

COVER YOUR FACE OR SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCE

BOB DYLAN 2020

by Olof Björner and Daniel Mackay

A SUMMARY OF RECORDING & CONCERT
ACTIVITIES, NEW RELEASES, EXHIBITIONS & BOOKS.



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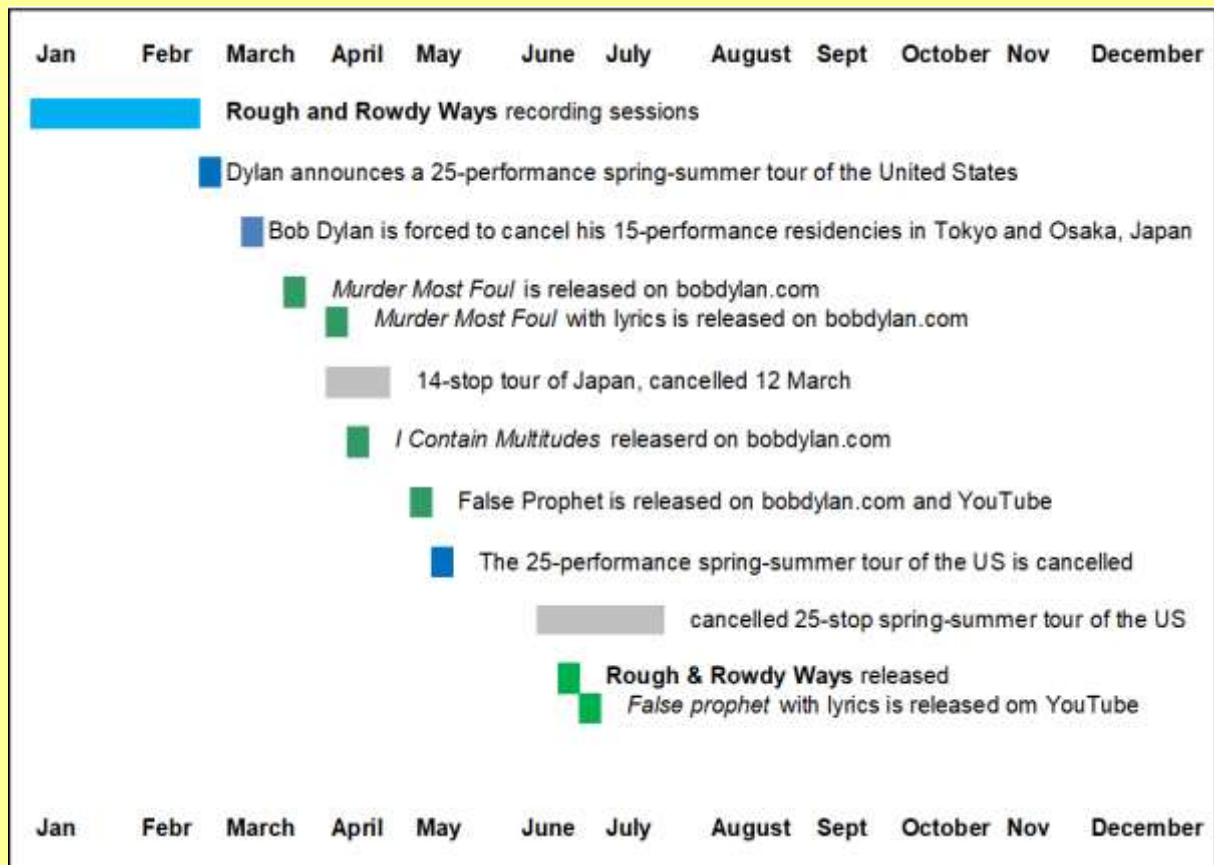
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1. INTRODUCTION

Unprecedented times. The world is affected by a global COVID-19 pandemic even as, after eight years, Dylan records and releases a new album of original songs (the most voluble of all his albums by far), *Rough and Rowdy Ways*, that fulfills the promise of his outstanding [2019 US Fall Tour](#) and his dexterous dip into the Sinatra material both in albums and on stage in previous years. The album receives high praise from critics and generates significant attention for Dylan, who, rounding out his eighth decade, is forced to cancel both of his announced 2020 tours due to the pandemic.

