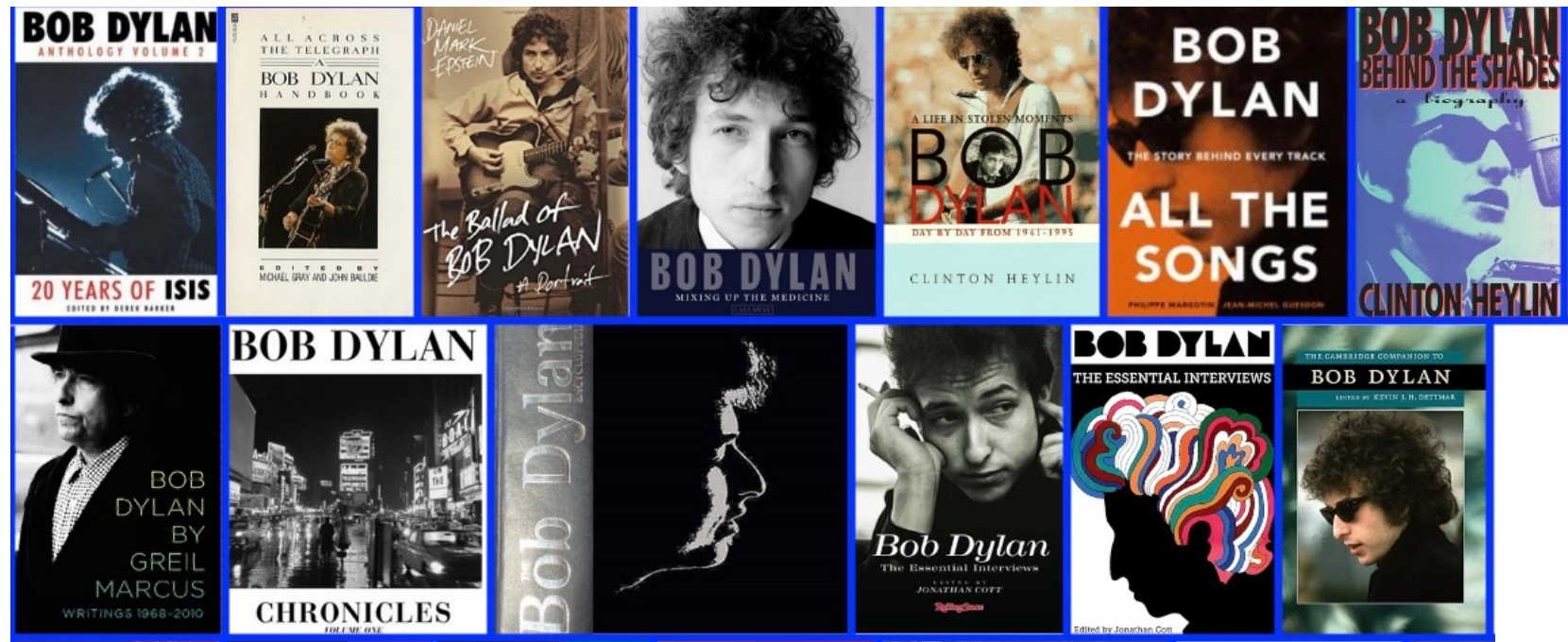


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Dylan's Influence

The meaning of life is not found
Amid the lyrics or in the sound
Of Dylan's music or in his words
As I find myself drawn towards
Synchronicity.

He has his muse and I have mine
And once in a while they intertwine
And meet together and share their mysteries
As they expand the boundaries
Of my **Creativity**.

Bob has no answers but he holds up a mirror
So we can see our reflection and perhaps a glimmer
Of what really matters, if truth be told,
As we search within our very soul
For **Spirituality**.

On the second day in June
We go to *Desolation Row* or to a tune
Like *Highway 61*.
It's a journey that is never done
And we return time and time again
Just to look around the bend
To view **Simplicity**.

Why the fascination with this man's talent?
What draws me to his music sent
For all of us to listen in time
So we can each compose our rhyme -
To express our **Individuality**?

How Bob Dylan Influences My Life and Work

Introduction

Relative to my interest in the work of Bob Dylan, I have been collecting/writing bits of connections in the form of poems, brief essays, concert reviews, and other products over the past twenty-five years or more. Currently, I am reading the book *Why Bob Dylan Matters* by Richard Thomas. The title intrigued me enough to compose a list of my own for why Bob Dylan matters to me including:

- Many of his songs have a nice, easy beat to walk to during my daily exercise on the treadmill.
- I like using his tunes to write alternative lyrics to convey thoughts and events that are on my mind.
- The cover songs by other artists allow me to appreciate his lyrics in new ways.
- I can share my interest with Dylan's work with friends.
- Individual segments, to me, are worth more than the composite of the entire set of lyrics.
- He brings out my creativity in expressing myself using some of his songs/lyrics.
- He has influenced many other musicians whose work is of greater excellence because of that influence.

- I have little interest in knowing what any of his songs are about or mean ... they are what they are and not more or less.
- I appreciate knowing where he's going next.
- He has enriched my life by his presence.

The format of my sharing of resources originally took shape in a presentation I delivered for a regional conference. For this current rendition, I am choosing to share my work in a more narrative fashion.

*You are about to see
What Dylan means to me;
How his words have inspired
As my writing has transpired
And creativity emerges
As my life surges
Forward to its current state
Of satisfaction with my fate
In connecting with Dylan's past
And present works that will last
Forever in my heart and mind.
Bob Dylan, to me, is one of a kind!*

Celebrating the Birth of a Grandson

When my grandson was born, I wanted to commemorate the event in a special way. I have been composing acrostic organizers in my courses as a way to summarize key information from specific areas of content. I decided to construct an acrostic using a title of a Dylan song at the beginning of each line. To form the acrostic, I started each line with the successive letters in my grandson's name: LEO DYLAN SCHMIDT. And, I concluded each line with the names of his parents: - NADYA AND RANDY -. I was quite pleased with the results and titled the work – Precious Memories – another title of a Dylan song.

*One wonders who the influences are
As we reflect on life from where
We find ourselves each and every day
And we can search for a special way
In which Dylan can inspire us anew.
These pages contain just a few
Of the results of such times
When I turn my thoughts to rhymes.*

Precious Memories

L*o and Behold* a new baby prepares to enter the world –
E*very Grain of Sand* shouts his name up and down
O*n a Night Like This* from ocean, land and sea
D*ignity* is a virtue that he will command
Y*ou Changed My Life* his parents will often say
L*ay Down Your Weary Tune* as you enter this arena
A*ll Along the Watchtower* we celebrate his presence.
N*ew Morning* has arrived. Rejoice in this little man
S*omething There Is About You* say both mom and dad
C*ry a While* if you must, but have no fear
H*ard Times* will pass. You will be
M*an of Peace*, Love, Hope and Affection
I*t Ain't Me, Babe* who will ever doubt your word
D*on't Think Twice, It's All Right* you will hear us say
T*omorrow Is a Long Time* and our love is forever –

Organizing Our Knowledge

I was seeking a way to introduce content in one of the courses I teach and wandered upon the Periodic Table of Elements as a graphic organizer. I like to think this is one of a kind and even if someone has thought of this graphic organizer, it has not been filled in with the exact elements that I have chosen to do. For example, LA is reserved for Larry Campbell, an extraordinarily talented member of Bob's band from the late 1990s to early 2000s. I had an occasion last year to see Larry Campbell and his wife, Teresa Williams, at Infinity Hall in Norfolk, CT. They put on a tremendous show!

*We organize our life in segments
That represent important moments
And we remember many a Dylan show
And songs and lyrics and know
That they bring meaning to the elements
Composing our diligence
To capture all that is important and true
Of what his work means to me and you.*

Periodic Table of the Elements

Bob Dylan

(created by Ernie Pancsofar)

This visual organizer represents one person's connections with the work of Bob Dylan. Another person might choose completely different entries per symbol associated with the Periodic Table of Elements.

H Hibbing, MN		Bob Dylan (created by Ernie Pancsofar)														He Clinton Heylin																			
Li Daniel Lanois		Be Beatty Zimmerman		This visual organizer represents one person's connections with the work of Bob Dylan. Another person might choose completely different entries per symbol associated with the Periodic Table of Elements.														B Blood on the Tracks		C Cry A While		N Newport Folk Festival		O Oh Mercy		F Forever Young		Ne Never Ending Tour							
Na Nat Hentoff		Mg Marcus, Greil																Al Al Grossman		Si Mississippi		P Pressing On		S She Belongs To Me		Cl Renaldo and Clara		Ar Maggie's Farm							
K Knocked Out Loaded		Ca Things Have Changed																Sc Stuck Inside of Mobile ...		Ti Time Out of Mind		V Love Minus Zero ...		Cr Christopher Ricks		Mn Minnesota		Fe Cold Irons Bound		Co Cowboy Band		Ni Tonight I'll be Staying ...		Cu Goin' to Acapulco	
Rb Rubin Hurricane Carter		Sr Sara Dylan		Y You Angel You		Zr Love Minus Zero ...		Nb The Wonder Boys		Mo New Morning		Tc Dont Look Back		Ru Working-man's Blues #2		Rh Royal Albert Hall		Pd MTV Unplugged		Ag Allen Ginsberg		Cd Romance In Durango		In Visions of Johanna		Sn Nashville Skyline		Sb Gotta Serve Somebody		Te Blind Willie McTell		I Highway 61		Xe Fixin' To Die	
Cs Jacques Levy		Ba Joan Baez		La Larry Campbell		Hf A Hard Rain's A Gonna Fall		Ta Tangled Up In Blue		W Woody Guthrie		Re The Free-Wheelin' B. D.		Os With God On Our Side		Ir It's Alright Ma		Pt Positively 4th Street		Au Autumn Leaves		Hg Mecurial Sound		Tl It Takes A Lot To Laugh ...		Pb Pennebaker		Bi Biograph		Po Po' Boy		At Ain't Talkin'		Rn ...It Takes A Train To Cry	
Fr Frankie Lee & Judas Pr.		Ra Rainy Day Women #12 & 35		Ac My Back Pages		Rf Watching the River Flow		Ha John Hammond		Sg Slow Train Coming		Bh Robert Hunter		Hs Subter. Homesick Blues		Mt Mr. Tambourine Man																			

Ce Saving Grace	Pr Pat Garrett	Nd No Direction Home	Pm Phantom of the Opera	Sm Patti Smith	Eu Emmylou Harris	Gd Grateful Dead	Tb The Byrds	Dy Bob Dylan	Ho Ballad of Hollis Brown	Er Expect- ing Rain	Tm Ballad of a Thin Man	Yb Young- bloods cover	Lu Tomb- stone Blues
Th Thunder on the Mount.	Pa Sam Shepard	U I Want You	Np Nobel Prize	Pu MTV un- plugged	Am Andrew Muir	Cm Charlie McCoy	Bk Book Chroni- cles	Cf Chimes of Freedom	Es Medgar Evers	Fm Folk Music	Md Time Out of Mind	No North- ampton Venue	Lr Like A Rolling Stone

Random Thoughts Associated with Sample Dylan Lyrics

The following lyrics from several Dylan songs are accompanied by some connections with my everyday experiences.

01. One Too Many Mornings

*You're right from your side,
I'm right from mine.*

In education, It really depends on what side of the table you are on. You will look differently on the needs of the student depending on what position you are advocating from.

I also like the wisdom from Deborah Tannen from her book, *The Argument Culture*, in which she states that the answers to life's challenges rarely lie at the polar extremes. It's not either/or but rather both/and. The challenge must be approached from many sides similar to viewing a crystal with its multi-faceted sides.

Life is not a debate. I do not always have to be right. I can always learn to appreciate a challenge by perceiving it from the point of view of someone whose opinion differs from mine.

02. Positively Fourth Street

*I wish that for just one time
You could stand inside my shoes
And just for that one moment
I could be you.*

Mark O'Brien aptly states, "We're all going to be handicapped . . . unless you die first!" How would I want to be supported? What does respect and dignity have to do with assisting others? Do I imagine what life must be like for many of the individuals whose lives I have entered by virtue of their status as students in my class?

I want others to focus on my strengths, gifts, competencies and accomplishments and not my weaknesses, setbacks, errors, and missed opportunities.

03. Talkin' World War III Blues

*"I'll let you be in my dream if I can be in yours."
I said that.*

This relates directly to person-centered planning in which the vision of the future (the dreams of the person) is center stage for what follows. My role is to translate a path toward those dreams into language that fits in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for students in special education. The pathway toward one or more of the dreams may actually contribute to more quality in a student's life than the actual acquisition of the dream.

