

= Love Minus Zero / No Limit =

" Love Minus Zero / No Limit " (read " Love Minus Zero over No Limit ") is a song written by Bob Dylan for his fifth studio album Bringing It All Back Home , released in 1965 (see 1965 in music) . The song was originally written as a tribute to Dylan 's future wife Sara Lowndes . Its main musical hook is a series of three descending chords , while its lyrics articulate Dylan 's feelings for his lover , and how she brings a needed zen @-@ like calm to his chaotic world . The song uses surreal imagery , some of which recalls Edgar Allan Poe 's " The Raven " and the biblical Book of Daniel . The style of the lyrics is reminiscent of William Blake 's poem , " The Sick Rose " .

Dylan has performed " Love Minus Zero / No Limit " live on several of his tours . Since its initial appearance on Bringing It All Back Home , live versions of the song have been released on a number of Dylan 's albums , including Bob Dylan at Budokan , MTV Unplugged (European versions) , and The Bootleg Series Vol . 5 : Bob Dylan Live 1975 , The Rolling Thunder Revue , as well as on the reissued Concert for Bangladesh album by George Harrison & Friends . Live video performances have been included on the Concert for Bangladesh and Other Side of the Mirror : Live at Newport Folk Festival 1963 ? 1965 DVD releases .

Artists who have covered " Love Minus Zero / No Limit " include Ricky Nelson , The Turtles , Joan Baez , Judy Collins , Fleetwood Mac , and Rod Stewart . Eric Clapton played it at Bob Dylan 's 30th Anniversary Concert Celebration .

= = Composition and recording = =

The version of the song that appears on Bringing It All Back Home was recorded on January 14 , 1965 and was produced by Tom Wilson . This version was recorded by the full rock band that Dylan used to accompany him on the songs that appeared on side one of the album , and features a prominent electric guitar part played by Bruce Langhorne . However , like the other love song on side one , " She Belongs to Me " , " Love Minus Zero / No Limit " was recorded a day earlier in various acoustic configurations , and one of these takes was a strong contender to be included on the album . The January 13 , 1965 recordings and a first take from January 14 were released on the 6 @-@ disc and 18 @-@ disc versions of The Bootleg Series Vol . 12 : The Cutting Edge 1965 ? 1966 in 2015 .

The song is tuneful , with a prominent series of three descending diatonic chords providing the main hook . The music is soothing , so that the love expressed seems tranquil even when images such as cloaks and daggers and trembling bridges are evoked by the lyrics . The tune and rhythm have a Latin feel and the lyrical rhyming pattern varies from verse to verse . For example , in the first verse , the first and second lines rhyme , the fourth and eighth lines rhyme and the sixth and seventh lines rhyme , but the third and fifth lines are unrhymed . But in the second verse , the first three lines rhyme . Throughout the song , the rhymes are sometimes approximate ; for example " another " is rhymed with " bother " and " trembles " is rhymed with " rambles " .

= = Interpretation = =

" Love Minus Zero / No Limit " was written as a tribute to Dylan 's future wife Sara Lowndes . The lyrics reflect her Zen @-@ like detachment through a series of opposites , for example , that she " speaks like silence " and is both " like ice " and " like fire " . Another famous line from the song also captures this dichotomy : " She knows there 's no success like failure , and that failure 's no success at all . "

The first verse of the song has the singer infatuated with the woman , admiring her inner strength . The three remaining verses reflect the inauthentic chaos that the singer has to deal with in the outside world , from which the lover 's Zen @-@ like calm provides needed refuge . The final image is of the lover being like some raven at the singer 's window with a broken wing . This image recalls Edgar Allan Poe 's " The Raven " , but is also a symbol of the lover 's vulnerability in spite of her strength . The broken wing may also be a reference to the woman 's need for shelter , or else to a

flaw in her . The style of the song 's lyrics are comparable to William Blake 's poem , " The Sick Rose " , in their economy of language and use of a detached tone to express the narrator 's intense emotional experience . The song 's surreal images anticipate the psychedelic songs Dylan would later write .

