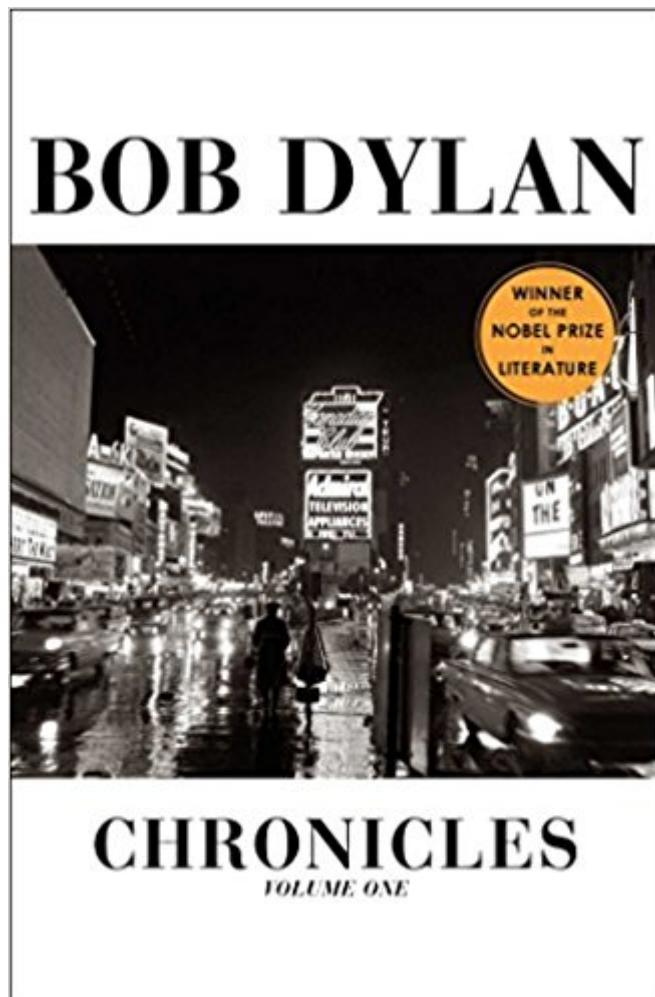


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Chronicles, Vol. 1



Synopsis

"I'd come from a long ways off and had started a long ways down. But now destiny was about to manifest itself. I felt like it was looking right at me and nobody else." So writes Bob Dylan in *Chronicles: Volume One*, his remarkable book exploring critical junctures in his life and career. Through Dylan's eyes and open mind, we see Greenwich Village, circa 1961, when he first arrives in Manhattan. Dylan's New York is a magical city of possibilities -- smoky, nightlong parties; literary awakenings; transient loves and unbreakable friendships. Elegiac observations are punctuated by jabs of memories, penetrating and tough. With the book's side trips to New Orleans, Woodstock, Minnesota and points west, *Chronicles: Volume One* is an intimate and intensely personal recollection of extraordinary times. By turns revealing, poetical, passionate and witty, *Chronicles: Volume One* is a mesmerizing window on Bob Dylan's thoughts and influences. Dylan's voice is distinctively American: generous of spirit, engaged, fanciful and rhythmic. Utilizing his unparalleled gifts of storytelling and the exquisite expressiveness that are the hallmarks of his music, Bob Dylan turns *Chronicles: Volume One* into a poignant reflection on life, and the people and places that helped shape the man and the art.

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Customer Reviews

One would not anticipate a conventional memoir from Bob Dylan--indeed, one would not have foreseen an autobiography at all from the pen of the notoriously private legend. What *Chronicles: Volume 1* delivers is an odd but ultimately illuminating memoir that is as impulsive, eccentric, and

inspired as Dylan's greatest music. Eschewing chronology and skipping over most of the "highlights" that his many biographers have assigned him, Dylan drifts and rambles through his tale, amplifying a series of major and minor epiphanies. If you're interested in a behind-the-scenes look at his encounters with the Beatles, look elsewhere. Dylan describes the sensation of hearing the group's "Do You Want to Know a Secret" on the radio, but devotes far more ink to a Louisiana shopkeeper named Sun Pie, who tells him, "I think all the good in the world might already been done" and sells him a World's Greatest Grandpa bumper sticker. Dylan certainly sticks to his own agenda--a newspaper article about journeymen heavyweights Jerry Quarry and Jimmy Ellis and soul singer Joe Tex's appearance on The Tonight Show inspire heartfelt musings, and yet the 1963 assassination of John Kennedy prompts nary a word from the era's greatest protest singer. For all the small revelations (it turns out he's been a big fan of Barry Goldwater, Mickey Rourke, and Ice-T), there are eye-opening disclosures, including his confession that a large portion of his recorded output was designed to alienate his audience and free him from the burden of being a "the voice of a generation." Off the beaten path as it is, *Chronicles* is nevertheless an astonishing achievement. As revelatory in its own way as *Blonde on Blonde* or *Highway 61 Revisited*, it provides ephemeral insights into the mind one of the most significant artistic voices of the 20th century while creating a completely new set of mysteries. --Steven Stolder