2. 2020 AT A GLANCE



3. THE 2020 CALENDAR

- 6 January [Variety reports](#) that Timothee Chalamet is in talks with Fox Searchlight to play Bob Dylan in a biopic based on Elijah Wald's *Dylan Goes Electric!: Newport, Seeger, Dylan, and the Night that Split the Sixties* (2015) to be directed by James Mangold
- January- February *Rough and Rowdy Ways* is recorded at [Sunset Sound Recorders in Los Angeles](#).
- 7 February Conor McPherson's *Girl From The North Country* makes [its Broadway debut](#) with previews at the Belasco Theatre before marking its official Broadway debut on 5 March.
- 11 February Heaven's Door Whiskey announces its availability at European retailers.
- 9 March Dylan announces a 25-performance spring-summer tour of the United States's Pacific Northwest, West Coast, Southwest, South, and East Coast on his website with Nathaniel

- Rateliff & the Night Sweats and Hot Club of Cowtown (featuring former Dylan band member Elana James) to alternate opening for him on tour.
- 12 March Bob Dylan is forced to cancel his 15-performance residencies in both Tokyo and Osaka, Japan that were to have taken place from April 1st to April 24th with a statement from UDO Artists Inc. on his website: “Given the situation of the widespread Coronavirus, our Prime Minister has requested that we cancel or postpone all forthcoming concerts or events in late March and beyond [. . .] We will look to rebook the shows in the future.”
- 22 March Musician Eric Weissberg, who performed on the *Blood on Tracks* version of “Meet Me in the Morning” and who features in [Bootleg Series vol. 14: More Blood, More Tracks](#), dies in Michigan at the age of 80.
- 24 March With a Facebook video posting, Teresa Williams, wife to former Dylan band member Larry Campbell (1997-2004), reveals that Campbell has COVID-19. He recovers by mid-May and the two [release a duet of them performing Rev. Gary Davis’s “Let’s Get Together Right Down Here” on Youtube](#) to celebrate his recovery.
- 27 March With [a note on his website and social media platforms](#) about “gratitude for all your support and loyalty across the years,” Dylan unexpectedly releases the longest studio recording of his career online at midnight (Eastern Standard Time), “Murder Most Foul,” describing it as “an unreleased song we recorded a while back” and signing off with “Stay safe, stay observant and may God be with you.” The website posting is updated with a link to the song’s lyrics on 6 April.
- 7 April Beloved singer and songwriter – and former “New Dylan” – John Prine passes away at the age of 73 in a Nashville hospital from complications resulting from COVID-19.
- 8 April Dylan achieves his first ever Billboard #1 song when “Murder Most Foul” tops the bewildering “Rock Digital Song Sales” Billboard chart.
- 17 April Three weeks to the hour after the release of “Murder Most Foul,” Dylan [releases a new song online](#), “I Contain Multitudes,” increasing speculation about a new album to a fever pitch.
- 4 May Beat poet Michael McClure dies in Oakland, California at the age of 87 as a result of complications from a stroke, leaving ninety-year-old Gary Snyder as the last living poet who read at the Six Gallery reading of October 7, 1955 – generally regarded as the initial public expression of the Beat movement. Photographs by Larry Keenan taken in the alley outside of City Lights Bookstore of Dylan, McClure, Allen Ginsberg, and Robbie Robertson on December 5, 1965 are frequently reprinted in books on Dylan.
- McClure’s essay *Bob Dylan: The Poet’s Poet*, originally published in the March 14, 1974 issue of *Rolling Stone* was reprinted by Beat Scene Press in their 2019 Chapbook Series.
- 8 May At midnight, Dylan uses his website and social platforms to announce a forthcoming album of original songs, *Rough and Rowdy Ways*, to be released 19 June. Accompanying this announcement, Dylan releases a third new song, “False Prophet,” [online](#).
- 9 May “The Architect of Rock & Roll,” Little Richard, passes away at his home in Tullahoma, Tennessee at the age of 87. Within hours of the announcement, Dylan eulogises him on Twitter and Facebook: “I just heard the news about Little Richard and I’m so grieved. He was my shining star and guiding light back when I was only a little boy. His was the original spirit that moved me to do everything I would do. I played some shows with him in Europe in the early nineties and got to hang out in his dressing room a lot. He was always generous, kind and humble. And still dynamite as a performer and a musician and you could still learn plenty from him. In his presence he was always the same Little Richard that I first heard and was awed by growing up and I always was the same little boy. Of course he’ll live forever. But it’s like a part of your life is gone.”
- 12 May “In the interest of public health and safety and after many attempts to try and reschedule these shows for a workable timeframe this year,” Dylan cancels his 25-night tour of the