04. Love Minus Zero No Limit

*In the dime stores and bus stations,
People talk of situations,
Read books, repeat quotations,
Draw conclusions on the wall.
Some speak of the future,
My love she speaks softly,
She knows there's no success like failure
And that failure's no success at all.*

This is, perhaps, one of my favorite Dylan quotes. It relates to the issue of paradox and the seeming contradictions in a statement. To work with students, we need to help them experience “failure” as a natural progression along the path to success. But, merely failing is no success at all unless it leads you in the direction of success. We are unsuccessful far more frequently than we are successful when we embark on new endeavors. Many adults forget what it feels like to learn new skills or concepts. Children experience this every day, but adults tend to develop comfortable routines and patterns of living that rely on current skills.

05. Don't Think Twice, It's All Right

*Don't Think Twice,
It's All Right.*

I used this song to write a parody about the high-stakes assessments experienced by students in the public schools. My new title was: **Please Think Twice, It's Not Right**. One of the verses goes:

*There's got to be some other way of knowing
The progress that they made.*

*There's got to be another way of showing
How they're doing in their grade.*

*My big ideas don't fit in the bubbles on the sheet.
When I finish the test, I feel I'm in defeat*

*These high stakes tests just make us want to cheat.
So, please think twice. It's not right.*

06. Brownsville Girl

*The only thing we knew for sure about Henry Porter
Is that his name wasn't Henry Porter.*

I think about these two lines when I meet a person/student who has a label of a specific disability like Down syndrome, dyslexia, or Tourette syndrome. The only thing for sure that I know about these students is that they are not their label. A person who has Down syndrome is not the label “Down syndrome.” That is not who they are!

07. A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall

*But I'll know my song well
Before I start singin'.*

Prepare – Prepare – Prepare! Much of the learning occurs in the preparation, which must also include debriefing/self-reflection of previous attempts to teach or learn a skill/concept/idea. There are too many people spouting off about the latest “fad” or “state-of-the-art” something who know nothing about which they speak. They are hired to sell a product and make a living. I need to be careful about what I relate from my “position of authority” or from the position of the teacher of the course. I am a searcher for the truths that lie at the heart of teaching and, every time I teach a topic, I peel back one more layer to add additional clarity to that which I seek to know.

09. Sweetheart Like You

*Steal a little they throw you in jail.
Steal a lot and they make you king.*

This quote reminds me of the double standard applied to the wealthy and poor. If you are rich, one can steal from people via white-collar crime or in promoting a product to one's own benefit and not to the benefit of those people for whom the product is targeted. I would put standardized tests in this category. Companies are stealing from the poor whose lives are judged by their inability to meet established standards. But as soon as a person designated as poor is caught in the act, they are severely chastised and judged; i.e., the looting in New Orleans that occurred during a recent hurricane.

08. My Back Pages

*A self-ordained professor's tongue
Too serious to fool
Spouted out that liberty
Is just equality in school.
“Equality,” I spoke the word
As if a wedding vow.
Ah, but I was so much older then,
I'm younger than that now.*

Being younger in mind and spirit, to me, means that I try to maintain a fresh take on things. I try not to think that I know the “ANSWER” but that I am experiencing many little “answers”. When I was older then, I was the expert and things were much simpler – I was right! But, as I age, I get younger in the feeling that there is still so much more to know - - - especially from the “professor's tongue.”

10. **Jacket Notes from *Another Side of Bob Dylan* Album**

*... and I say that every question
if it's a truthful question
can be answered by askin' it.*

Asking good questions is better than seeking one “right” answer. This truth is apparent in the Quaker style clearness committee process to approaching challenges. Members of a gathered group of caring peers ask clarifying questions of a person to help that person sort out the possible ways to respond to that challenge. No one offers a “correct” approach but, by asking insightful questions, provides the feedback necessary for the person to know what is right to do next.

Also, I have given credit to students for developing a good question from a chapter that might be a good quiz ingredient. They receive the equivalent score on the quiz by developing the question as they might from a different chapter when they respond to questions I developed.

Bob Dylan Lyrics and the Game of Thrones.

One of the methods of engagement for students is to link lyrics from their musical interests to the content currently under investigation in a subject area. I decided to link various lines from Bob Dylan's lyrics to the Game of Thrones with the following results:

01: Dylan Lyrics: *Oh Sister*

*Oh, sister, when I come to lie in your arms
You should not treat me like a stranger.
Our Father would not like the way that you act
And you must realize the danger.
Oh, sister, am I not a brother to you
And one deserving of affection
And is our purpose not the same on this earth
To love and follow his direction.*

Game of Thrones: *Relationship of Cersei and Jaime Lannister*

02: Dylan Lyrics: *Long and Wasted Years*

*I ain't seen my family in twenty years.
That ain't easy to understand.
They may be dead now.
I lost track of them after they lost their land.*

Game of Thrones: *House Stark*

03: Dylan Lyrics: *Blowin' In the Wind*

*Yes, how many years can a mountain exist
Before it's washed to the sea?
Yes, how many years can some people exist
Before they're allowed to be free?*

Game of Thrones: *Gregor Clegane*

04: Dylan Lyrics: *Love Minus Zero No Limit*

*My love, she's like some raven
At my window with a broken wing.*

Dylan Lyrics: *Can You Please Crawl Out Your Window?*

If he needs a third eye he just grows it.

Game of Thrones: *Bran Stark – Three Eyed Raven*

05: Dylan Lyrics: *The Groom's Still Waiting at the Altar*

*West of the Jordan, east of the Rock of Gibraltar
I see the turning of the page
Curtain rising on a new age;
See the groom still waiting at the altar.*

Game of Thrones: *Cersei Lannister / Daenerys Targaryen*

06: Dylan Lyrics: *Cold Irons Bound*

*Looking at you and I'm on my bended knee.
You have no idea what you do to me.*

Dylan Lyrics: *I Feel a Change Comin' On*

*We got so much in common
We strive for the same old ends
And I just can't wait
Wait for us to become friends.
I feel a change comin' on
And the fourth part of the day's already gone.*

Game of Thrones: *Jon Snow / Daenerys
Targaryen*

07: Dylan Lyrics: *Shelter From the Storm*

*Now there's a wall between us,
somethin' there's been lost.
I took too much for granted,
got my signals crossed.*

Game of Thrones: *The Wall*

08: Dylan Lyrics: *Pay in Blood*

*Someone must of slipped a drug in your wine.
You gulped it down and you've crossed the line.
Man can't live by bread alone.
I pay in blood, but not my own.*

Game of Thrones: *Arya Stark/Revenge of the Red
Wedding*

09: Dylan Lyrics: *If Not For You*

*If not for you
The winter would hold no spring;
Couldn't hear a robin sing.
I just wouldn't have a clue, If not for you.*

Game of Thrones: *Winter is Coming*

10: Dylan Lyrics: *Positively Fourth Street*

*You got a lotta nerve
To say you got a hand to lend.
You just wanna be
On the side that's winning.*

Game of Thrones: *House Allegiances*

11: Dylan Lyrics: *Changing of the Guard*

*Peace will come
With tranquility and splendor on the wheels of fire,
But will bring us no reward when her false idols fall
And cruel death surrenders with its pale ghost retreating
Between the King and the Queen of Swords*

Game of Thrones: *Battle for the Seven Kingdoms*

12: Dylan Lyrics: *Beyond the Horizon*

I'm touched with desire.

What don't I do?

I'll throw logs on the fire.

I'll build my world around you.

*Beyond the horizon, at the end of the game,
Every step that you take, I'm walking the same.*

Game of Thrones: *General Comment*

13: Dylan Lyrics: *Abandoned Love*

Everybody's wearing a disguise

To hide what they've got left behind their eyes.

So, one more time at midnight, near the wall

Take off your heavy make-up and your shawl.

Won't you descend from the throne, from where you sit?

Let me feel your love one more time before I abandon it.

**Game of Thrones: *Arya Stark learning her craft with the
faceless men / Jon Snow leaving the wall / throne***

Blog Entry for 11/22/17

A Missed Opportunity?

I did not see Dylan the other night
When in Boston he did alight
With his band of extraordinary musicians.
It was one of my harder decisions
To forego concert #29.
Someone else's seat could have been mine.
But, I'm OK - I wasn't missed.
It was just fate that simply twists
In and out of my recent past.
I hope Dylan and his band last
Several more years when I still can go
And honor his presence at another show.
He inspires me to give my best
To my students each day and I'm blessed
With the chance to share what I do know;
Perhaps even some wisdom to show
Them how to be the best at what they do
And be quite satisfied when each day is through.

Blog Entry for 9/18/17

My Mind Wanders

Sitting in my office in my easy chair
Wondering what to write and where
My thoughts may go next
To help prepare what I read in the text
And give my students glimpses of the truth -
My mind just wandered up to Duluth
With a Dylan tune in my ear.
It's always a good time of year
To connect the words of this living legend
With my current work - once again.
Spiral curriculum was today's vocab term
As one peels the layers in order to learn
More deeply about what can be in store
Today as I sit and wander some more.

Blog Entry on 10/14/17

This month, at 66, an iconic symbol of
of rock 'n roll passed away. He was connected
With many music legends including Backing
A prominent set of shows in the mid 1980's
While touring with Dylan. I only
Recently began listening to the extensive catalog
Associated with Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers.
My daily walks have been enriched by listening to these tunes.

Blog Entry of 5/24/17

Bob Dylan is 76 Today.

I will be seeing Dylan in concert on Father's Day in less than a month. Today, he celebrates his 76th birthday or, I should say, many people throughout the world are celebrating his 76th birthday. I often wonder why I am fascinated by the output of Dylan's work and I will put it in as simple a set of words as possible. Dylan stretches the boundaries of his craft and is not held back by the constraints of the expectations of others. People learn more about themselves by listening to Dylan's lyrics sung in his own voice and covered by hundreds of other musicians. I honor his presence by listening to him play live. I have used his tunes to organize my own thoughts and write lyrics that relate to a topic about which I am passionate. He stumbles. He has his faults and limitations. He brings out the best in those who are fortunate enough to accompany him. He has no answers to life's challenges, but he brings elements of those challenges to our attention that need to be addressed. His works have enriched my life. His presence has made my life more satisfying.

Review of *I'm Not There* November 23, 2007

After reading mostly favorable reviews of this biopic, I was not disappointed with Todd Hayne's work. He held my attention from beginning to end and the interplay among characters was artfully accomplished. I would definitely go see it again! **Overall rating: 9 out of 10 stars:** no one can capture Dylan with perfection; a 10 out of 10 is impossible! My comments follow:

Cheesiest Moments: Jude (Cate Blanchett) makes a remark right after a huffy exit by CoCo, "Just like a woman!" and Jude frolicking on the lawn with Beatles look-alikes.

Highlight of the biopic: Cate Blanchett's gestures while playing piano at the Manchester Free Trade Hall venue in 1966 during a version of *Ballad of a Thin Man*.

Overall Effects: town of Riddle, which appeared to contain a collage of characters who could have inhabited *Desolation Row*, resided by *Highway 61* or assembled *All Along the Watchtower*.

Unexpected Moment: Ritchie Havens as Old Man Arvin singing on the front porch with little "Woody Guthrie."

Best Aspect of Viewing the Movie: attending with my daughter and sharing a "Dylan" moment.

Best Interpretation of a Song: following Mr. Jones, the journalist, as lyrics are in the background and mirror *Dont Look Back* sequence.

Most Realistic Representation (aside from Cate Blanchett): portrayal of Joan Baez persona (Alice Fabian) by Julianne Moore.

Best Portrayal of a Member of the Dylan Entourage: Albert Grossman (Norman) character played by Mark Camacho.

Best Song Connected to the Script: *Goin' to Acapulco* sung by Jim James with white powdered face reminiscent of Rolling Thunder Revue days.

New Lyrics to Familiar Dylan Tunes

I have enjoyed adding new lyrics to familiar Dylan tunes that help convey a meaningful, and at times humorous, message. A sample of these adapted lyrics follows.