Some of the song 's images evoke prophecies from the Biblical Book of Daniel . For example , the line :

Statues made of matchsticks

Crumble into one another

is reminiscent of Daniel 's prophecy that Nebuchadnezzar would build a statue of precious metals only to see it crumble like " chaff " . Another line in the song states that people " Draw conclusions on the wall . " Drawing conclusions on the wall rather than from the wall evokes the story from the Book of Daniel where a hand writes on a wall the words " MENE MENE TEKEL UPHARSIN , " warning that the Neo @-@ Babylonian Empire was about to end .

One interpretation of the lover in this song , as well as that which features in " She Belongs to Me " , is that she is Dylan 's muse . In each song , the inaccessibility of the lover / muse can be interpreted as Dylan 's acknowledgment of his own limitations ? limitations that he attempts to overcome in writing the songs . In this interpretation , the final raven image sitting at the window can be viewed as a symbol of the muse 's inaccessibility , and the raven 's broken wing a symbol of its wildness . A related interpretation is that the song reflects an artist 's " self @-@ awareness through isolation . " The line " She knows there 's no success like failure , and that failure 's no success at all " can be seen as a reflection of the isolation of the American writer .

The original title of the song was " Dime Store " , which originates from the line " In the dime stores and bus stations ... " The official title " Love Minus Zero / No Limit " is , according to Dylan , a fraction with " Love Minus Zero " on the top and " No Limit " on the bottom , and this is how the title appeared on early pressings of the Bringing It All Back Home LP . Therefore , the correct pronunciation of the song 's title is " Love Minus Zero over No Limit " . In theory , the resulting quotient would be equal to " absolutely unlimited love . " The title is also based on gambling terminology that would mean that all love is a risk .

= = Performances and recordings = =

Dylan has frequently performed the song in concert since the time it was written , nearly always acoustically . He performed it occasionally in concert during 1965 and 1966 , but more frequently during the Rolling Thunder Revue tours from 1974 through 1976 . Dylan also played it at The Concert for Bangladesh , during the first of the two August 1 , 1971 benefit concerts organized by George Harrison and Ravi Shankar to help provide relief for refugees in Bangladesh . Dylan has also been playing the song live throughout the Never Ending Tour that began in 1988 .

In addition to its appearance on Bringing It All Back Home , " Love Minus Zero / No Limit " has been included on several Dylan live and compilation albums . In the 1970s , it was included on the compilation Masterpieces and on the live Bob Dylan at Budokan album , recorded in 1978 . Other live performances have been included on The Bootleg Series Vol . 5 : Bob Dylan Live 1975 , The Rolling Thunder Revue (recorded December 1975) , on the European versions of MTV Unplugged (recorded November 1994) , and on the 2005 reissue of the Concert for Bangladesh album . Footage of Dylan playing the song is included on the 2005 DVD of the Concert for Bangladesh film and in The Other Side of the Mirror : Live at Newport Folk Festival 1963 ? 1965 , a film by Murray Lerner showing Dylan 's performances at the Newport Folk Festival . A snippet from an impromptu performance of " Love Minus Zero / No Limit " is also included in the film Dont Look Back .

The song was also included on the Rhino / Starbucks compilation album This is Us : Songs from Where You Live .

= = Cover versions = =

The song was covered several times in 1965 , including a version by The Turtles on their album It

Ain 't Me Babe and a version by The Walker Brothers on their album Take It Easy with The Walker Brothers . Los Angeles band The Leaves covered the song on their 1966 album Hey Joe and Joan Baez included it on her 1968 album of Dylan covers Any Day Now . A version by singer / songwriter Turley Richards became a minor hit in 1970 (US # 84) . It was also covered in 1993 by Judy Collins on Judy Collins Sings Dylan ... Just Like a Woman . Eric Clapton covered the song on during Bob Dylan 's 30th Anniversary Concert Celebration . Other musicians who have covered the song include Fleetwood Mac , Rod Stewart , Jackson Browne , Ricky Nelson , Buck Owens , Bridget St. John , Eliza Gilkyson and Les Fradkin .

= = Legacy = =

In a 2005 reader 's poll for Mojo magazine , " Love Minus Zero / No Limit " was listed as the # 20 all @-@ time greatest Bob Dylan song , and a similar poll of artists ranked the song # 32 . In 2002 , Uncut magazine listed it as the # 23 all @-@ time greatest Bob Dylan song . Australian music critic Toby Creswell included the song in his book 1001 Songs : The Great Songs of All Time and the Artists , Stories and Secrets Behind Them .