Starred Review. After a career of principled coyness, Dylan takes pains to outline the growth of his artistic conscience in this superb memoir. Writing in a language of cosmic hokum and street-smart phrasing, he lingers not on moments of success and celebrity, but on the crises of his intellectual development. He reconstructs, for example, an early moment in New York when he realized "that I would have to start believing in possibilities that I wouldn't have allowed before, that I had been closing my creativity down to a very narrow, controllable scale...that things had become too familiar and I might have to disorient myself." And he recounts how, in that search for larger reach, he actually went to the public library's microfilm archives to learn the rhetoric of Civil War newspapers. Skipping the years of his greatest records, or perhaps saving those years for the second volume of his chronicle, Dylan recalls the times when he was sick of his public persona and made more lackluster albums like "Self-Portrait" and "New Morning." He then skips again to his comeback work with producer Daniel Lanois in the late 1980s. Dylan emphasizes that he was "indifferent to wealth and love," and readers looking for private revelations will be disappointed. But others will prize the display of musical integrity and seriousness that is evident in his minutia-filled accounts of his influences in folk and blues. Ultimately, this book will stand as a record of a young

man's self-education, as contagious in its frank excitement as the letters of John Keats and as sincere in its ramble as Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, to which Dylan frequently refers. A person of Dylan's stature could have gotten away with far less; that he has been so thoughtful in the creation of this book is a measure of his talents, and a gift to his fans. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Beautifully written. Dylan describes everything carefully and precisely and I get a wonderful feel for the places and the people. I really enjoyed the step into his thoughts, which are as clear and evocative as anything he has written (I am a big, big fan of his music). But as beautiful as it is while I am reading it, as soon as I put it down I forget that I am reading it.

Bob Dylan is a great song writer but not a great story writer. Very hard to follow this story, it rambles and shifts places/people/time without warning. Dylan makes statements that are difficult to understand - there's no context. I thought his life story would be interesting but I was unable to finish reading this book. I read 40 pages and gave up.

Love the way Bob writes for most of the book. Honestly, the details of his folk influences were not of interest to me. The title says it well : *Chronicles* and this is chronicle of his beginning but mostly the folk musicians of influence and importance. Come to think of it, it strikes me that as much as I LOVE his art and respect his ethic and deeply appreciate his songs, I don't find him very interesting. Fair enough. I don't ask that of him. But therefore the book was boring for me...

It was not exactly what I was expecting. The book kind of goes from the 80's backwards to the beginning. He has a gift with words as would be expected and expresses his feelings of people amazingly. Describes scenes incredibly well must have been keeping a incredible diary, I bet that is a great read. Maybe volume two is the book I need to read.

Fans have recommended this over the years and after reading it I am now a fan as well. The last chapter is where it all really begins. The timeline is quite fluid so don't expect a true accounting. He creates his history as he goes along. Dylan is a national treasure. Just don't tell him so.

I loved this book. Man, Dylan can write!!! I enjoyed this as much as I did *Just Kids*. Dylan kind of bops around in his narrative, doesn't stick to a strict chronology, but it works. He paints beautiful

impressionistic scenes and images with words -- it's amazing and dreamlike -- as well as clearly articulates details as needed. It's kind of cool when he's goes into the studio to create an album in New Orleans. Really writes about the experience of trying to get the songs right and what goes into it. I think musicians would love this. I'm going to buy a hard copy for my musician brother for Christmas. I am so looking forward to the next volume of Chronicles.

A little obtuse and meandering sometimes but interesting. He is a "trippy" guy as many very intelligent people are. I find reading a chapter and putting it down for a while is necessary to get the most out of it. He had a sojourn to get to where he did like a lot of artists. His persistence and talent eventually won. The reading and observation he did to become successful is profiled in considerable detail. It is definitely a behind-the-scenes personal account. Recommended.

In his own words he describes his life as captivating as the lyrics in his songs. This was a rather quick read and I enjoyed learning about Bob's personal life, as well as about his influences and hardships. Although I did feel the book still could have had nearly a thousand more pages, I think Dylan did a great job of keeping the reader engaged and fitting as much depth as one can in novel format.

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