- **Tangled Up in Bellevue**
- **The Phases of Faces**
- **The High-Stakes Tests Are Gonna' Fall**
- **The Questions on My Mind**
- **Knock, Knock, Knockin' on Heaven's Door**
- **Who Spilled the Wine Last Night?**
- **The Changin' Truths**
- **Please Think Twice, It's Not Right**
- **The Curse is Gone Babe**

Tangled Up in Bellevue

Over thirty years ago, I found myself a patient in the emergency room of Bellevue Hospital in New York City. I was in NYC as a presenter for one of the school districts and, after a bout of dizziness upon leaving the train, found myself in a surreal set of circumstances that, upon reflection, reminded me of the different scenes from Dylan's *Tangled Up in Blue*. I wrote a rather lengthy essay with details of the events that seemed to change in their sequencing as I relived the ordeal. More recently, I composed a shorter form of my essay to the tune of *Tangled Up in Blue* to become the current *Tangled Up in Bellevue*. (lyrics on the following page)

*As one ages, the memories of our past
Change places as the vast
Number of scenes that go on in our mind
Float in and out as we find
Ourselves trying to make sense
Of these thousands of events
That influence who we are today
Amid what Dylan has to say.*

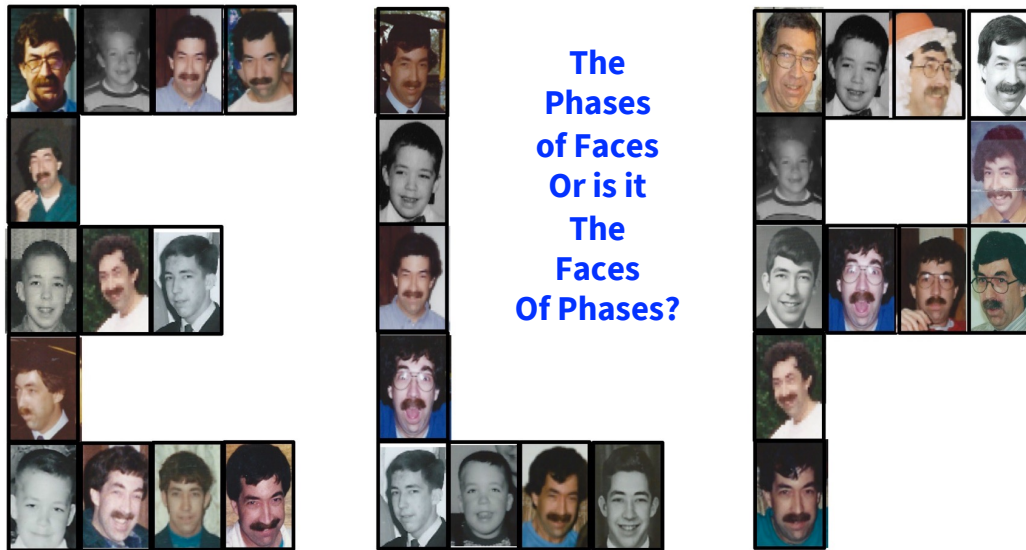
Tangled Up in Bellevue

The train pulled in and I got off;
Started my usual routine.
Stopped on the stairs to make my escape
Grew faint from my morning caffeine.
The ambulance sped on ahead
With me in the back for a ride.
I didn't know what would become of me;
I guess it wasn't up to be to decide.
I had a job 12 blocks away
From the hospital that I did enter.
They expected me at 9:00
I was to be the main presenter . . .
Near Second Avenue,
But instead . . . I'm Tangled up in Bellevue.
Someone came over to the side of my bed.
She said her name was Mrs. Paul.
She asked who I was and where I was from
And in her book my name she did scrawl.
Some were homeless and some were thieves.
Some were just presenters by day.
Some recovered in detox from drugs.
Some had a lot to say.
I entertained myself as best I could;
Peered through the bars of my bed.
I don't belong here at all
Wish I could leave now but instead . . .
I felt everyone knew - - -
I was Tangled up in Bellevue.

People came and people went;
Misery could be heard in each voice.
No one was here voluntarily.
No one was here by choice.
What is normal is foreign to me.
It seems like I'm in a dream.
The plot doesn't seem to make any sense;
I didn't get any ice cream.
A community of strangers stares back at me.
What will be in store?
When will I leave – Where will I go?
I don't know if it's 1:00 or it's 4:00 ...
I wish that I knew,
but I'm Tangled Up in Bellevue.
Twenty-one years have come and gone.
I've moved on to other places;
But I know I will never soon forget
All the emergency room faces.
I didn't know if the sun came out
Or whether it rained all day.
All I know about that fact is
Whether I would leave or stay.
The people there have gone back to their lives
And I have done so too;
But I realize that for all these years
I still haven't got a clue ...
But I've paid my dues ...
Tangled up in Bellevue.

Another Connection to Dylan's *Tangled Up in Blue*

I was arranging photographs that depicted me at various ages in my life. I formed the photos into my initials ELP [Ernest Leo Pancsofar] and placed them out of chronological order. I immediately thought of Dylan's tune, *Tangled Up in Blue*, in which the episodes described in the verses do not adhere to any specific timeline and has been referred to as kaleidoscopic in its presentation. I composed a brief set of four verses to describe how my current life is a composite of my past experiences as my memory holds them to be true and the events of my later years influence my perceptions of my younger self.



**My past is out of order
in a chronology of time.
The phases of these faces
lend to my current rhyme.
Dylan captures this paradox
in *Tangled up in Blue*.
I'm shaped by my impressions
of this personal picture stew.**

**My reflections of my twenties
are influenced by what I know
Of life when I was forty.
It's a blur as my age does grow.
Am I the sum of all my past;
is now all there is for me?
I think I remember – No, I just forgot
A part of what used to be.**

To Honor a Colleague's Advocacy

This connection has its roots in Dylan's *A Hard Rain's A Gonna Fall*. My colleague and friend, Jesse Turner, walked from Connecticut to Washington DC on two occasions to protest the harm inflicted on children by the high-stakes assessment culture that pervades our schools. I applaud Jesse's dedication and advocacy on behalf of all children.

*Amid the talk of progress,
Laws are passed by Congress
That aim for a better education
For students in their preparation
To be a citizen as an adult.
But, instead, we have a cult
Of assessment to determine
What our children are learnin'
And teaching to that test
Means that all of the rest
Of their time is spent getting ready
For the steady
Barrage of money-making entities
From the test making companies
That cause undo harm on all –
It's time to cease and call
An end to this monstrosity
And take some responsibility.*

The High Stakes Tests are Gonna Fall

Oh, where have you been, my walking man?
Oh, where have you been, out walking the land?

I've walked in my home state – yes, from the Northeast;
10 miles at a time in the rain and the heat.
I've been in the country and I've been in many a town.
My steps take me up and they also bring me down.
I've stepped on the sidewalk and I've stepped in the street.
I've walked alone and with many people I meet.
Each day's a new dawn with the friends that I make.
Their spirit is with me every step that I take.

And I'll walk, yes I'll walk, yes I'll walk - - - for us all
For the High Stakes Tests - - - are Gonna Fall.

Oh, what did you see, my walking man?
Oh, what did you see, out walking the land?

I saw young and old and black and white.
I saw love and honor in the day and the night.
I saw signs and posters after walking many miles.
I saw hope on their faces and was met with huge smiles.
I saw defiance and grit and not backing down.
That's what I saw as I went town by town.

And I'll walk, yes I'll walk, yes I'll walk - - - for us all
For the High Stakes Tests - - - are Gonna Fall.

Oh, what did you hear, my walking man?
Oh, what did you hear, out walking the land?

I heard teachers & students & parents all pleading,
Get rid of those TESTS – our hearts are a’bleeding!
I heard shouts of anguish and long, drawn out sighing.
I heard heart-wrenching screams amid all the crying.
I heard laughter from the people who make all their money
Off the backs of the students who don’t think it’s that funny.
I heard critics who say we all can do better.
I heard from hundreds of parents who sent me their letters.

And I’ll walk, yes I’ll walk, yes I’ll walk - - - for us all
For the High Stakes Tests - - - are Gonna Fall.

Oh, who did you meet, my walking man?
Oh, who did you meet, out walking the land?

I met the eyes of the students in all types of schools.
I met our next senators – the future makers of new rules.
I met parents who just want what’s right and what’s just.
They all are behind me – Washington DC or bust!
I met people who offered me food and a drink.
I met people who wanted to hear what I think.
I met hard working people who will not give up hope.
I met love & faith – two great ways we can cope.

And I’ll walk, yes I’ll walk, yes I’ll walk - - - for us all
For the High Stakes Tests - - - are Gonna Fall.

Oh, what will you do now, my walking man?
Oh, what will you do now, out walking the land?

I’ll talk to all people who know things are not right.
I’ll share all the stories and help them shed some light.
I’ll work with our teachers for better ways to assess.
I’ll help make real plans to get us out of this mess.
I’ll dedicate my life to the students I meet
In the literacy center – when they come once a week.
I’ll never back down from the high stakes test lies
From the people who deceive and pull the wool over our eyes.

And I’ll walk, yes I’ll walk, yes I’ll walk - - - for us all
For the High Stakes Tests - - - are Gonna Fall.

The Questions on My Mind **(set to the tune of Blowin' In The Wind)**

How many times will it take till we know
that all children don't learn all the same?
How many times will we not turn our head
and see the harm done in testing's good name?
Yes, and how many years will it take till we show
that it's not the children we should blame?
Please hear my words, my friend.
Don't lie to our children.
Make learning fun and meaningful for all.

How can we teach to a child who's not there;
a child in poverty and more?
How many times must we search for a cause
that's hidden by a single testing score?
Yes, and how many times will the children cry out,
"Get us out of this rotten testing game?"
Please hear my words, my teacher
And try real hard to reach her.
Make learning fun and meaningful for all.

How many subjects must we lay by the side and
only work on reading skills and math?
Yes, and how many hours can our students explore
all the skills to continue on life's path?
How many voices must cry out in the dark
that the tests fall far from the mark?
Please hear my words, my friend.
We're hurting our children.
Make learning fun and meaningful for all.

Knock, Knock, Knockin' on **Grade Seven's Door**

Teacher, take this label off of me.
I don't need it anymore.
I'm not so different, can't you see.
I can learn beyond that door.

Knock, knock, knockin' on grade seven's door
Don't leave me out here anymore.
Knock, knock, knockin' on grade seven's door
Hear my voice and let me soar.

This label doesn't let me be
With my peers who I can reach.
Open up your eyes and see
And find new ways that you can teach.

(Chorus)

All I need from you is HOPE.
I can take care of the rest.
Your support will help me cope.
I can show you all my best.

(Chorus)

Don't give up on me and flee.
With your help I can achieve.
Take a closer look at me.
I belong - you must believe.

(Chorus)

Who Spilled the Wine Last Night?
(A Parody to Dylan's Who Killed Davey Moore?)

*This is a lighthearted set of verses
following an incident at a social
event at which I was present. Someone
spilled the wine that night and no one
appeared to own up to it.*

Who Spilled the Wine Last Night
And left the rug such an awful sight?

Not I said the man who sat
Right above where the spill was at.
I saw the table as it did shake.
I believe we had a big earthquake.
I saw the glass as it did fall.
It's not my fault at all.

Who spilled the wine last night
And left the rug such an awful sight?

Not I said the gentleman.
I sat quietly I could have ran.
I took a look at my right side
As the glass fell in mid stride.
It wasn't me that made it fall.
You can't blame me at all.

Who spilled the wine last night
And left the rug such an awful sight?

It's not me came a shout from across the table.
My arms are too short and I wouldn't be able
To knock the glass from where I sat.
It could have been a dog or cat.
It wasn't me I do recall.
It's not my fault at all.

Who Spilled the Wine Last Night
And left the rug such an awful sight?

It wasn't me said man number four,
But I volunteered to go to the store
To buy more salt to soak it up.
We need much more than just a cup
To spread around about the floor.
It's not me I do implore.

Who spilled the wine last night
And left the rug such an awful sight?

It wasn't me said the evening's host.
I was sitting at my post
Looking down upon my aces;
I heard a gasp and saw the faces
Look to where the glass had been.
It wasn't me who spilled it then.

Who Spilled the Wine Last Night? **(continued)**

Who spilled the wine last night
And left the rug such an awful sight?

It wasn't me said a voice so terse
Just because I wrote this verse.
I saw the glass fly in the air
And spread the wine most everywhere
On the carpet, wall and chair.
It wasn't me I do declare.

Who Spilled the Wine Last Night
And left the rug such an awful sight?

I now remember, I think I know
It wasn't any of us there though.
I think I do remember him.
His name, I believe, to be Jim.
He snuck into the house real late.
We were taking a bathroom break.
He spilled the wine and left real fast.
We found the culprit at long last.
Who spilled the wine last night?
It was Jim – but he took flight!