- Pacific Northwest, the West Coast, the Southwest, the South, and the East Coast in the United States due to the COVID-19 pandemic, making it likely that 2020 will be the first year without a Bob Dylan tour since 1985.
- 25 May Dylan band member from 1992-1999, Bucky Baxter, passes away from a stroke in Florida at the age of 65. Baxter played 740 shows with Dylan, his pedal steel contributing significantly to Dylan's sound, which continued for decades after his departure as first Larry Campbell and then Donnie Herron assumed the multi-instrumentalist role in Dylan's band.
- 19 June ***Rough and Rowdy Ways*** – recorded only a few months earlier at [Sound City Recorders in Los Angeles](#) – is released by Columbia Records. The album was also released in its entirety as a [playlist on Dylan's official Youtube channel](#), a first for a Dylan album release. The album receives universal acclaim from critics, earning a 95/100 metascore from [Metacritic](#).
- 22 June Debut of the ["official lyric video" for "False Prophet"](#) on Dylan's official Youtube channel.
- 26 June New York graphic designer Milton Glaser – who created the poster wherein Dylan's silhouette was wreathed with a psychedelic, rainbow-hued halo of hair – dies in New York City at the age of 91. This poster was packaged with the 1967 LP *Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits*.
- 25 July Musician, writer, broadcaster, & lecturer CP Lee, who authored multiple books on Dylan, specializing in chronicling the [infamous "Judas" heckle from Manchester Free Trade Hall in 1966](#), dies in England at the age of 70.
- 5 August American writer Pete Hamill, former editor of the *New York Post*, editor-in-chief of *The New York Daily News*, and author of the liner notes to 1975's *Blood on the Tracks*, dies in New York City at the age of 85.
- 3 September Pianist Bill Pursell, who played on "Early Morning Rain," "Woogie Boogie," "Copper Kettle," "Belle Isle," and "All the Tired Horses" during [the fourth overdub session for *Self Portrait*](#), passes away in Nashville at the age of 94 [as a consequence of complications from COVID-19](#).
- 5 September [Music journalist Dan O'Neil](#), who was the "kid journalist" seen interviewing Dylan before his [Sheffield performance in *Don't Look Back*](#), dies in Cardiff at the age of 90.
- 9 September The documentary *Jimmy Carter: Rock & Roll President* opens in select theaters in the United States. The film, which emphasizes the role of the youth movement in Carter's 1976 election, features a recent interview that screenplay author Bill Flanagan conducted with Dylan. "When I first met Jimmy, the first thing he did was quote my songs back to me," Dylan recalls in the film. "It was the first time that I realized that my songs had reached into the establishment world. And I had no experience in that realm; I had never seen that side, so it made me a little uneasy. He put my mind at ease by not talking down to me and showing me that he had a sincere appreciation for the songs I had written. He was a kindred spirit to me of a rare kind. The kind of man you don't meet every day and you're lucky if you ever do."

