

● Powerful Songs and Poems

Can poems and songs help to change the world?

1 Power of prayer



A. Read the poem, while listening to Maya Angelou reciting it **MP3 n°52**.

B. How does this poem make you feel?

C. What is the message that Maya Angelou wants to convey? What does she pray for?

Hope is born again in the faces of children
It rides on the shoulders of our aged as they
walk into their sunsets.

Hope spreads around the earth. Brightening

5 all things,

Even hate which crouches breeding in
dark corridors.

[...]

We, Baptist and Buddhist, Methodist and

10 Muslim, say come Peace.

[...]

Come and fill us and our world with your
majesty.

We, the Jew and the Jainist, the Catholic and
the Confucian,

15 Implore you, to stay a while with us.

So we may learn by your shimmering light

How to look beyond complexion and see
community.

**"Amazing Peace" in
Celebrations, Rituals of Peace
and Prayer,
Maya Angelou, 2005**



2 Bob Dylan's Nobel Prize

Text A

"Our songs are alive in the land of the living. But songs are unlike literature. They're meant to be sung, not read. The words in Shakespeare's plays were meant to be acted on the stage. Just as lyrics in songs are meant to be sung, not read on a page. And I hope some of you get the chance to listen to these lyrics the way they were intended to be heard: in concert or on record or however people are listening to songs these days. I return once again to Homer, who says, "Sing in me, on Muse, and through me tell the story."

Bob Dylan, about receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature, 5 June 2017

Text B

*Here comes the story of the Hurricane
The man the authorities came to blame
For somethin' that he never done
Put in a prison cell, but one time he could-a been
The champion of the world*

© Bob Dylan, **The Hurricane**, 1976

Rubin "Hurricane" Carter was a top middleweight boxing contender after he knocked out 11 of his first 15 professional opponents. But Carter was locked up for 19 years after he was convicted (wrongly) of a triple murder. Dylan's song (co-written with Jacques Levy) helped galvanize public support to his case, and eventually a federal judge ruled in 1985 that Carter didn't receive a fair trial and released him.

A. Read text A. What does Bob Dylan say about songs in his lecture?

B. Do you think he sees them as worthy of receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature?

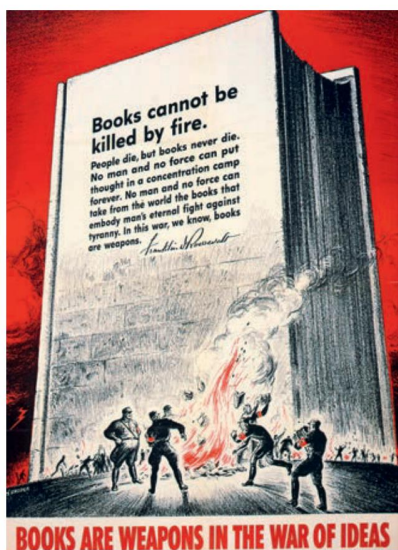
C. Read text B. Say why songs carry a power of their own.

D. How would you define this type of song? Do you know others?

E. **Have your say.** Was the Nobel Foundation right when they granted the Prize in Literature to Bob Dylan? Justify.

YOUR PROJECT

Write an article to explain how words can be a powerful weapon to convey a social or political message. 



BOOKS ARE WEAPONS IN THE WAR OF IDEAS