The Changin' Truths

Come gather round people and I'll sing you a tale.
I'll sing you this song and I'll send it e-mail.
It's a song about learning, teaching and fun.
It's a song that continues and never is done.
'Cause you better start lookin' & searchin' some more
For the truths - - - they are a changin'.

We're talkin' 'bout people with labels and names.
Sometimes we're different & sometimes we're the same.
We all have gifts and talents and skills.
We all have minds and souls and wills.
So look all around you and wonder in awe
For the truths - - - they are a changin'.

Come teachers and students and everyone here.
Come from your schools and gather all near
And celebrate our unique diversity
And welcome us all into your community.
'Cause we all have ambitions and goals and dreams
For the truths - - - they are a changin'.

Once again, A Dylan tune serves as the melody for this set of lyrics: *Don't Think Twice, It's Alright*. A colleague of mine, Karen Riem, contributed two of the verses during a celebration ceremony for student teachers. The words contained in these verses summarize some of the great harm to our children in the name of misplaced accountability.

Please Think Twice, It's Not Right

The school is getting ready for the testing
What they test for - I don't know.
Instead, the parents should be protesting
The manufacturers of this show.
What is the answer to question #3?
Right or wrong, why can't it be maybe?
These high stakes tests were not made for you and me
So, please think twice. It's not right.

There's got to be some other way of knowing
The progress that they made.
There's got to be another way of showing
How they're doing in their grade.
My big ideas don't fit in the bubbles on the sheet
When I finish the test, I feel I'm in defeat.
These high stakes test just make us want to cheat.
So, please think twice. It's not right.

I wonder what those yearly tests do measure.
I wonder what's behind that score.
I wonder what's behind the pressure.
Our students can't take it anymore.
It measures the money that the parents make.
It measures the money that the testers take.
Please stop this testing for the children's sake.
So, please think twice. It's not right.

The school year starts with lots of preparation
Learning how to take those tests.
Students sit in desperation
Each answer looks like all the rest.
Fill in a bubble - get the right response.
The scores bring troubles and fears and haunts.
Students survive amid all the taunts
So, please think twice. It's not right.

I'm searching for the answers to my questions
And the best way to assess
Their attitudes and dispositions
That can't be measured with a test
Like caring and sharing in community
Embracing love and diversity
Help build a school of joy and unity,
So, please think twice. It's not right.

Ain't no use in making up your charts,
Each child is not the same,
And teaching is a complicated art,
Not a faceless numbers game.
Children are the world and our responsibility.
We've got to give them every tool and opportunity,
And that means teaching with respect for rich diversity.
So, please think twice. It's not right.

The Curse is Gone, BABE

(to the Dylan tune – It Ain't Me, Babe
composed in 2004 after the Red Sox won the World Series)

Go 'way from my dream, BABE,
Leave with great haste and much speed.
Your ghost has fled the scene, BABE,
Listen to this warning and take heed.
We're not the ones you want, BABE,
Go back amid the history of your fame.
You're not welcome in our dream, BABE,
The Red Sox just won the seventh game!
You say you're looking for someone
Who is weak and always wrong;
Someone to haunt with bad dreams;
Someone to hear your song;
Someone who falls and fails again.
But it ain't me, BABE,
No. No. No. It ain't me, BABE.
It ain't me your lookin' for BABE.

Go back into your grave, BABE,
Go back to sleep six feet beneath the ground.
We're not the ones you want, BABE,
We're sick and tired of you bein' 'round.
You say it is your duty
To curse each one you see.
Go back to where you came from
And take that curse away from me.
Go back and don't come 'round here no more!
'Cause it ain't me, BABE.
No. No. No. It ain't me, BABE.
It ain't me your lookin' for, BABE.

When Bob Dylan wrote the words to one of his classic songs, It Ain't Me, Babe, I doubt that he had the Boston Red Sox in mind. Having been a life-long, suffering Red Sox fan, 2004 was a baseball season in which the Red Sox won their first World Series since 1918. I immediately thought of the curse of the bambino – Babe Ruth, as a major influence in this drought and rearranged Dylan's lyrics to reflect the removal of that curse.

Concert Reviews

For some of the shows I attended, I recorded a review of my impressions with what Dylan had to offer. I enjoyed sharing many of these reviews on expectingrain.com.

08/18/1997	Wallingford, CT
08/24/2006	Pawtucket, RI
11/11/2006	Boston, MA
11/15/2006	Amherst, MA
06/25/2007	Northampton, MA
06/27/2007	Uncasville, CT
09/29/2007	Kingston, RI
09/30/2007	Bridgeport, CT
05/16/2008	Worcester, MA
08/15/2008	Mashantucket, CT
07/15/2009	New Britain, CT
11/27/2010	Uncasville, CT
08/21/2011	Boston, MA
11/15/2014	Providence, RI
11/21/2014	Philadelphia, PA
06/18/2017	Wallingford, CT
11/18/2018	Springfield, MA
11/20/2018	Waterbury, CT
11/20/2019	Providence, RI

Wallingford, CT
(August 18, 1997)



**My first Dylan concert in 1997
accompanied by my wife and
two daughters!**

Set List

- 01 Peggy-O
- 02 Absolutely Sweet Marie
- 03 I'll Be Your Baby Tonight
- 04 Tough Mamma
- 05 Silvio
- 06 It's All Over Now Baby Blue
- 07 Tangled Up In Blue
- 08 Little Sadie
- 09 I'll Remember You
- 10 This Wheel's On Fire (with Rick Danko)
- 11 The Cat's In the Well
- 12 Like a Rolling Stone
- 13 I Shall Be Released (with Rick Danko)
- 14 Alabama Getaway

One Too Many Evenings and a Hundred Miles - - - BEHIND!

(August 24, 2006)

In Pawtucket, Rhode Island, on a cool Thursday night
McCoy baseball stadium came into sight.
At approximately 5:00 PM, give or take a few minutes
We stood among people with BOB printed on their tickets.
The line inched forward one slow step at a time
Enough that by coincidence I picked up a dime.
This could only mean one thing, my inner voice did speak.
Tonight, Dylan's performance will be quite unique.

Elana James and the Continental Duo
Temporarily morphed into a smooth-playing trio.
And in her set – a little past the middle -
She let it rip on the country fiddle
With **The Orange Blossom Special** – a delight to hear;
Got the crowd to its feet with some shouts and a cheer.

Junior Brown was next – with a snare drummer and bass player,
He stepped it up a notch as a solid entertainer
With a deep voice that resonates much like Ernest Tubb
As Brown plays his guit-steel at the Continental Club.
If you break the law, you'll hear from me, I know.
I'm workin' for the state. I'm the Highway Patrol.

Jimmie Vaughan rounded out the initial group of musicians
With Lou Ann Barton adding a few guest contributions.
Boom-Bapa-Boom and **Telephone Man**
Were two strong choices for the occasional fan.
He also performed selections from his famous brother:
Stevie Ray Vaughn played guitar like no other.

One Too Many Evenings and a Hundred Miles - - - BEHIND!

(continued)

Now on with the show!
I bet you'd like to know
What the set list was for this evening of delight;
This cool, dark evening on a late August night.

Cat's in the Well was a surprise first slot pick.
Many thought *Maggie's Farm* would do the trick
And Bob looked a little stiff as he rocked back and forth,
But the crowd cheered loudly for what it was worth.
Two bare heads and four hats donned -
Dylan and his band were rockin' on.

As we wondered what next he would do,
We recognized quite quickly pick number two
When *Clouds so swift - Rain won't lift* echoed in the air,
The show moved on with ***You Ain't Goin' Nowhere***.

From ***Love and Theft*** and his #3 selection,
Tweedle Dee & Tweedle Dum was up for consideration.
Not especially a strong favorite of many a Dylan fan,
But you do not protest the decision of this man
Who allows us to observe his improvisation
As he plays some of his songs for the 500th occasion.

The crowd was in the mood to sing along with a roar
As they heard the beginning of set list #4.
Just Like A Woman echoed throughout the stands
And Dylan seemed impressed as he motioned with his hands.
I wasn't sure this "sing-along" was part of his plan,
But it created a stir and excitement for each fan.

One Too Many Evenings and a Hundred Miles - - - BEHIND!

(continued)

Saint Annie and Sweet Melinda were part of song #5;
Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues loudly came alive.
We've all been lost somewhere along the road;
Sometimes directions needed to be told
And challenges mount. We feel quite defeated.
Get out of that rut and go where you're needed.

One of my favorites was now in the mix
For Dylan's choice for set list #6:
Masters of War. Statements of hypocrisy
Spew from the current developers of democracy.
Leaders, take heed when you send young people off to war.
There's no winners only losers; you can't even the score.

Sometimes we need to go back and see things again
Be it a place or a person or a road or a glen.
Highway 61 seems to be such a place
Where spectators look on and take up space
To see the attractions from the bleachers on the side
Of exploits from a prophet, kings and gamblers in stride.

While we waited to hear Dylan's selection #8,
The hour yet was not getting late
For there had been a dire forecast of rains from heaven
So, ***Shelter From the Storm*** seemed the choice after #7.
Hopeful, serene, with a slow, steady cadence;
Appeared well received by those in attendance.

One Too Many Evenings and a Hundred Miles - - - BEHIND!

(continued)

The choice and selection for set list #9

Originated from **Nashville Skyline**.

We had been talking about Norman Blake earlier in the day.

He helped record this song with his most extraordinary play.

I'll Be Your Baby Tonight was the choice by Mister Dylan,

As the set winds down – three songs yet to be fillin'.

From **Blood on the Tracks** in 1975,

The next song in the set did derive.

Tangled Up in Blue filled in well in slot #10.

I never tire of hearing this once again.

I especially like the version performed by the Dead,

But it's better hearing it in person, instead.

The lyrics of the next song in my head are still ringing:

I'll know my song well before I start sing.

A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall is from the pen of the wise

As Ginsberg recalls with tears in his eyes

For a colleague's admiration in commentary

Captured in the *Dont Look Back* documentary.

Summer days now concludes this night's set,

But we know Bob's not quite done with us yet.

The yells for "encore" erupt in great earnest

From the mouths of the young and the sounds of the eldest.

He typically ends with a 12-song selection

And plays two more, at least that's his convention.

One Too Many Evenings and a Hundred Miles - - - BEHIND!

(continued)

Not to disappoint, he comes back on stage
For ***Like A Rolling Stone*** – it never seems to age.
Then, he introduces the members of his band
Followed by ***All Along the Watchtower*** - He's now played his hand.
But then, from the darkness, the lights once more appear
As Dylan acknowledges the ovations he hears.
His hat in his hand – he waves to the crowd.
The lights then dim – after the band has bowed.

Dylan's not to be idolized.
Dylan helps me question why
He has enriched my life – I can't begin to explain how.
I hope I have expressed my appreciation for him. Now
It's on to Pittsfield tomorrow night
To see what else I may choose to write.

The Midnight Ride That Brought Me Here

(November 11, 2006)

Listen my children and you shall hear
My comments of the show on a night cool and clear
To Boston with my daughter on a Saturday night
The Agganis Arena soon came into sight.

The opening act really did sizzle.
The Raconteurs can make hairs on the back of your neck bristle.
They walked on stage to a Dracula beat
And kept up a drive – notched up the heat!
Two of my favorites that they played tonight
Together and a version of **Bang Bang** - - out of sight!
Of all the opening bands that I have ever seen
The Raconteurs were, by far, supreme.

The lights came back on – Dylan swayed to and fro
As **Maggie's Farm** opened the show.
After watching the Raconteurs – full of energy,
The band seemed subdued – perhaps even with lethargy.
But, they are a professional group of musicians
And Bob knows quite well of each one's contributions.

10 times at #2 on this leg of the tour,
She Belongs to Me echoed 'round the floor.
There's been 21 dates from Vancouver to Maine
And 60 different songs – no set list is the same.

The Midnight Ride That Brought Me Here

(continued)

Lonesome Day Blues – caused a certain jubilee
'Cause my picks of songs are perfect through three.
But then the truth of a set list probability
Is that any song is a possibility.
Nothing is a certainty.
Bob's in charge – most definitely.

An acoustic guitar was prominent at four.
Don't Think Twice was next in store
And the tempo varied from verse to verse
With Bob's phrasing – there's just forward – no reverse.

It's Alright Ma was a nice choice at five;
At this point the audience seemed to come alive.
They responded in the typical way
When the president must stand naked – as Dylan did say.