Carter and Dylan first met after Dylan and the Band's second of two Atlanta performances. In the documentary, Carter relates that "The only questions he asked me were questions about my Christian faith, and what it meant to me. Basically the principles of it." Director Mary Wharton said of the Dylan interview, "He was gracious and professional, and he showed up with some great ideas about what he wanted to say about Carter. He also seemed to be enjoying himself that day and gave us a lot more of his time that I ever would have expected."

4. NEW RELEASES

Rough & Rowdy Ways

Bob Dylan's first album with new original songs since 2012 is released 19 June 2020. Three songs were released in advance on bobdylan.com.

For details please refer to the session page [here](#).



5. NEVER ENDING TOUR

5.1 TOUR OF JAPAN

This tour was announced late 2019 and cancelled 12 March 2020.

APRIL

1	Tokyo, Japan	Zepp DiverCity
2	Tokyo, Japan	Zepp DiverCity
4	Tokyo, Japan	Zepp DiverCity
5	Tokyo, Japan	Zepp DiverCity
6	Tokyo, Japan	Zepp DiverCity
8	Osaka, Japan	Zepp Namba
9	Osaka, Japan	Zepp Namba
10	Osaka, Japan	Zepp Namba
14	Tokyo, Japan	Zepp Tokyo
15	Tokyo, Japan	Zepp Tokyo
17	Tokyo, Japan	Zepp DiverCity
19	Tokyo, Japan	Zepp DiverCity
20	Tokyo, Japan	Zepp DiverCity
21	Tokyo, Japan	Zepp DiverCity

5.2 US SUMMER TOUR

This tour was announced 9 March 2020 and cancelled 12 May 2020.

JUNE

4	Bend, Oregon	Les Schwab Amphitheatre
6	Ridgefield, Washington	Sunlight Supply Amphitheater
7	Auburn, Washington	White River Amphitheatre
9	Eugene, Oregon	Matthew Knight Arena
12	Stateline, Nevada	Harveys Outdoor Amphitheatre
13	Berkeley, California	Greek Theatre
14	Berkeley, California	Greek Theatre
17	San Diego, California	Pechanga Arena
18	Los Angeles, California	Hollywood Bowl
20	Las Vegas, Nevada	Mandalay Bay Events Center
21	Glendale, Arizona	Gila River Arena
23	Albuquerque, New Mexico	Tingley Coliseum
24	Amarillo, Texas	Amarillo Civic Center
26	Irving, Texas	The Pavilion @ Toyota Music Factory
27	Little Rock, Arkansas	Simmons Bank Arena
28	Southaven, Mississippi	BankPlus Amphitheatre @ Snowden Grove
30	Brandon, Mississippi	Brandon Amphitheatre

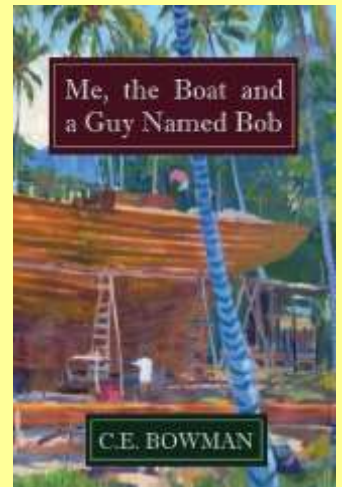
JULY

2	Nashville, Tennessee	Bridgestone Arena
3	Alpharetta, Georgia	Ameris Bank Amphitheatre
5	Virginia Beach, Virginia	Veterans United Home Loans Amphitheatre
7	Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania	Mohegan Sun Arena
8	Forest Hills, New York	Forest Hills Stadium
9	Saratoga Springs, New York	Saratoga Performing Arts Center
11	Essex Junction, Vermont	Champlain Valley Exposition
12	Bethel Woods, New York	Bethel Woods Center for the Arts

6. NEW BOOKS

Christopher E Bowman: Me, The Boat And A Guy Named Bob
[Tradewind Publishing](#) 2020. Softback 452 pages.

