

= Chimes of Freedom (song) =

" Chimes of Freedom " is a song written and performed by Bob Dylan and featured on his 1964 album *Another Side of Bob Dylan* (see 1964 in music) , produced by Tom Wilson . It was written in early 1964 and was influenced by the symbolist poetry of Arthur Rimbaud . The song depicts the feelings and thoughts of the singer and his companion as they wait out a lightning storm under a doorway . The singer expresses his solidarity with people who are downtrodden or otherwise treated unjustly , and believes that the thunder is tolling in sympathy for them . Music critic Paul Williams has described the song as Dylan 's *Sermon on the Mount* . The song has been covered many times by different artists , including The Byrds , Jefferson Starship , Youssou N 'Dour , Bruce Springsteen and U2 .

= = Bob Dylan 's version = =

" Chimes of Freedom " was written shortly after the release of " *The Times They Are a @-@ Changin '* " album in early 1964 during a road trip that Dylan took across America with musician Paul Clayton , journalist Pete Karman , and road manager Victor Maimudes . It was written at about the same time as " *Mr. Tambourine Man* " , which is similarly influenced by the symbolism of Arthur Rimbaud . There are conflicting stories about exactly when during the trip this song was written . One story is that Dylan wrote the song on a portable typewriter in the back of a car the day after visiting civil rights activists Bernice Johnson and Cordell Reagon in Atlanta , Georgia . However , a handwritten lyric sheet from the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in Toronto , Canada that was reproduced in *The Bob Dylan Scrapbook 1956 @-@ 1966* indicates that this story cannot be entirely true . Dylan was in Toronto , Canada in late January and early February , before the road trip on which the song was supposedly written . So , although parts of the song may have been written on the road trip , Dylan had started working on the song earlier . The first public performance of the song took place in early 1964 , either at the Civic Auditorium in Denver on February 15 , or at the Berkeley Community Theater in Berkeley , California , on February 22 . " Chimes of Freedom " was an important part of Dylan 's live concert repertoire throughout most of 1964 , although by the latter part of that year he had ceased performing it and would not perform it again until 1987 , when he revived the song for concerts with the Grateful Dead and with Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers .

The master take of the song was recorded by Dylan , with Tom Wilson producing , during the recording sessions for the *Another Side of Bob Dylan* album on June 9 , 1964 . It took seven takes before Dylan got the song right , even though it was one of only three songs that he recorded during the session that he had already performed in front of a concert audience .

Music critic Paul Williams has described the song as Dylan 's *Sermon on the Mount* . The song is a lyrical expression of feelings evoked while watching a lightning storm . The singer and a companion are caught in a thunderstorm in mid @-@ evening and the pair of them duck into a doorway , where they are both transfixed by one lightning flash after another . The natural phenomena of thunder and lightning appear to take on auditory and ultimately emotional aspects to the singer , with the thunder experienced as the tolling of bells and the lightning bolts appearing as chimes . Eventually , the sights and sounds in the sky become intermixed in the mind of the singer , as evidenced by the lines :

As majestic bells of bolts struck shadows in the sounds ,
Seeming to be the chimes of freedom flashing .

Over the course of the song the sun slowly rises and the lyrics can be interpreted as a proclamation of the hope that as the sky clears after a difficult night , all the world 's people will rise together to proclaim their survival to the sound of the church bells .

In *Chimes of Freedom : The Politics of Bob Dylan 's Art* , author Mike Marqusee notes that the song marks a transition between Dylan 's earlier protest song style (a litany of the down @-@ trodden and oppressed , in the second half of each verse) and his later more free @-@ flowing poetic style (the fusion of images of lightning , storm and bells in the first half) . In this later style , which is influenced by 19th century French symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud , the poetry is more allusive , filled

with " chains of flashing images . " In this song , rather than support a specific cause as in his earlier protest songs , he finds solidarity with all people who are downtrodden or otherwise treated unjustly , including unwed mothers , the disabled , refugees , outcasts , those unfairly jailed , " the luckless , the abandoned and forsaken , " and , in the final verse , " the countless confused , accused , misused , strung out ones and worse " and " every hung @-@ up person in the whole wide universe . " By having the chimes of freedom toll for both rebels and rakes , the song is more inclusive in its sympathies than previous protest songs , such as " The Times They Are A @-@ Changin ' " , written just the prior year . After " Chimes of Freedom " , Dylan 's protest songs no longer depicted social reality in the black and white terms he renounces in " My Back Pages " but rather use satirical surrealism to make their points .

The assassination of U.S. President , John F. Kennedy , is one possible inspiration for Dylan starting the song . Although Dylan has denied that this is the case , he did draft a number of poems in the fall of 1963 in the aftermath of Kennedy 's death and one of those poems in particular , a short six @-@ line piece , appears to contain the genesis for " Chimes of Freedom " :

the colors of friday were dull
as the cathedral bells were gently burnin'
strikin for the gentle
strikin for the kind
strikin for the crippled ones
and strikin for the blind .

Kennedy was killed on a Friday , and the cathedral bells in the poem would have been the church bells heralding his death . Using a storm as a metaphor for the death of a president is similar to Shakespeare 's use of a storm in King Lear . By the time Dylan wrote the first draft of " Chimes of Freedom " the following February , it contained many of the elements of this poem , except that the crippled ones and the blind were changed to " guardians and protectors of the mind . " In addition , the cathedral bells had become the " chimes of freedom flashing " , as seen by two lovers finding shelter in a cathedral doorway .