A few weeks ago, I downloaded a tune
Workingman's Blues as Haggard did croon.
Dylan pays homage through and through
In his version of **Workingman's Blues #2**.

Tangled Up in Blue then slowed the pace down.
The seats seemed well filled in as I looked around.
The audience ranged from very young to quite old;
I'm inching in the latter group . . . so I'm told.

The Midnight Ride That Brought Me Here

(continued)

The thing about concerts that bother me the most,
And this appears to happen from coast to coast,
It's the "excuse me" I need to get out.
After the 30th time I just want to shout
Hold it in – It won't be long.
Don't leave your seat in the middle of this song!

Song #8 was heard only once – this leg of the tour
Blind Willie McTell rang eerily 'round the floor.
I was pleased to listen to this current version.
The "Rake" songs are reported to be Bob's inspiration.

At this point in time in many a Dylan show,
Slot #9 is a difficult one to know
What the master will play – what he will say
And tonight it was **Most Likely You Go Your Way.**

When I heard the **Ballad of Hollis Brown** from the stage,
I thought of Aaron Neville's cover of this song's sage.
Its slow and haunting tempo and pace
Brings the sad images back into place.

Rolling up Interstate 84,
Boston's just about 50 miles more
And when I get there – I'm not quite done;
I still have to travel down **Highway 61!**

The Midnight Ride That Brought Me Here

(continued)

A second selection from Modern Times;

Spirit on the Water comes forth in rhymes.

The crowd reacts to whether Bob is past his prime.

Was that a smile, as he plays the crowd sometimes?

Fall has taken hold and it's cool outside;

Summer Days signals the end of this set's ride.

I've heard tighter versions. but this one's still fine.

It ages quite well – like a fine vintage wine.

The stage darkens – the audience begins to roar.

Three more songs for his standard encore.

At this point in time in many a Dylan show,

Thunder on the Mountain is welcomed as many of the crowd stand

After which a funny thing happened when Bob introduced his band.

His typical remarks were standard and on cue

Until he introduced himself with words anew:

I used to play the guitar – but someone's got to play this thing!

As he gestured to the organ and then gave a cue to sing - - -

Like a Rolling Stone and ***All Along the Watchtower***

Brought the show to a close just before the 11th hour.

My eighth show was over and I leave quite content.

It's off to Amherst on Wednesday;

A new review – perhaps to present.

Stuck Inside of Amherst With the Boston Blues Again

(November 15, 2006)

Duck out of work – leavin’ on the run.
Out on the highway – clouds blockin’ the sun.
Mist fallin’ down – darkness fillin’ ‘round
Goin’ back to see Dylan – to hear this evenin’s sound.

First on hand – The Raconteurs began
With a similar set as Boston – and still sound grand.
However, an addition from the Byrds did evolve,
I Love the Christian Life – sung with some resolve.

I have read some of this band’s earlier tour site reviews
By individuals who seem to be quite confused
By the mixture of talents that seems to effuse
Into a loud and sometimes dynamic blues.

I personally like their creative energy
And the exciting, complementary synergy
Mingled in with some tenacity
You can hear each band member’s individuality.

I had a clear view from where I sat
As the set started off with ***Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat***:
Front row, stage left on the floor
Waiting for what was to be in store.

Five concerts in four month’s time
My entire entertainment budget is now a dime.
It took awhile before I could see
Song #2 was ***The Man In Me***.

Stuck Inside of Amherst With the Boston Blues Again (continued)

I had to go back to my Bob Dylan Lyrics Book
And turn to p. 295 and once again look
At the **New Morning** pages to review this song;
It's been awhile – sometime a bit too long.

Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum took set list position #3.
In this song, Denny Freeman shines and he was quite close to see.
But overall, not one of my favorites of the night,
But it brings out some of the talent – and this band's tight.

When the Deal Goes Down was in position #4:
Melodic, smooth and with tenderness and more.
The audience is attentive and you could even say hushed,
As Bob sings this song slowly - he doesn't seem rushed.

From the very first note with a deep bass sound
There is no doubt what's next, it's **Cold Irons Bound**.
There was a much longer intro in the Pittsfield set
From *Time Out Of Mind*, it's always a good bet.

My highlight and the talk 'round the cracker barrel
Was **The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll**.
Bob's past songs contained clips from the news
To fuel his lyrics – a source for his muse.

The title of Bob's seventh song selection
Escaped my waning memory's detection.
I wrote She Acts Like We Never Have Met
I Don't Believe You was in this spot of the set.

Stuck Inside of Amherst With the Boston Blues Again
(continued)

On Veterans Day in Boston town,
I originally thought Bob would play **John Brown**.
This song is one of sorrows;
War brings such uncertain tomorrows.
Soldiers leave to cheers, but quite often
Return quite maimed or worse, in a coffin.
For spot number 8 - John Brown met his fate.

Watching the River Flow has a nice, easy pace
And anchors a spot in the #9 space.
The set so far is a satisfactory one:
Quite diverse and over halfway done.

Sugar Baby is the 10th song of the set.
Bob's ballad style singing has not left him yet.
This final track from the **Love and Theft** CD
Has multiple meanings and thoughts for me.

Bright lights flashing 'gainst the black backdrop;
Everyone knows this old-fashioned stop
As I begin to hear **Highway 61**.
It lets me know the set is almost done.

Spirit on the Water enters in at #12 place.
Bob's soft, crooning voice has a leveling pace.
Reflective and selective in his questioning at this time,
He asks us, the listener, if we think he's past his prime.

Tony's smile is the highlight of **Summer Days**
As he twirls the upright bass in entertaining ways.
The band puts new life into this version of the song
As the members of the audience move and sway along.

Stuck Inside of Amherst With the Boston Blues Again
(continued)

The set is over and the clapping does begin.
I've already written "Thunder" as my 14th pick again.
But much to my surprise, what does Bob sing instead?
He begins his encore with **Lenny Bruce** is dead.

Then Bob introduces the members of the band
Followed by **Thunder on the Mountain** – again quite grand.
I smile as I remember hearing it the first time
And admiring Bob's ability to creatively make a rhyme:
Gonna raise me an army, some tough sons of bitches
I'll recruit my army from the orphanages.

Like a Rolling Stone ended the night.
The band seemed to get it sufficiently right.

My thoughts and feelings about the night
Are similar to other times Bob's been in my sight.
I welcome the chance to see him play live.
It's an honor to hear him – no matter the dive.
His phrasing and playing often in different keys
Bring serenity and satisfaction and please
And thank you, Bob and I wish you good cheer,
Until I see you 3 or 4 times again next year.

In the Whispering Pines Theater

(June 25, 2007)

In the Pines Theater at Look Park,
Waitin' on Dylan for a 7:30 start.
But first there is Sarabeth Tucek to hear;
Not too familiar with her work and its clear
She's hot as she plays in this 95-degree heat
As she thanks Bob's crew for their help from her seat
And she sang about *Highway 61*.
After a few more songs her set was done.

Sixteen songs comprised this evening's show.
I'll give just a brief impression as I prepare to go
To Uncasville for tomorrow night's venue
And review my notes both old and new.

First, he opened with ***Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat***
None of us figured this song for that
Beginning slot where ***Cat's in the Well***
Had been each previous set's opening bell.

My personal highlights consisted of two of Bob's songs
When ***Desolation Row*** & ***Things Have Changed*** came along.
When I saw Donnie on his mandolin, I remembered last year
When his personal mark on this song did appear.
But this show his presence was far down in the mix;
Instead, Denny Freeman had some great licks.
Bob said many words in his quick, staccato voice:
Des-O-La-Tion Row was his emphasis of choice.

Things Have Changed was a great choice too,
As his Oscar award was presently in view.

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts;
My 10th show contained songs that could spark
My feelings, imagination and memories in kind.
Dylan's the background music for my soul and mind.
I'm thankful for his unique gift.
He has in his songs the power to lift
My thoughts and feelings and make new connections
To my work, to my life ... to my daily reflections.

Once again, I leave a Dylan show quite satisfied.
At 69 he's still quite dignified.

Mohegan Sun Arena: Dylan Show

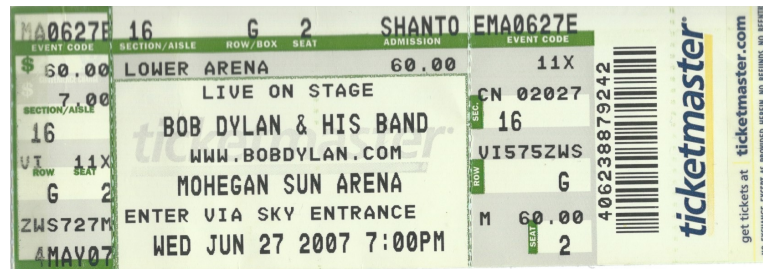
(June 27, 2007)

If from this set the best I had to choose,
It's **To Romona** and **Just Like Tom Thunb's Blues**.
But wait, there's a 15th song in store:
Blowin' in the Wind echoes before this night's encore.

The "Eye" rolls down and "Thunder" roars
From both inside the arena and outside the doors.
My first trip to a casino to watch a Dylan show.
The glitz and glitter and lights all aglow.
One's senses are attacked from each and every angle;
The lure of riches from the slot machines dangle
Just outside this 10,000-seat arena
With winners and losers in the bars and cantina.

One more highlight to comment on:
Just Like a Woman was more like a sing-along.
Bob encouraged this audience participation
With his hand gestures and voice inflection.

How was the show? Was it the best?
Was Bob on target along with the rest?
There are no answers to questions like these.
I left my 11th show content and pleased.



Kingston, Rhode Island

(September 29, 2007)

Pre-Concert Listening: Prior to the concert I listened to tunes by artists who influenced Dylan either as a contemporary or predecessor: Blind Willie McTell, Eric von Schmidt, Jesse Fuller, Blind Boy Fuller, Warren Zevon, Howlin' Wolf, etc. In a similar vein, while recently reading the Shelton entry in the *The Encyclopedia of Bob Dylan*, it was 46 years ago on this date when his career enhancing review appeared in the *NY Times*.

Elvis Costello: I had not heard Elvis Costello on stage before and he has a commanding presence. He is a SHOWMAN who entertains with humor, zest and style.

Energy Level of the Show: This was a rather low energy show with several ballad entries. However, this is not to imply that it was not well worth the price of admission, which by the way is set at a very reasonable cost considering the talent of Costello and Dylan on the same ticket.

George Receli: *Highway 61* really brings out the best in this A-1 drummer. On other selections he surfaces when necessary and recedes into the background at just the right times. Receli is a class act!

Mariner's Compass: A bright yellow and black (URI school colors?) adorned the stage floor. Dylan stood at True North during the first three numbers while on guitar. Then, he moved to north by northeast for the remainder of the show on keyboards. Our seats were at south by southwest and we had a clear view of Dylan's expressions throughout the evening.

Red Trunk – Stage Right: Against a backdrop of black and gray (equipment and attire), this red trunk stood out like the color red in the movie *Sixth Sense*. To me, it signified the raw emotion contained in Dylan's lyrics that get to the heart of current, everyday challenges even though the words were written scores of years ago.

Subtle Changes in Lyrics and Beat: This is one of the essential reasons to continue to marvel at the mastery of Dylan over the phasing of his lyrics – often to a new arrangement or in a different key than I may have heard before. His spontaneous interpretations are a trademark of his performances, and his band must be on constant alert to when and how he changes his attention to detail for that specific song. He is like a painter who currently provides us with a unique opportunity to view his re-creations of a previous painting but with more blue and yellow and less red than before. The finished product leaves us with a different impression and image.

Kingston, Rhode Island

(continued)

Donnie Herron: I believe him to be one of the most versatile and talented of Dylan's band members. However, he is often so far down in the mix that I seem to miss his contribution. Upon reflecting on his work, I wonder if he is a link in the total sound whose absence would be readily apparent if not there, but whose work blends in so well that you don't notice how well he contributes to the whole.

In Concert: Each time I revisit Dylan's work, my life has changed. I am the sum total of all my previous experiences and the synergy with which they interact. Thus, I am a different receiver of his art and he is a different deliverer of his art. This combination advances my appreciation and puts his work in a different context each time I have the privilege of hearing him live.

Miscellaneous: As I scan the set and players, one item appears missing. In most of Dylan's previous appearances someone often comments about the sparkle that shines from his diamond ring on his left hand. No ring was evident tonight. Perhaps this is just a coincidence.