In the spring of 1972, a twenty-year-old kid from California took off to see the world. His journey led him down the East African coast and across several oceans to a magical Caribbean island and the building of a beautiful schooner: *Water Pearl*, partly owned by Bob Dylan. "I'm either in New York or on the West Coast or down in the Caribbean. Me and another guy own a boat down there," Dylan once said. Finally, after forty years, here is the story of the cosmic chain of events behind Dylan's boat.



Aubrey L. Glazer: God Knows, Everything is Broken: The Great (Gnostic) Americana Songbook of Bob Dylan.
 Penni Publications 2019. Softback 415 pages.

What is it about the songbook of Bob Dylan that continues to captivate our deeper yearnings for meaning and hope in a world so dark and broken? While Dylan's songbook has been analyzed in numerous studies, whether as classical literature, as scriptural theology, as mystical prophesy, or as the musings of a Zen master, the present study, *God Knows Everything is Broken*, aims to be a "generative" exploration of the depth and breadth of Dylan's songbook in as of yet unexplored registers by examining the uniquely cynical but coherent gnostic theology within the arc of his lyrics.



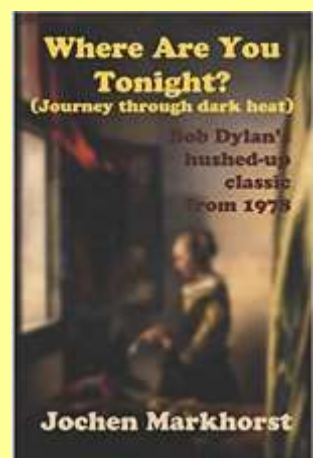
Spencer Leigh: Bob Dylan Outlaw Blues
 Foreword by Ian McNabb
[McNidder & Grace](#) 2020. Softback 511 pages.

Yes, this is yet another biography! Despite his age, Bob Dylan still tours extensively. Famously known for not looking happy, the author looks at what motivates him. 'Journalists are very fond of saying Bob Dylan is an enigma,' says Spencer Leigh, 'but that word is flawed. It's as good as saying you don't know... I have not called Bob Dylan an enigma at any point in the book as I have tried to find answers.' Spencer Leigh has spoken to over 300 musicians, friends and acquaintances of Bob Dylan in his research for this book.



Jochen Markhorst: Where Are You Tonight? (Journey Through Dark Heat): Bob Dylan's Hushed-Up Classic from 1978.
 Independent published 2020, Softback 85 pages.

"I don't know if I could name all twenty-nine of my records, but I could name some of them. I liked a bunch of albums I did in the eighties. I liked Street-Legal a whole lot. I did that in the seventies." So Bob Dylan recollected with interviewer Denise Worrell in November 1985 at his home in Malibu. Partly posed, no doubt. Dylan can probably list more than "some of" his own albums. But it's telling that Street Legal is



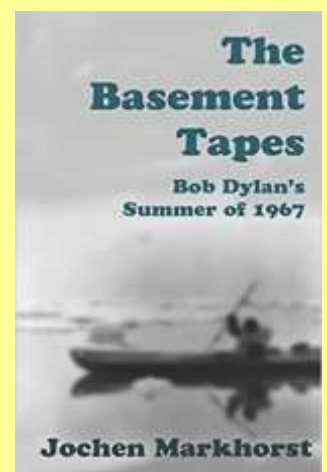
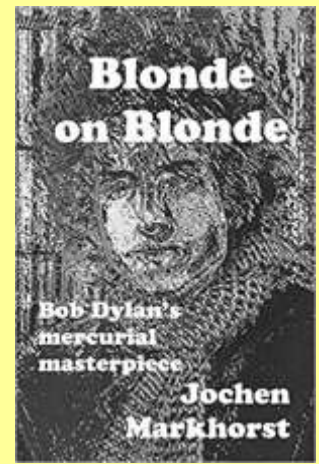
the only one he mentions. At the time, in 1978, Street-Legal was critically burned to the ground in his own country. It bothers him. From September through December in 1978, Dylan toured the United States, performing songs from the new album, but not many and not wholeheartedly. And when he does, he remarkably often announces them with a somewhat sour introduction, even when announcing the album's highlight, on December 9, 1978 in Columbia, the last time Dylan will perform the song: "Thank you. We'd like to do a song from the new album called Street-Legal. This was a single. I know it sold about 100 copies. Anyway, I think it just sold 25, but I guess that we can play it anyway." That's not true. "Where Are You Tonight?" did not sell a hundred copies. Not even twenty-five. The song – one of the very great songs in Dylan's oeuvre – has never been released as a single at all! Anyway, after December 9, 1978, Dylan never looked back at this monumental song, Markhorst does.

