John Corigliano
Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan

Prelude: Mr. Tambourine Man

...Though I know that evenin’s empire has returned into sand,
Vanished from my hand,
Left me blindly here to stand but still not sleeping.
My weariness amazes me, I'm branded on my feet,
I have no one to meet
And the ancient empty street's too dead for dreaming.

Hey! Mr. Tambourine Man, play a song for me,
I'm not sleepy and there is no place I'm going to.
Hey! Mr. Tambourine Man, play a song for me,
In the jingle jangle morning I'll come followin' you.

Take me on a trip upon your magic swirlin' ship,
My senses have been stripped, my hands can’t feel to grip,
My toes too numb to step, wait only for my boot heels
To be wanderin’.
I'm ready to go anywhere, I'm ready...to fade
Into my own parade, cast your dancing spell my way,
I promise to go under it.

Hey! Mr. Tambourine Man, play a song for me,
I'm not sleepy and there is no place I'm going to.
Hey! Mr. Tambourine Man, play a song for me,
In the jingle jangle morning I'll come followin' you.

Though you might hear laughin’, spinnin’, swingin’ madly across the sun,
It's not aimed at anyone, it's just escapin’ on the run...
And if you hear vague traces of skippin’ reels of rhyme
To your tambourine in time, it's just a ragged clown behind,
I wouldn't pay it any mind, it's just a shadow you're
Seein' that he’s chasing.

...Yes, to dance beneath the diamond sky with one hand waving free,
Silhouetted by the sea, circled by the circus sands,
With all memory and fate driven deep beneath the waves,
Let me forget about today until tomorrow.

...I'm not sleepy and there is no place I'm going to...

Copyright © 1964,1965 Warner Brothers, Inc.
Copyright renewed 1992, 1993 Special Rider Music
International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved.
Used by permission of Special Rider Music.

Clothes Line

After a while we took in the clothes,
Nobody said very much.
Just some old wild shirts and a couple pairs of pants
Which nobody really wanted to touch.
Mama come in and picked up a book
An’ Papa asked her what it was.
Someone else asked, “What do you care?”
Papa said, “Well, just because.”
Then they started to take back their clothes,
Hang ’em on the line.
It was January the thirtieth
And everybody was feelin’ fine.

The next day everybody got up
Seein’ if the clothes were dry.
The dogs were barking, a neighbor passed,
Mama, of course, she said, “Hi!”
“Have you heard the news?” he said, with a grin,
“The Vice-President’s gone mad!”
“Hmm, say, that’s too bad!”
“Well, there’s nothin’ we can do about it,” said the neighbor,
“It’s just somethin’ we’re gonna have to forget.”
“Yes, I guess so,” said Ma,
Then she asked me if the clothes was still wet.

I reached up, touched my shirt,
And the neighbor said, “Are those clothes yours?”
I said, “Some of ’em, not all of ’em.”
He said, “Ya always help out around here with the chores?”
I said, “Sometime, not all the time.”
Then my neighbor, he blew his nose
Just as papa yelled outside,
“Mama wants you t’ come back in the house and bring them clothes.”
Well, I just do what I’m told,
So, I did it, of course.
I went back in the house and Mama met me
And then I shut all the doors.

Copyright © 1969, 1975 Dwarf Music
Copyright renewed 1998 Special Rider Music
International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved.
Used by permission of Special Rider Music.

Blowin’ in the Wind

How many roads must a man walk down
Before you call him a man?
Yes, ’n’ how many seas must a white dove sail
Before she sleeps in the sand?
Yes, ’n’ how many times must the cannon balls fly
Before they’re forever banned?
The answer, my friend, is blowin’ in the wind,
The answer is blowin’ in the wind.

How many times must a man look up
Before he can see the sky?
Yes ’n’ how many ears must one man have
Before he can hear people cry?
Yes, ’n’ how many deaths will it take till he knows
That too many people have died?
The answer, my friend, is blowin’ in the wind...

How many years can a mountain exist
Before it’s washed to the sea?
[The answer is blowin’ in the wind.]
Yes, ‘n’ how many years can some people exist
Before they’re allowed to be free?
[‘blowin’ in the wind.’]
Yes, ‘n’ how many times can a man turn his head,
Pretending he just doesn’t see?
...blowin’...
...blowin’...

Copyright © 1962 Warner Brothers, Inc.
Copyright renewed 1990 Special Rider Music
International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved.
Used by permission of Special Rider Music.