Bridgeport, CT
(September 30, 2007)

Yesterday's show was very good,
But tonight was better from where I stood.
The mournful sound from Donnie's electric violin
Gave eeriness to **Nettie Moore** with added passion.
I detected some skillful improvisation on **Honest with Me**
As Denny Freeman excelled for all to see.
The selections complemented each other well,
But I was hoping and wishing for **Blind Willie McTell**.
However, what Bob plays and what he leaves out
Is what seeing him live is all about.
What a way to start my week
As I plod along and continue to seek
The connections of the slender threads
That interweave in blues and reds
And make up the passage of this current time
And out of the chaos comes some rhyme.
Thanks again, Bob. To be in your presence
Adds richness to my life's essence.

Highlights/Lowlights of Another Leg of the Never-Ending Tour

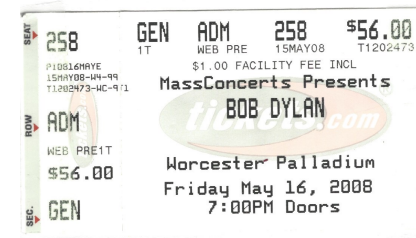
(May 16, 2008)

The Lows:

- \$20.00 parking;
- Starting off with ***Tweedle Dee & Tweedle Dum*** – an unpleasant surprise (perhaps a political commentary on the primaries and upcoming elections);
- No Bob on guitar, although there appeared to be an electric guitar atop a couple of the stage speakers that I did not notice anyone using.

The Highs:

- Listening to Warren Zevon on the ride up to Worcester;
- ***Simple Twist of Fate*** (excellent arrangement);
- ***Girl From the North Country*** (perhaps a tribute to Dylan days);
- ***John Bown*** with Donnie Herron on banjo high in the mix.



Interesting:

- I thought a couple of Charlie Patton tunes were playing over the house speakers prior to the concert;
- Lyric sheets in front of Bob for all songs;
- An old book, hat and small red cardboard box appeared on the floor – center stage prior to the encore;
- The juxtaposition of lyrics in ***Tryin' to Get to Heaven*** (*When you think that you lost everything, you find out you can always lose a little more*) and ***Like a Rolling Stone*** (*When you got nothing, you got nothing to lose*).

Waiting For:

- ***Visions of Johanna***;
- ***Desolation Row***

Final Comment: It was a Dylan Show!

MGM Grand Concert Review

(August 15, 2008)

In the spirit of the Olympics, I offer the follow 10 categories using a 10-point system of judging:

Choice of Songs: (9.8) I noted a diverse selection, mostly from the 1960s and 2000s with a 1979 and a couple from the 90s thrown in for good measure. It may or may not have been a coincidence that ***I Believe in You*** appeared on the day Jerry Wexler died.

Band Personality: (9.1) I personally like the low-key features of this highly talented group of musicians. Their talents blend beautifully to showcase the changing dimensions of Dylan's most recent interpretations of his work.

Instrumentation: (9.3) The proportion of time allocated to music-only segments was super relative to the time devoted to lyrics.

Venue Quality: (10) Some may argue this point, but the acoustics were great from my fifth-row, side seating. The MGM Grand has only recently opened. The key moments of quality occurred with Tony's bass throughout ***Nettie Moore*** and Denny Freeman with some great segments of ***Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum*** (Usually not a favorite, but tonight was played with more bass and times when Freeman excelled.). I did, however, quickly dispose of \$15.00 in the slot machines surrounding the theater.

Audience Receptivity: (9.0) As with many Dylan shows, there was a wide age range of people represented. It was a respectful crowd thankful to be watching an artist whose work many have followed them through significant transitions in their lives. Dylan's music connects with those transitions, and his delivery lets us now that we survived and we are better people for those experiences.

Sound System: (9.8) See my previous comments in venue quality. At no time did the sound seem too loud.

Creativity: (9.5) Hearing some of the classics like ***Chimes of Freedom, Just Like a Woman*** and ***Times They Are A Changin'*** in new arrangements was welcomed.

Unpredictability of the Set List: (9.5) There were several surprises tonight that were not highly evident in the previous 12 or so shows: ***Chimes of Freedom, I Believe in You, Most Likely You Go Your Way and I'll go Mine*** and ***I'll Be Your Baby Tonight***.

Pace: (9.3) The mix of fast and slow songs was arranged in a pleasant manner. It is always nice to see Donnie take out his violin and Tony at the standup bass. George Receli, as always, excels in maintaining the precision and pacing of most songs. I know Tony takes his cues from Bob, but it appears to the untrained eye that Receli doesn't miss a beat!

MBM Grand Concert Review

(continued)

Miscellaneous: (9.5) The starting time of 9:00 PM did not appear too late considering no warm-up group. The seating was terrific with ample leg room and comfortable chairs. The parking was free! Tickets were a little steep but well worth it.

I won't do a total of my scores since Bob is not competing against or with anyone. I do conclude though by stating that of the 15 concerts I have attended in the past 15 years, this August 15th show is up there in the top 3.

New Britain, CT
(07/15/2009)

What am I looking for? What do I expect?
What will he deliver? What will he elect
To play and the order to each song?
It's hard to anticipate what will come along.

People of all ages are heading to the Park;
Old and young are in the crowd three hours 'fore it's dark.
I wonder if he'll ever put **Catfish** on his plate.
I'll add it to my wish list – the hour's getting late.

Maybe I'll go to Lakewood.
Maybe I'll stay at home.
Maybe just will have to do
Where I decide to roam.

Bob's songs take on more meaning
To those of us who are leaning
Closer to his age
In the presence of this sage.

I listen to some songs more intently than before
Like **Trying to Get to Heaven Before they Close the Door**.
Those of us who've been granted a second lease on life
Listen to his songs anew – the ones of death and strife.

Well, once again I leave his show and marvel at his presence
And think, maybe, once again I glimpsed part of Bob's essence
As he shares new interpretations of each song.
I'm grateful for this chance to come and tag along.

Mullins Center, Amherst, MA Review

(November 19, 2010)

November 18th – Pre Show Analysis

Based on my attendance at previous concert venues,
I offer my humble opinion about tomorrow's crowd whose
Anticipation about the quality of the show
Can be reduced to 10% of what they surely know.

10% will be delirious when Bob comes into sight.

10% will be delirious from what they took earlier in the night.

10% will be wondering just what he will play next.

10% will still wonder why it's different from the text.

10% will be hoping for NO ***Tweedle Dee & Tweedle Dum***.

10% will be happy for just anything that comes.

10% will be held in awe by this band of many talents.

10% will be held up by others as they mostly lose their balance.

10% will be thankful for the wonder of his presence.

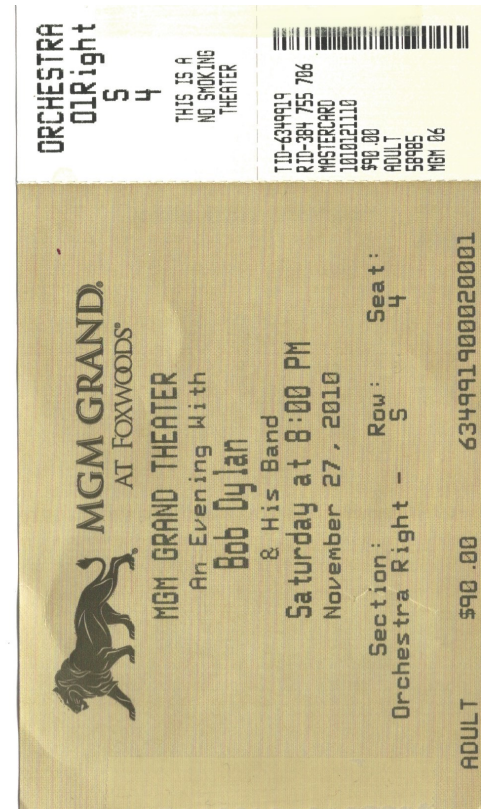
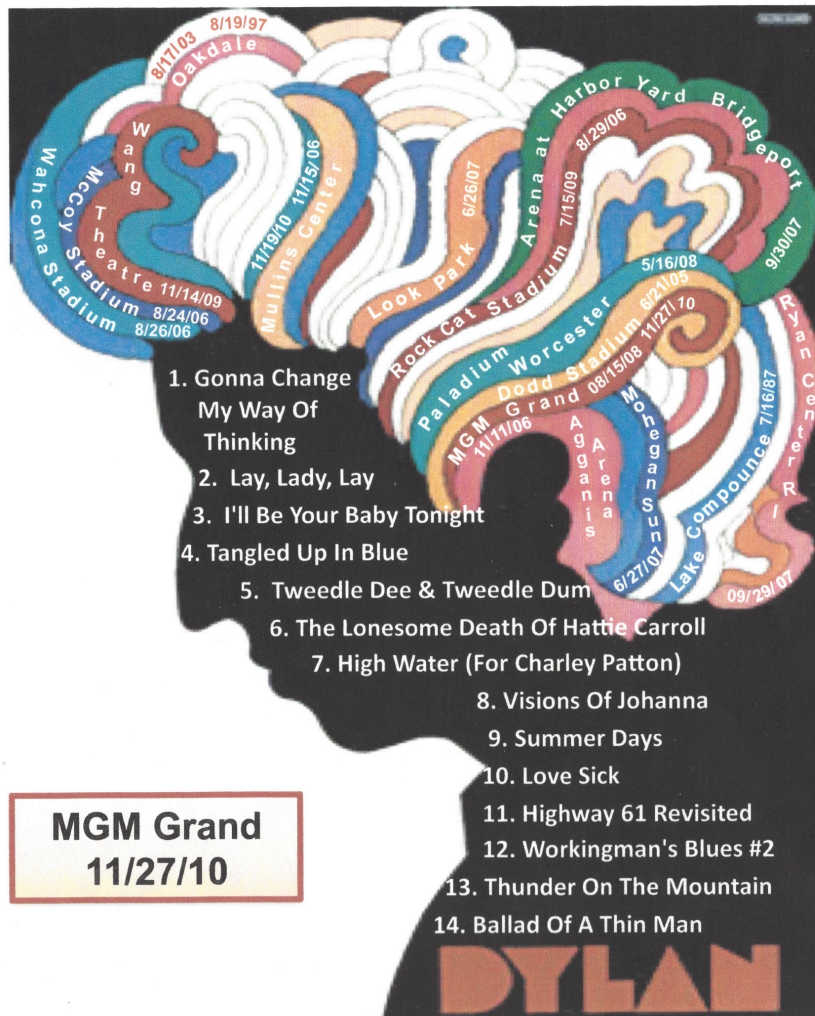
10% will just welcome the quiet and the silence.

November 19th – After the Bob Dylan Show

My review: a blank piece of paper.

I would love to see a reviewer of a local newspaper write a
column about a review of the Dylan concert and just leave a
void of white space: 4 to 5 inches of white space for the column
and then sign their name. I guess I have been viewing a few too
many minutes of lectures by Milton Glaser on YouTube: *Art is
Whatever Remains*.

Speaking of Milton Glaser, the poster below was inserted in the album for **Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits** in 1966. I took this image as a background upon which to record the venues where I had seen Dylan perform up to and including this current show at the MGM Grand at Foxwoods in Connecticut.



(encore)

15. Jolene
16. Like A Rolling Stone

House of Blues, Boston, MA

(August 21, 2011)

The crowd was tangled up in the House of Blues
Across from Fenway Park.
There's something about a sold-out show
That seems to ignite the spark.

Blues to the north and Blues to the west
On the signposts in the street.
Blues on the outside and Blues at the Inn
Blind Willie McTell you'll meet.

Things Have Changed but still stay the same
In this paradox by the Boston shore
The band was rockin' - the people were knockin'
Trying to get to Heaven before they Close the Door.

Thank you Bob for your energy tonight.
You shared with us and more.
We heard your **Blowin' in the Wind**
As a welcome third encore.

I write my notes on the morning after
I'll not soon forget this night
When our paths again crossed for the 20th time.
May the end not be in my sight.

Providence, RI
(November 15, 2014)

A good time was had by all
This crisp November day in the Fall
In the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantation
Dylan and his band met my every expectation.
A little mellow and slow in its cadence.
Some different lyrics gave us the evidence
Of a master storyteller - a man of art
As he shared from his work - he shared from his heart –
Rust and dust in ***Tangled Up in Blue***
Were rhymes that added to this song's hue
And it was in the year of 1958
In song eleven's ***Simple Twist of Fate***.
The only distraction that I could detect
Was loud laughter a few rows back to the left.
I have averaged one show a year since 1989
And it's off to Philadelphia as I cross the state line
And focus on some lyrics from a tune or two
And write down my thoughts and reflections anew.