Jochen Markhorst: Blonde On Blonde: Bob Dylan's Mercurial Masterpiece. Independent published 2020, Softback 160 pages.

The Nobel Prize for Literature awarded to Bob Dylan in 2016 is met with resistance. But we can all agree that the songs of the old bard have penetrated the collective memory worldwide. When asked what makes him so Nobel Prize worthy, the late Sara Danius, then Secretary of the Swedish Academy, replied, "You may start with Blonde On Blonde, the album from 1966. It's got many classics. It's an extraordinary example of his brilliant way of rhyming and putting together refrains, and his pictorial way of thinking." She is not the only one who is touched by the "pictorial way of thinking" on that record. Jerry Garcia always treated "Visions Of Johanna" like a relic, Mick Jagger sings "Just Like A Woman" at the memorial service for his partner, Roger Waters claims that "Sad-Eyed Lady Of The Lowlands" changed his life and Tom Waits says about that monument: "A grand song. It's like Beowulf, it takes me to the meadow." In Blonde On Blonde, Bob Dylan's mercurial masterpiece, Dylan scholar Markhorst takes the reader through the beauty and background of both the album's fourteen songs and its outtakes.

Jochen Markhorst: The Basement Tapes: Bob Dylan's Summer of 1967. Independent published 2020, Softback 240 pages.

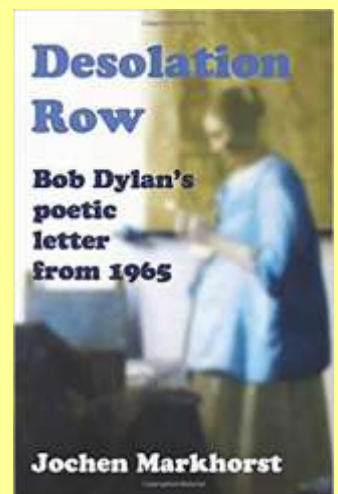
Woodstock, 1967: The Summer Of Love passes Dylan by. While *Sergeant Pepper* showers the popular music scene with the sounds of sitar, trumpets, tape experiments, strings, studio effects, and psychedelics, Dylan and The Band hole up for months in the countryside in a big house, playing antique folk and country songs in the basement of Big Pink. In between, he tinkers and jams with The Band on about seventy new songs that sound both fresh and old-fashioned at the same time. Some of them are gratefully picked up by others. Manfred Mann scores with "The Mighty Quinn", Julie Driscoll has a hit with "This Wheel's On Fire", The Byrds have a hit with "You Ain't Going Nowhere," and nearly half the music world happily records "I Shall Be Released." As for the originals: the world has to make do with pirated releases – especially *The Great White Wonder*, the legendary first rock bootleg. In 1975, The Basement Tapes is released, on which a modest, polished selection of the recordings can be found; only in 2014 are almost all of the recordings officially released, in *The Basement Tapes Complete*, volume 11 in The Bootleg Series. In his sixth Dylan book, Jochen Markhorst



takes the reader along 32 of the best and most completed Basement songs, highlighting the background, history, and impact of the legendary *Basement Tapes*.

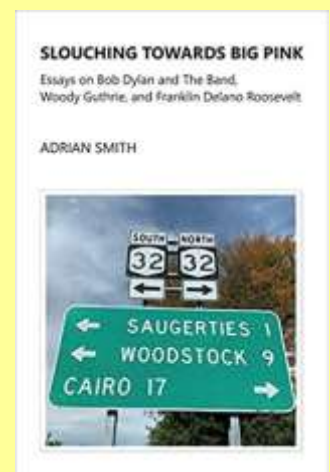
Jochen Markhorst: Desolation Row: Bob Dylan's Poetic Letter from 1965.
Independent published 2020, Softback 131 pages.

