

19th January 2022

Changing

“Everything within them and around them was changing.”

Denis Diderot, Oeuvres Romanesques (1959), Ed H Benac, Revised L Perol, 1981

When Robert Allan Zimmerman – Bob Dylan to you and me – was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2016, it came as a surprise to many within and out with the literary world. Yet the citation reads: “For having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition.” Anyone familiar Dylan’s poetry will know the truth of that statement – and not just those of us who were brought up with his music in the 1960s and 70s.

Among his early lyrics were the words of *The times they are a-changin’* from his 1964 album of the same name. His ideas expressed then were nothing short of prophetic. In the early days of 2022, and with all that’s happened to us in the past two years, are they not equally relevant? In our concerns from climate justice, read this:

*Come gather ‘round people wherever you roam,
And admit that the waters around you have grown,
And accept it that soon you’ll be drenched to the bone.
If your time to you is worth savin’,
Then you’d better start swimmin’ or you’ll sink like a stone,
For the times they are a-changin’.*

And these words still speak powerfully to me as a parent and grandparent:

*Come mothers and fathers throughout the land,
And don’t criticise what you don’t understand.
Your sons and your daughters are beyond your command;
Your old road is rapidly agin’.
Please get out of the new one if you can’t lend a hand,
For the times they are a-changin’.*

When it feels like everything around *me* is changing, I get uncomfortable with the sentiments Dylan’s words express. I don’t like being reminded that I live in changing times. I don’t want to have to adapt to new things. But ... if Bob Dylan is right, and “the times they are a-changin’” is the truth, isn’t it my task to keep changing too? Now, there’s a challenge ...

A prayer for today

*All around me I see change, Lord. I need your changeless love more than even before.
As I adapt to a changing world, may my trust and faith stay strong. Amen*