A Found Poem

Following one show at which I was a member of the audience, I composed my own poem that included one segment of lyrics from each of his songs. Here is the result. [Lyrics from Dylan's songs are in bold/blue.]

Thoughts From a Set List of Lyrics Academy of Music, Philadelphia, PA (November 21, 2014)

Stay with me as this I try to do -
To take some lyrics and turn them into something new -
To take some lyrics that Bob did sing
And make sense of the words to connect everything;
Making sure to capture events of past time
Into a poem that makes sense of Bob's rhyme.

*I'm searching for phrases
To sing your praises.*

All the truth in the world adds up to one big lie
From the day we are born until the day we will die.

When I become real serious
and begin my critique
I realize that *she's a hypnotist collector*
You are a walking antique.

And those of us nearing retirement age
Welcome these words from the singing sage:
You think I'm over the hill
You think I'm past my prime
Let me see what you got
We can have a whoppin' good time.

There are times when I think about when I am dead
Beyond here lies nothin'
Nothin' done and nothin' said.

When I think about my life and how its rhythm flows
I think about a phrase – This is how it goes:
I've had my fun
I've had my flings
Gonna shake em all down
Like the early Roman kings

In the paradox of life
Amid our joy and strife
Sometimes the silence can be like the thunder
Sometimes I feel like I'm being plowed under.

Bono once remarked that in seeking fortune and fame
On the way up to stardom people honor his name,
But that gets old - - - gets old real fast
To return to our roots - - - to return to our past.
I wear dark glasses to cover my eyes
There are secrets in them I can't disguise
Come back baby if I every hurt your feelings, I apologize.

People come in and out of view
I've known my share - - I've known a few
Now they worry and they hurry and
they fuss and they fret
They waste your nights and days
Them I will forget
But you I'll remember always

Some mornings at dawn when I awake
I wonder what decisions I'm going to make
I'm staying up late, I'm making amends
While we smile, all heaven descends
If love is a sin, then beauty is a crime
All things are beautiful in their time.

Quite a while ago – back in my early thirties
While at SIU graduate school and evening parties,
I would not have guessed that city would find its way
In a Dylan song as he did say:
Listen to that Duquesne whistle blowing
Blowing like it's gonna sweep my world away.
I wanna stop at Carbondale and keep on going
That Duquesne train goin' rock me night and day.

It's funny how, as the scenes in our memories evolve,
The sequence of events takes on a different resolve.
The later ones influence our memories anew
They are Tangled Up - - - some might say in Blue.

*She lit a burner on the stove
And then she swept away the dust
"I thought you looked like someone that I used to
know,
"You look like someone that I can trust."*

And even when I was just the age of seven
The next line to me he could have given:
*"You should have met me back in '58
We could have avoided this little simple twist of fate."*

We need to be humble as we go on about our way
We need to be humble as the singer starts to say:
*I asked Fat Nancy for somethin' to eat,
she said, "Take it off the shelf -
As great as you are a man
You'll never be greater than yourself."*

It's been a while since my poker buddies and me
Threw money in the center for that round's ante:

*Low cards are what I've got
But I'll play this hand whether I like it or not
I'm sworn to uphold the laws of God.*

Many parts of my life are now through
As I write these words as if I knew
*The door has closed forevermore
If indeed there ever was a door.*

I end this poem as I think I must
And wipe off the lyrics and blow off the dust
*The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind
The answer is blowin' in the wind.*

Wallingford, CT

(June 18, 2017)

My 28th Dylan Show did not disappoint. The highlight of the evening was a new rendition of **Summer Days** featuring Donnie Herron on the violin. A sedate crowd with a median age of 50 to be my best guess. Very tight security as mentioned on the Jimmy Fallon show a few nights ago from his trip to Port Chester. No intermission on this leg of the journey. Dylan plays a role as part Rudy Vallee and part Charlie Chaplin during his crooning to the oldies tunes. He appears to be having fun! I wonder if I will have his energy at 76! He also managed his way through a couple of malfunctions: wobbly mic stand and faulty stool. Earlier this week I thought of an apt comparison on the Dylan I have come to know: Dr. Who. Dr. Who has his T.A.R.D.I.S. and Dylan has his Cowboy Band to take us back and forth through time. Dr. Who regenerates himself so that his 13th version is currently airing on BBC America. Dylan has gone through the regeneration process a variable number of times depending on the observer. The scenes from his songs [**Desolation Row & Highway 61**] could take place in distant galaxies many light years away. Dr. Who is “The Doctor” – Dylan is ... well, he is “Dylan.” (In honor of Father’s Day, I thought it would be a great touch if Jakob Dylan had made an appearance. Perhaps he was there somewhere in the audience.) It was 20 years ago (my 1st Dylan Show) at this site that Rick Danko came on stage for a wonderful version of ***This Wheel’s on Fire***.

Symphony Hall, Springfield, MA Review

(November 18, 2018)

As I think about my Concert #29,
I recall the following line:

*There's more than one answer to these questions
Pointing me in a crooked line
And the less I seek my source for some definitive,
The closer I am to fine.*

Closer to Fine – Indigo Girls

Bob is certainly getting closer to fine
If the rearrangements of his work are any sign
That he hasn't yet given us his masterpiece.
The quality of his work is only on the increase.

The ages in the audience ranged from 5 to 77 plus.
A quite young girl in the front row was among us.
The only thing we know for sure
Is that her name was not Henrietta Porter!
Bob represents those of us of the older set
Who have not tired of his omnipresence yet.

One highlight of the Symphony Hall night
That I can readily remember in hindsight
Was when out of the blue from the backstage comes
An impassioned 30 seconds by Receli on the drums
During **Thunder on the Mountain** - #16 in the set;
This is a version I will not soon forget.

Symphony Hall, Springfield, CT Review

(continued)

Stu Kimble is gone – He has met his fate,
But this the Cowboy Band still captivates.
I wonder if at all, somehow,
Larry Campbell could take another bow
To finish out the remaining dates
And be back in tune with his music mates.

The encore contained a change in position
From previous show's commonly heard rendition.
Why? Who knows? Your guess is as good as mine.
Bob doesn't necessarily work by any one design.

There were many other highlights that could be talked about.
The phrasing in **LARS** when the lines stretched out
And **Don't Think Twice** on the piano in rare form
Back to the early 60s when a solo Bob was the norm.
Suffice it to say, I wonder what will be
When in Waterbury, a new set beckons to me.

Palace Theater, Waterbury CT Review

(November 20, 2018)

My 30th concert – I'm older in age,
But 10 years younger than the sage
Whose words reminded me of a quite familiar song
As the music ripples over the concert throng.

*If my words did glow with the gold of sunshine
And my tunes were played on the harp unstrung,
Would you hear my voice come through the music?
Would you hold it near as if it were your own?*

Ripple – Grateful Dead

Great similarities from two nights ago,
But a different seat in a mezzanine row
Where I could see all the band in one view
Within this majestic, fully restored venue.

Most pronounced for me to comment upon
Was a silhouetted figure who for every song
Walked to and fro three rows in front of me
Like Alfred Hitchcock who came back from the dead
Just to see Bob Before going to bed.

The seating in the balcony left little leg room
And two people in front of me I presume
Didn't have anywhere better to laugh and talk;
Couldn't they have stayed in the bar down the block?

Palace Theater, Waterbury CT Review

(continued)

On with the show – one of the highs of the night
Was the bow work on bass by Tony – what a delight
In the joy he brings to this tightly knit group
Whose talents seem to know just when to swoop
In among Bob's lyrics – rephrased and refreshed.
To hear such magic, we are truly blessed.

We appreciate Donnie's versatility and Charlie's virtuosity.
(Don't miss him as Townes Van Zandt in all his grandiosity.)
Receli is superlative once more
When he lets loose on **Thunder**, you can hear his drums roar!
Bob on piano for **Don't Think Twice ...**
Was the true highlight
Of an evening of song that brought much delight.

If I had the chance to meet with this genius of a person
Words would not express the impact he has had on
Me, so a nod would have to do – and perhaps a simple nod back
To acknowledge that he knows the way he can impact
And inspire each of us to keep on living our dreams
And be creative in our own ways. He seems
To touch a chord that resonates with our inner core.
I hope to be in his presence – a few concerts more.

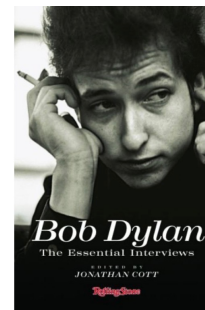
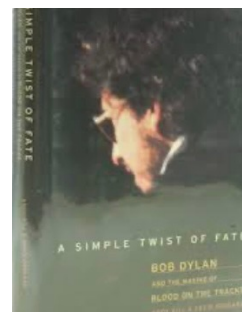
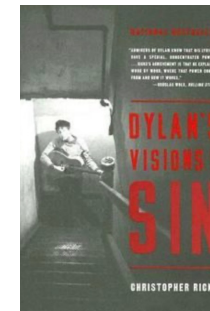
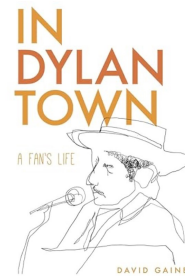
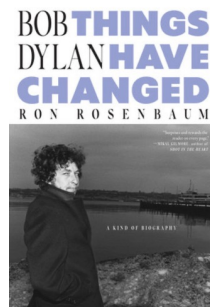
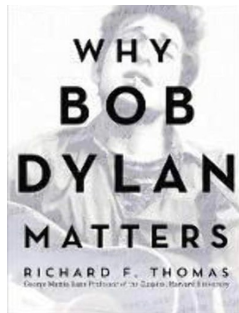
Providence, Rhode Island

(November 20, 2019)

Painting masterpieces
Rainy and drizzly outside / Thunder inside
Ornamental surroundings
Violin virtuosos
Introductions to applause
Dylan delights
Enigmatic energy
New England in November
Center stage majesty
Evolving still
Reworked tempos
History continues
Offering old and new
Dylan delights once again
Entertained
It's 9:30 PM - Encore awaits
Seventy-Eight !!
Lighting casts shadows
Another day / another city / another show
Never the same song twice
Dylan delights a final time

Quotes of Note

The following pages contain quotes from different books devoted to Bob Dylan.



Some Quotes of Notes From Off my Bookshelf

Gaines, D. (2015). *In Dylan town: A fan's life*. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press.

- *I did not think his songs held all the answers, but I loved the way those songs raised so many questions and nudged me to come up with my own answers.* (p. 161)
- *Bob Dylan speaks for me more than anyone else I have ever read or heard.* (p. 202)
- *[A]ye, chance, free will, and necessity – no wise incompatible - all interweavingly working together ... chance by turns rules either, and has the last featuring blow at events.* (a quote from Ishmael, Moby Dick) (p. 241)
- *I strived to make it clear that the course was as much about how students responded to the subject matter as it was about the subject matter itself.* (p. 248)
- *The more I read their papers, the more I realized that students were learning something new about themselves, their families, and their culture as they wrote about Dylan.* (p. 250)
- *The poker player with the winning hand never talks about having the cards.* (p. 359)
- *Gilmore asked him if he was happy. Dylan replied, “You know, these are yuppie words, happiness and unhappiness. It’s not happiness or unhappiness, it’s either blessed or unblessed.” When Gilmore then asked Dylan if he felt blessed, he said, “Oh yeah. ... Yeah I do.” That’s kind of the way I’m seeing it these days as well.* (p. 359)
- *I did what I had done so many times before, and would do so many times again, with so much of what Dylan sang and wrote: I stored it away somewhere in my memory, waiting until I was ready for it.* (p. 361)
- *... hora. I had literally just come across the word on the flight from Austin to Minneapolis. Apparently, it meant “the right time, the right place, the seasonal time, the beautiful time. Where everything comes together.”* (p. 436)
- *“All the way to heaven is heaven.”* (p. 462)
- *“When it comes to music, we project what we most crave onto its makers. When we listen to certain tunes – and play them for our friends – we are making a statement of who we are or who we want to be.”* (p. 470)

Cott, J. (Ed.) (2006). *Bob Dylan: The essential interviews*. NY: Wenner Books.