Bob Dylan's legendary 1965 album *Highway 61 Revisited* is still considered one of the best albums in rock history. The opening song "Like A Rolling Stone" is a meteorite whose impact shook the world. When Bruce Springsteen is asked if he feels he owes Dylan anything, The Boss replied: "When I was sixteen and I had Highway 61 on my little mono record player in my room at night, I'd listen to it a thousand times. It's one of those debts that you can never repay." Of the album Dylan says, "I could buy it myself." The final track is the only exclusively-acoustic track on the record, the long, melancholic, poetic explosion "Desolation Row", Dylan's kaleidoscopic impression of "what goes on around here", the mysterious masterpiece that is a first building block of his later Nobel Prize. "Like Desolation Row...there's no logical way that you can arrive at lyrics like that. I don't know how it was done," Dylan mused more than twenty years later, in 1987. In *Desolation Row: Bob Dylan's Poetic Letter from 1965*, the seventh Dylan book by Dylan scholar Jochen Markhorst, the reader is taken through the history, background and impact of the ten-verse song, the recording sessions, and the aftermath of its release, in which he comes close to unlocking the song's mysteries.



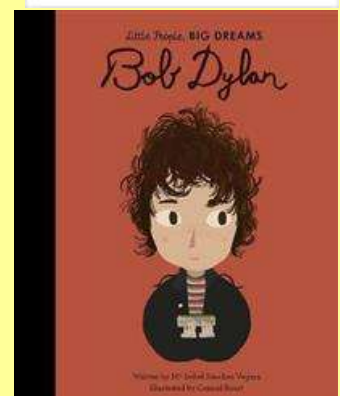
Adrian Smith: Slouching Towards Big Pink. Essays on Bob Dylan and The Band, Woody Guthrie and Franklin Delano Roosevelt.
[Takahe Publishing](#) 2020, Softback 231 pages.

This book focuses on Bob Dylan and The Band's performances at the Woody Guthrie tribute concerts staged in Carnegie Hall on January 20, 1968, and on a deeply controversial song that Dylan has never reprised: Guthrie's last complete composition, "Dear Mrs. Roosevelt". Why Woody Guthrie wrote "Dear Mrs. Roosevelt", and how Bob Dylan rescued it from obscurity twenty years later, reflects the close relationship between 'people's music' and progressive politics in America from the 1930s to the 1960s. No president has been celebrated in song as much as Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and no First Lady has loved folk music like Eleanor Roosevelt – this is as much their story as that of Guthrie, Dylan, and his sidemen.



Maria Isabel Sanchez Vegara: Little People, Big Dreams: Bob Dylan.
[Francis Lincoln Children's Books](#) 2020. Hardback 32 pages.

Bob Dylan was born in Duluth, Minnesota. As a teenager, he played in various bands and, over time, his interest in music deepened into a particular passion for American folk music and blues. Dylan moved to New York City in 1961, where he began to perform poetry and music in clubs and cafes in Greenwich Village. There, he recorded a number of albums that made him one of the most influential musicians of history. This fascinating book features stylish and quirky illustrations and extra facts at the back, including a biographical timeline with historical photos and a detailed profile of the musician's life.



Mike Wyvill & John Wraith: Went Into The Town: Dylan's 2019 Concerts. [Two Riders](#) 2020. Softback 64 pages.

One in an ongoing series of Bob Dylan tour summaries. This volume features complete track listings of every 2019 show and is lavishly illustrated with photos, tickets, and other ephemera.



7. REFERENCES & SOURCES

- Research for [The 2020 Calendar](#) by [Daniel Mackay](#).
- Articles and columns in [Isis](#) 2020.
- Articles and columns in [The Bridge](#) 2020.