Masters of War

Come, [come,] you masters of war
You that build all the guns
You that build the death planes
You that build the big bombs
You that hide behind walls
You that hide behind desks
[Come, come, you masters of war]
I just want you to know
I can see through your masks

You that never done nothin’
But build to destroy
You play with my world
Like it’s your little toy
You put a gun in my hand
And you hide from my eyes
And you turn and run farther
When the fast bullets fly...

You fasten the triggers
For the others to fire
Then you set back and watch
When the death count gets higher
You hide in your mansion
As young people’s blood
Flows out of their bodies
And is buried in the mud

You’ve thrown the worst fear
That can ever be hurled
Fear to bring children
Into the world
For threatening my baby
Unborn and unnamed
You ain’t worth the blood
That runs in your veins...

Let me ask you one question
Is your money that good
Will it buy you forgiveness
Do you think that it could
I think you will find
When your death takes its toll
All the money you made
Will never buy back your soul

And I hope that you die
And your death will come soon
I will follow your casket
In the pale afternoon
And I'll watch while you're lowered
Down to your deathbed
And I'll stand o'er your grave
'Til I'm sure that you're dead

Copyright © 1963 Warner Brothers, Inc.
Copyright renewed 1991 Special Rider Music
International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved.
Used by permission of Special Rider Music.

All Along the Watchtower

“There must be some way out of here,” said the joker to the thief,
“There’s too much confusion, I can’t get no relief.
Businessmen, they drink my wine, plowmen dig my earth,
None of them along the line know what any of it is worth.”

“No reason to get excited,” the thief, he kindly spoke,
“There are many here among us who feel that life is but a joke.
But you and I, we’ve been through that, and this is not our fate,
So let us not talk falsely now, the hour is getting late.”

All along the watchtower, princes kept the view
While all the women came and went, barefoot servants, too.

Outside in the distance a wildcat did growl,
Two riders were approaching, the wind began to howl.

Copyright © 1968, 1985 Dwarf Music
Copyright renewed 1996 Special Rider Music
International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved.
Used by permission of Special Rider Music.

Chimes of Freedom

Far between sundown’s finish an’ midnight’s broken toll
We ducked inside the doorway, thunder crashing
As majestic bells of bolts stuck shadows in the sounds
Seeming to be the chimes of freedom flashing
Flashing for the warriors whose strength is not to fight
Flashing for the refugees on the unarmed road of flight
An’ for each an’ ev’ry underdog soldier in the night
An’ we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing.

In the city’s melted furnace, unexpectedly we watched
With faces hidden while the walls were tightening
As the echo of the wedding bells before the blowin’ rain
Dissolved into the bells of the lightening.

[Striking for the gentle, striking for the kind
Striking for the guardians and protectors of the mind
An’ the unpawned painter behind beyond his rightful time
An’ we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing.

Through the mad mystic hammering of the wild ripping hail
The sky cracked its poems in naked wonder
That the clinging of the church bells blew far into the breeze
Leaving only bells of lightning and its thunder
As we listened one last time an’ we watched with one last look
Spellbound an’ swallowed ’til the tolling ended

Tolling for the rebel, tolling for the rake
Tolling for the luckless, the abandoned an’ forsaked
Tolling for the outcast, burnin’ constantly at stake
An’ we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing...

Tolling for the deaf an’ blind, tolling for the mute
Tolling for the mistreated, mateless mother, the mistitled prostitute...]

Tolling for the aching ones whose wounds cannot be nursed...
An’ for every hung-up person in the whole wide universe
An’ we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing.

Copyright © 1964 Warner Brothers, Inc.
Copyright renewed 1992 Special Rider Music
International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved.
Used by permission of Special Rider Music.

Postlude: Forever Young

May God bless and keep you always,
May your wishes all come true,
May you always do for others
And let others do for you.
May you build a ladder to the stars
And climb on every rung,
May you stay forever young,
Forever young, forever young,
May you stay forever young.

May you grow up to be righteous,
May you grow up to be true,
May you always know the truth
And see the lights surrounding you.
May you always be courageous,
Stand upright and be strong,
May you stay forever young,
Forever young, forever young,
May you stay forever young.

May your hands always be busy,
May your feet always be swift,
May you have a strong foundation
When the winds of changes shift.
May your heart always be joyful,
May your song always be sung,
May you stay forever young,
Forever young, forever young,
May you stay forever young.

Copyright © 1973, 1985 Ram’s Horn Music
International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved.
Used by permission of Special Rider Music.

Note:
… is used where composer has omitted lyrics
[ ] is used where lyrics have been set out of sequence