- *I'm one of these people that think everybody has certain gifts, you know; when they're born, and you got enough trouble just trying to find out what it is. . . . Nobody's really got the right to say that any one of these gifts are any better than any other body's.* [p. 10, Studs Terkel, WRMT (Chicago), May 1963]
- *I hate all the labels people have put on me . . . because they are labels. It's just that they are ugly, and I know, in my heart, that it's not me . . .* (p. 89, Robert Shelton from *No Direction Home*, March 1966)
- *Well, what the songwriter does, is just connect the ends. The ends that he sees are the ones that are given to him and he connects them.* (p. 129, John Cohen and Happy Traum, *Sing Out!*, October/November, 1968)
- *Woody Guthrie said he just picked songs out of the air. That meant that they were already there and that he was tuned into them. "Changing of the Guards" might be a song that might have been there for thousands of years, sailing around in the mist, and one day I just tuned into it.* (p. 263 – Jonathan Cott, *Rolling Stone*, November 16, 1978)
- *I don't think I've found any new chords or new progressions, or any new words that haven't been said before. I think they're pretty much all the same old thing, just kinda reworked.* (p. 299, Kurt Loder, *Rolling Stone*, June 21, 1984)
- *It starts off as a stream of consciousness thing and you add things to it. I take things from all parts of life and then I see if there is a connection, and if there is a connection, I connect them.* (p. 400, Robert Hilburn, *The Los Angeles Times*, December 14, 1997)

Thomas, R. F. (2017). *Why Bob Dylan matters*. New York: HarperCollins.

- *Just as it can mean something different every time he sings it, so it can mean something different every time I hear him sing it, depending on what images, all generally mysterious, are flashing by.* (p. 81)
- *As captured in an interview with Mikal Gilmore . . . "I only know what I told you. You'll have to go and do the work yourself to find out what it's about."* (p. 125)
- *Dylan has said of this and by extension of all song, "it doesn't really matter where a song comes from,. It just matters where it takes you."* (p. 297)

Gil, A. & Odegard, K. (2009). *A Simple Twist of Fate: Bob Dylan and the making of Blood on the Tracks*. Paris, France: Da Capo Press.

- *Someone was giving him advice, telling him, ‘Bob, if you did this and that it might be better,’ and he said, ‘Y’know, if I’d listened to everybody who told me how to do stuff, I might be somewhere by now.’ (p. 74)*

Ricks, C. (2003). *Dylan’s vision of sin*. NY: HarperCollins.

- *T. S. Eliot was once asked what a line of Ash-Wednesday meant, “Lady, three white leopards sat under a juniper-tree”. The answer, “Lady, three white leopards sat under a juniper-tree”. (p. 329)*

My Back Pages

*Ah, but I was so much older then.
I’m younger than that now.*

What does it mean?

*Ah, but I was so much older then.
I’m younger than that now.*

Rosenbaum, R. (2025). *Bob Dylan: Things have changed: A sort of biography*. Melville House Publishing

- *Is it true for Dylan what I’ve come to believe for myself, that the more one leaves one’s youth behind, the more one yearns for what has been lost, the love that has been left behind that defined it? (p. 205)*

The Spirit of Paul

When I heard of my graduate school mentor's passing, I wanted to share how much he influenced me on my current career path. I could think of no better way than by citing songs by Bob Dylan within the context of my relationship with Paul Bates. I tossed in a few other tunes along the way.

There are many **Precious Memories** that cross my mind
When I think of Paul Bates as one of a kind:
Mentor, advisor, colleague and friend;
He was true to his values - - - right up to the end.

As Dylan sang in **A Hard Rain's a Gonna Fall**
That not everyone is up for their vocational call
To speak the truth in whatever the form
Even when those truths go against the norm.

We need to put ourselves in the shoes
Of people whose disabilities they did not choose
And look at life for those individuals we meet
As Dylan explains in **Positively 4th Street**.

I noticed the wisdom and drive Paul brought to us all.
I hope to continue his values and also recall
As I left SIU, Paul's work had a **Ripple** effect
In all of the work about which now I have time to reflect.

And Paul, I know, **I Will Remember You**
And pass on your legacy in all that I do
For all of the students who pass through my door.
Thank you for allowing me room to explore

How each student – no matter the disability
Has much to contribute to life in the community.
I will remember Dylan's tune – **Dear Landlord** and think
About the gifts our students offer as we link

Each of our activities until **the End of the Line**
When retirement is staring at us for a final time
And we reflect on the people whom we have known
And remember the people from whom we have grown

And think about the words in **Bob Dylan's Dream**
About times when with his friends he would scheme
And be together in places long since in the past.
I know these memories with Paul will last.

Finally, in this brief tribute of mine;
In this short set of verses that rhyme,
I think of a song when the words of one line
Comment about getting **Closer to Fine**.

Paul's legacy rests with his integrity.
His intelligence was tempered by his benevolence.
He met each resistance with utmost persistence.
His passion requires our action.

ROUGH AND ROWDY WAYS

What Do the Critics Say?

I decided to look up a sample of various reviews from critics addressing the most recent album by Bob Dylan: *Rough and Rowdy Ways*. Then, I took sample words from those reviews to compose a poem reflecting on this recent work.

I contain multitudes reverberates in my mind
 As I think of how Dylan captures the mysteries that I find
 In a collage of memories reflective in his rhymes.
 His masterful collection is speaking to our times
 And each one's mortality for what could be in store
 When each of us go knocking up on heaven's door.
 Befuddling, mysterious and even some soul searching
 I think this master's songs are greatly awe inspiring.

pulp-noir **R** masterpiece [LA Times]
 often frequently c **O** nspirational [NY Times]
 one of the most timely alb **U** ms ever [Rolling Stone]
 keepin **G** an eye on heaven's door [Boston Globe]
 enthralling, misc **H** evious – and very male [The Guardian]
 -
 m **A** sterful, reflective [MN Star Tribune]
 breathes, expa **N** ds and contracts [NPR]
 masterful (and cru **D** e) collage ... [Slate]
 -
 one long magnificent **R** iddle [The Telegraph]
 Bob Dylan c **O** nfronts his mortality [USA Today]
 pessimistic Americana **W** ith hallucinatory fervor [The Atlantic]
 reflective, meditative befu **D** dling, funny and awe inspiring [ABC News]
 sa **Y** ing what he wants while he still can [WSJ]
 -
 If it **W** ere a painting, I'd call it a masterpiece [BBC]
 a menacing and pl **A** yful return [The Irish Times]
 he's making up for lost rh **Y** me [Variety]
 soul **S** earching masterpiece [Ernie Pancsofar]

Study Guide Example – Bob Dylan

In one of my courses, I discussed the value of using study guides to alert students to the important ingredients of a lesson. One type of a study guide is a list of true and false statements. As students read through the content of the lesson, they verify if each statement is true or false. If the statement is false, they change it to a true statement. Contained in this example are the different variations of the study guide composed of content related to Bob Dylan.

	Fill in the bubble before True Statements with Green / False Statements in Red – Change False Statements to be True.
☐	Bob Dylan is dead.
☐	Bob Dylan's name at birth was Robert Zimmerman.
☐	Bob Dylan married Joan Baez.
☐	Your instructor has been to 50+ Dylan shows.
☐	Dylan wrote Blowin' in the Wind.
☐	Bob Dylan and Paul Simon have sung together.
☐	Bob Dylan wrote "Heart of Gold."
☐	Bob Dylan was born in Nashville, TN.
☐	Dylan plays the drums at most live performances.
☐	Dylan won the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Study Guide (continued)

	Fill in the bubble before True Statements with Green / False Statements in Red – Change False Statements to be True.
☐	Bob Dylan is dead.
☐	Bob Dylan's name at birth was Robert Zimmerman.
☐	Bob Dylan married Joan Baez.
☐	Your instructor has been to 50+ Dylan shows.
☐	Dylan wrote Blowin' in the Wind.
☐	Bob Dylan and Paul Simon have sung together.
☐	Bob Dylan wrote "Heart of Gold."
☐	Bob Dylan was born in Nashville, TN.
☐	Dylan plays the drums at most live performances.
☐	Dylan won the Nobel Prize for Literature.

	All Statements Below Are True
☐	Bob Dylan is alive and well at age 79.
☐	Bob Dylan's name at birth was Robert Zimmerman.
☐	Bob Dylan married Sarah Lownds.
☐	Your instructor has been to 30+ Dylan shows.
☐	Dylan wrote Blowin' in the Wind.
☐	Bob Dylan and Paul Simon have sung together.
☐	Neil Young wrote "Heart of Gold."
☐	Dylan was born in Duluth MN / raised in Hibbing, MN.
☐	Dylan plays the harmonica / keyboards / guitar.
☐	Dylan won the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Dylan Trivia Jeopardy

I Played in the Band	Lyrics in a Song	I'm Bob's Friend	Places in a Song	I Covered That!
200	200	200	200	200
400	400	400	400	400
600	600	600	600	600
800	800	800	800	800
1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

Warning: This version of Jeopardy is not for the “occasional” Dylan fan.

I Played in the Band

200	I was associated with SNL	
400	I was a drummer on MTV Unplugged	
600	I played bass on Rolling Thunder Revue - 1	
800	I was the drummer at Royal Albert Hall - 1966	
1000	I played dobro on "Oh Mercy"	

Lyrics From a Song

200	bathed in a stream of pure heat	
400	blood dryin' in my yellow hair	
600	the branches bare like a banjo played	
800	Flagging down the "Double E"	
1000	There's smoke on the water, it's been there since June	

I'm Bob's Friend

200	I sang Hesitation Blue and Buckets of Rain	
400	Performed with Bob at Indian Neck Park in CT	
600	My daughter, Aryana, directed a film of my life	
800	I was BIG in the Fish Business	
1000	I wrote an essay in booklet for Bootleg Series Vol #4	

I Played in the Band

200	I was associated with SNL	G. E. Smith
400	I was a drummer on MTV Unplugged	Winston Watson
600	I played bass on Rolling Thunder Revue - 1	Rob Stoner
800	I was the drummer at Royal Albert Hall - 1966	Mickey Jones
1000	I played dobro on "Oh Mercy"	Daniel Lanois

Lyrics From a Song

200	bathed in a stream of pure heat	Where Are You Tonight
400	blood dryin' in my yellow hair	Angelina
600	the branches bare like a banjo played	Lay Down Your Weary Tune
800	Flagging down the "Double E"	It Takes A Lot to Laugh ...
1000	There's smoke on the water, it's been there since June	Man in the Long Black Coat

I'm Bob's Friend

200	I sang Hesitation Blue and Buckets of Rain	Dave van Ronk
400	Performed with Bob at Indian Neck Park in CT	Mark Spoelstra
600	My daughter. Aryana, directed a film of my life	Jack Elliott
800	I was BIG in the Fish Business	Louis Kemp
1000	I wrote an essay in booklet for Bootleg Series Vol #4	Tony Glover

Places in Songs

200	Jackson	
400	Honolulu	
600	New Orleans	
800	Las Vegas Daily Double	
1000	Pittsburgh	

I Covered That!

200	To Make You Feel My Love (BJ)	
400	Chimes of Freedom (BS)	
600	What Was It You Wanted (CS)	
800	Wallflower (DB)	
1000	One More Night (EJ)	

Places in Songs

200	Jackson	Outlaw Blues
400	Honolulu	You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go
600	New Orleans	House of the Risin' Sun
800	Las Vegas Daily Double	Went to See the Gypsy
1000	Pittsburgh	Lo and Behold

I Covered That!

200	To Make You Feel My Love (BJ)	Billy Joel
400	Chimes of Freedom (BS)	Bruce Springsteen
600	What Was It You Wanted (CS)	Chris Smither
800	Wallflower (DB)	Dave Bromberg
1000	One More Night (EJ)	Elana James

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And In Conclusion

I end this manuscript of connections with the work of Bob Dylan with a Final Thought, a poem I wrote several years ago and one that summarizes my path to where I am right now. There will be more entries prior to this conclusion as my connections are ever evolving and neverending.

Final Thought Ernie Pancsofar

Blisters hurtin' - - - Nothin's certain.
Life can bring a sigh or scream.
Blisters turn to callous soon.
Learn from those who live their dream.

Everyone has many talents
To use - - - not throw away
And we often have to answer to
Our conscious day-by-day.

No one can tell us exactly how long
The length of time is along the way.
So, live each day to the full extent
And at life's end you'll have lots to say

About inner feelings of what is right
And in what direction you did go
And how you used your talents and gifts
In a way that only you did know.

The road can be long and the path can be steep.
It's a journey of wonder and delight
And the strength you build along the way
Makes your goals turn out just right.

Wonder, awe, peace and love
Are the ultimate aspirations
Of a life well lived and a time well spent
In our final deliberations.