

## Bob Dylan: Like a Rolling Stone

- Dylan Facts
  - o \* 05/24/1941 (Duluth/Minnesota) as Robert Allen Zimmermann
  - o Ancestors can be traced back to Lithuanian and Ukrainian Jews
  - o University of Minneapolis (1959)
    - Actively involved in local Dinkytown folk circuit
    - Named himself Bob Dylan, after the famous author Dylan Thomas
      - Influenced by his poetry
  - o Moved to New York (1961)
  - o Gradual improvement of his career
- Album Facts
  - o Highway 61 Revisited released in August 1965
  - o Like a Rolling Stone was an already familiar single
  - o Dylan goes Electric at Newport Folk Festival 1965
  - o Mixed massive lyrics with driving rock rhythms and combined them with folk
- Song Facts
  - o Released on 07/20/1965
  - o Two version:
    - Full length (6 minutes)
    - Cut in half version to facilitate radio airplay
  - o Immediate hit, peaking at #2 on US billboard charts at the end of August
  - o Made Dylan a massive pop/rock/folkstar
    - Became a leader and a public symbol of vast cultural, political, generational changes at the age of 24
  - o Expresses and celebrates new relationship with himself, his art and his music (goes electric)
  - o What makes it so classic?
    - Musical structure of the song: the way it builds and builds and builds on itself; releasing with "How does it feel", finally reaching apotheosis with that piercing, hugely satisfying harmonica solo at the end
    - Centre: vocal performance + surroundings  
=> Great sounding performance, that works so well together in an extraordinary relation to the sound of Dylan's voice
    - Lyrics (important for post-war generation, looking for a new direction)

- Irresistible chorus
- Absolute conviction with which the singer says what he has to say
- Various interpretations: basically no interpretation necessary, since it speaks directly to every person who hears it, but also for that reason it lends itself wonderfully for interpretation

## NOTES

## Like a rolling stone

Once upon a time you dressed so fine  
You threw the bums a dime in your prime, didn't you?  
People'd call, say, "Beware doll, you're bound to fall"  
You thought they were all kiddin' you  
You used to laugh about  
Everybody that was hangin' out  
Now you don't talk so loud  
Now you don't seem so proud  
About having to be scrounging for your next meal

How does it feel  
How does it feel  
To be without a home  
Like a complete unknown  
Like a rolling stone?



You've gone to the finest school all right,  
Miss Lonely  
But you know you only used to get juiced in it  
And nobody has ever taught you how to live on the street  
And now you find out you're gonna have to get used to it  
You said you'd never compromise  
With the mystery tramp, but now you realize  
He's not selling any alibis  
As you stare into the vacuum of his eyes  
And ask him do you want to make a deal?

How does it feel  
How does it feel  
To be on your own  
With no direction home  
Like a complete unknown  
Like a rolling stone?

You never turned around to see the frowns on the jugglers and the clowns  
When they all come down and did tricks for you  
You never understood that it ain't no good

You shouldn't let other people get your kicks for you  
You used to ride on the chrome horse with your diplomat  
Who carried on his shoulder a Siamese cat  
Ain't it hard when you discover that  
He really wasn't where it's at  
After he took from you everything he could steal

How does it feel  
How does it feel  
To be on your own  
With no direction home  
Like a complete unknown  
Like a rolling stone?

Princess on the steeple and all the pretty people  
They're drinkin', thinkin' that they got it made  
Exchanging all kinds of precious gifts and things  
But you'd better lift your diamond ring, you'd better pawn it babe  
You used to be so amused  
At Napoleon in rags and the language that he used  
Go to him now, he calls you, you can't refuse  
When you got nothing, you got nothing to lose  
You're invisible now, you got no secrets to conceal

How does it feel  
How does it feel  
To be on your own  
With no direction home  
Like a complete unknown  
Like a rolling stone?

Highway 61 Revisited, 1965

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