Besides Rimbaud 's symbolism , the song is also influenced by the alliterative poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins , the poetic vision of William Blake and the violent drama , mixed with compassion and romantic language , of William Shakespeare . In addition , Dylan had used rain as a symbol in earlier songs , such as " A Hard Rain 's A @-@ Gonna Fall " . In his memoir , folk musician Dave Van Ronk claimed that the song was influenced by an old sentimental ballad , " Chimes of Trinity " by Michael J. Fitzpatrick , which Dave Van Ronk had introduced to Dylan .

Despite the song 's appeal to cover artists , it has appeared sparingly on Dylan 's compilation and live albums . It was , however , included on the 1967 European compilation album Bob Dylan 's Greatest Hits 2 . A recording of Dylan performing the song at the 1964 Newport Folk Festival was included on the compilation album , The Bootleg Series Vol . 7 : No Direction Home : The Soundtrack . The same performance can also be seen on the 2007 DVD The Other Side of the Mirror : Live at Newport Folk Festival 1963 @-@ 1965 . A version sung by Dylan and Joan Osborne in 1999 appears on the original television soundtrack album of the film titled The 60 's .

As of 2009 , Dylan continues to perform " Chimes of Freedom " in concert , although he did not play the song live during the 23 years between late 1964 and 1987 . In 1993 Dylan played the song in front of the Lincoln Memorial as part of Bill Clinton 's first inauguration as U.S. president .

= = Cover versions = =

= = The Byrds ' version = =

The Byrds included a recording of " Chimes of Freedom " on their 1965 debut album , Mr. Tambourine Man . The song was the last track to be recorded for the album but the session was marred by conflict and drama . After the band had completed the song 's instrumental backing track , guitarist and harmony vocalist David Crosby announced that he wasn 't going to sing on the

recording and was instead leaving the studio for the day . The precise reason for Crosby 's refusal to sing the song has never been adequately explained but the ensuing fracas between the guitarist and the band 's manager , record producer Jim Dickson , ended with Dickson sitting on Crosby 's chest , telling him " The only way you 're going to get through that door is over my dead body ... You 're going to stay in this room until you do the vocal . " According to a number of people present in the studio that day , Crosby burst into tears but eventually completed the song 's harmony part with sterling results . Dickson himself noted in later years that his altercation with Crosby was a cathartic moment in which the singer " got it all out and sang like an angel . "

The song went on to become a staple of The Byrds ' live concert repertoire , until their final disbandment in 1973 . The band also performed the song on the television programs Hullabaloo and Shindig ! , as well as including it in their performance at the Monterey Pop Festival . The Byrds ' performance of " Chimes of Freedom " at Monterey can be seen in the 2002 The Complete Monterey Pop Festival DVD box set . The song was also performed by a reformed line @-@ up of The Byrds featuring Roger McGuinn , David Crosby , and Chris Hillman in January 1989 . In addition to its appearance on Mr. Tambourine Man , " Chimes of Freedom " has appeared on several Byrds ' compilation albums , including The Byrds ' Greatest Hits , The Byrds Play Dylan , The Very Best of The Byrds , and The Essential Byrds .

= = = Other covers = = =

" Chimes of Freedom " has also been covered by artists as diverse as Phil Carmen , Jefferson Starship , Youssou N 'Dour , Martyn Joseph , Joan Osborne , Bruce Springsteen , Warren Zevon and The West Coast Pop Art Experimental Band . Although U2 have never released a recording of the song , they played it live in concert during the late 1980s . Bruce Springsteen 's cover version managed to reach # 16 on the Billboard Hot Mainstream Rock Tracks chart in 1988 , although it was never released as a single . It was recorded in Stockholm , Sweden , on July 3 , 1988 , when Springsteen performed it during his Tunnel of Love Express tour . Springsteen used the performance to announce before a worldwide radio audience his role in the upcoming Human Rights Now ! tour to benefit Amnesty International and mark the fortieth anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights . The song was subsequently released as the title track of the live Chimes of Freedom EP . Springsteen 's performance is rousing and fervent , transforming the song into a ringing anthem for the full E Street Band , without losing the power of the words evident in Dylan 's own solo performance . On the Human Rights Now ! tour itself , Springsteen led a group performance of " Chimes of Freedom " featuring the other artists on the tour : Tracy Chapman , Sting , Peter Gabriel , and Youssou N 'Dour , with each taking turns on the song 's verses .

Jefferson Starship covered the song on their 2008 release , Jefferson 's Tree of Liberty , with Paul Kantner , David Freiberg and Cathy Richardson on vocals . Additionally , the Senegalese musician Youssou N 'Dour recorded an unusual cover version of the song , in which he treated the song as an anthem for the many people in Africa struggling to survive . The melody of " Chimes of Freedom " was deliberately borrowed by Billy Bragg for the song " Ideology " , from his third album , Talking with the Taxman about Poetry , with Bragg 's chorus " above the sound of ideologies clashing " echoing Dylan 's " we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing " . In addition , the Bon Jovi song " Bells of Freedom " , from their Have a Nice Day album , is somewhat reminiscent of " Chimes of Freedom " in structure . Neil Young 's song " Flags of Freedom " from his Living with War album mentions Dylan by name and melodically recalls the tune and verse structure of " Chimes of Freedom " , though Young is listed as the song 's only writer . The British band Starry Eyed and Laughing took their name from the opening line of the song 's final verse .

" Chimes of Freedom " is one of seven Dylan songs whose lyrics were reset for soprano and piano (or orchestra) by John Corigliano for his song cycle Mr. Tambourine Man : Seven Poems of Bob Dylan .